



2019 FBCMG Garden Tour in Richmond 77406

Garden Descriptions

As prepared by the Garden Hosts

8118 Crescent Knolls Drive-Elisabeth Jones, F01

Note: Please park along lake side of street, across from tour home

The last time I was on the Master Gardener Tour, I had acreage. This time, I have the smallest lot I've ever had in all the 8 houses my husband and I owned through the years. The result is that I have definitely "overplanted." When we moved into this house almost seven years ago there was ONE plant in the backyard. (It was a night-blooming jasmine that was in a bad location and was subsequently donated to the BYO.) I have tried to incorporate the principles of the Backyard Orchard, as taught by Deborah Birge, and carried on by Rose Ann and Jim Stepp. My pride and joy is the large Poncho avocado tree which produces a bountiful crop each year. I also have a variegated Meyer lemon (which isn't variegated any more!), a small kumquat tree, a dwarf brown satsuma, a Cherry of the Rio Grande (no fruit yet) and an apricot tree that has produced exactly one fruit! Landscaping features include a fountain and a dry river bed to collect water and prevent it from reaching the house during heavy rains. The lot is highest in the back, and thus makes this an essential feature, as well as a drainage system which carries water to the street and circumvents the house. The backyard is just now recovering from being without water for 14 days in July when I was out of town, and the sprinkler system failed. I lost a lot of bedding plants. I now have a new controller that I can control from my phone, and if you haven't gotten one, I highly recommend it! After gardening for many years and being a Master Gardener since 2001, I guess my best advice to anyone starting out with a new landscape would be that nothing in a garden is ever static, and you have to keep working on it; you are never "finished" with a garden!

21134 Winding Path Way-Mike Garrett, F15

Note: Please park along same side of street as tour home

We built our home in 2010 in the Long Meadow Farm subdivision and it backs up to Oyster Creek. The back fence and about 20' of the side fences are wrought iron so everyone has a continual view of the back yard. The yard was sodded, 4 new Live Oak trees were planted and minimal landscaping was added to the front yard by the builder. My wife Linda has a firm belief that if anything is done outside in the yard, it is the man's responsibility. I have always enjoyed gardening but when I retired in 2015, I joined FBMG and also had lots of time to fulfil that responsibility!

Over the years I have added gardens for both beauty and function. The flower gardens are a mixture of annuals and perennials. The front is fairly conventional. I added a rock border to the two main beds on either side of the front and around the trees. I fill the beds around the trees with annuals while the two main beds are mostly perennials with some annuals. I like to keep trying different annuals. Some of the perennials are Texas Mountain Laurel, Yew Podocarpus (great at xmas), Japanese Blueberry tree and Amaryllis started from Linda's mother's garden. In the back I also outlined the beds with rocks. They are also filled with a mix of annuals and perennials. I also added three fruit trees, lemon, lime and tangelo, a 4' by 16' raised bed vegetable garden, a rain barrel and a 4' by 8' greenhouse. The greenhouse is used to start annuals in the spring and to house some of the potted plants in case of a freeze. Tomatoes is the main crop in the vegetable garden but includes items like cucumbers, various peppers, strawberries and various herbs. Some of the perennials are Esperanza, Dwarf Bottlebrush, Canna, Abelia, Pineapple Guava, dwarf Pomegranates. Some of the annuals that I always plant are Zinnias, hyacinth Bean Plant, Gomphrena. There is a large variety of cacti/succulents. I have a weakness for volunteers which sometimes makes the gardens a little messy! I also like to harvest seeds and start the next years plants in the greenhouse.

2522 Cooling Breeze Drive-Steve Schmerbeck, F17

We are relatively new to Texas gardening. We have lived in Texas just shy of 3 years and are beginning to learn what works here. New to us are citrus, ants that bite, oaks that do not lose their leaves in the Fall, tomatoes that do not fruit in the summer, Saint Augustine grass, and clay soil that acts like a bucket.

Our home sits on about ¼ acre with a detached garage, tall fence, and a pool taking up much of our backyard. Many of the plantings around the house and the backyard were inherited from the previous owners, such as pittosporum, nandina, azalea, plumbago, yaupon Holly, an orange tree, and a fig. Others we have added, like gardenia, Mexican Heather, knockout roses, and a Japanese magnolia. We are trying to find things to grow in the shade or in the Texas sun and soil.

We are also trying our hand at growing food – herbs in pots and in an herb garden; fruiting trees like a Mexican thornless Key Lime and a Ruby red grapefruit, and an Akers home pear we are attempting to espalier. In addition we have built 4 raised beds for vegetables in a narrow strip of

land wedged between the wall of our garage and a tall fence and shaded by a tall tree in the backyard of our neighbors to the South. This is not ideal, but adequate. We have also introduced herbs and vegetables (okra) into our landscaped areas and plan to add more varieties next year.

We keep our gardens and pots going by composting and using a micro-sprinkler system, as well as a lawn sprinkler system. Through the generosity of Cheryl Huber, we have a 65 gallon rain barrel which provides water for our potted plants not service by a drip system. An innovative rain barrel diverter kit connects into the downspout leading to the barrel, and when the barrel is full, redirects the water back to the down spout and to the curb at the street. It works so well we would like to install another.

We welcome you to our work in progress and look forward to learning from you some helpful hints, and how to identify some of our mystery plants. And while you are at it, enjoy some of the lovely flowering plantings peeking over the fence of our neighbors to the north.

4302 Glenwood Drive-Peggy d'Hemecourt, F03

My gardens are a collection of native and non-native well-adapted plants many of which help to sustain birds, butterflies, other pollinators, and my inner naturalist. Their unique feature may be that they survive without irrigation, except in the most severe prolonged dry spells (I estimate I water seven-ten days a year, on average, hose-end sprinkler, one bed at a time). The gardens' visual interest varies by season and by the presence or absence of rainfall (both conditions are beneficial, depending on the plant). They will never win a landscape design award, but they connect me with nature and a father who frequently showed up for a visit with pass-along plants in the trunk – memories come alive when I garden.

In addition to about a dozen landscape beds, depending how you divide them up, there is a water garden, a raised bed vegetable garden that grows enough for two, slow-cooking compost bins, and a wildflower “meadow” that is mowed once a year. At the time of writing this in early September, we're waiting for the Goldenrod to bloom before we mow, which will probably happen before the tour. Boone's Baptisia trial plot is on the property, but Baptisia are dormant until early next year. The lawn is what I call “pasture grass” meaning it's what was there when we built 27 years ago, except for some St. Augustine grass that has spread from a small garden room area where it was sodded over 20 years ago, and seems to be quite happy, despite receiving no fertilizer or supplemental irrigation, only regular mowing. Plenty of Earth-Kind principles are in play in my gardens, including IPM. And to top things off, we're capturing energy from the sun to help power our house and sometimes even send solar-generated power back to the grid, making the electric meter run backwards – a beautiful sight!

I'd say there are 24 species of trees on the property and 90+ species of plants in the gardens. If you visit and see a plant you'd like a start of, we'll make a list and I'll make it happen when the time is right.

Come!