2014 Master Gardener Conference
May 29 - 31, 2014

Seminar Speakers

**Dr. Jon Barry** is a Forestry Specialist at the Southwest Research & Extension Center of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service in Hope.

He graduated from Clemson University with a Ph.D. in forest resources. He also holds a Masters in botany from the University of Arkansas and a bachelor’s degree from Harding University. In his position as an Extension specialist, he provides technical assistance and training materials for private landowners, county extension agents, and professional foresters. Before joining the Cooperative Extension Service, Dr. Barry worked for several years as a consulting forester.

Dr. Barry will speak to conference attendees about the many invasive plant species living in Arkansas. Some of the species pose a real threat to Arkansas, while others are annoying everyday problems. He will share information about ornamental native plants that will flourish in Arkansas gardens.

**Dr. Mike Buttram** is a chemistry professor at Texarkana College. One of his passions is water quality. His presentation, Nutrients in Lakes and Streams, will help the attendees understand the importance of water in the fields of horticulture, agriculture, and humanity.

Dr. Buttram received his BA and MA from Texas A&M University. He earned a PhD from the University of Louisville.

**Dr. Victor Ford** is a northeast Tennessee native and earned a BSF (77) and MS (78) from the University of Tennessee and a PhD (82) from Virginia Tech. He has studied forest soils, productivity, and weed control for 35 years. He spent five years as an Extension Forester for the University of Arkansas at the Southwest Research and Extension. He worked the next 20 years for Westvaco and later MeadWestvaco in Kentucky, West Virginia, Alabama, and Texas as a Scientist and Project Leader. In 2008, he became Director and Professor of the University of Arkansas Southwest
Research and Extension Center. The center conducts research in forestry, beef cattle, horticulture, plant pathology, and row crops with a faculty of 4 professors and 25 support staff. Dr. Ford has over 80 publications and presentations. He is in demand for presentations on ethics in forestry, forest health, and the role of policy in agriculture. His conference presentation is “What Goes One Underground and How It Affects What Goes On Above Ground.” ‘Out of sight, out of mind’ is an old saying that is true when considering roots. Most homeowners do not understand the importance of root health. Disturbance of roots is one of the factors seen most when looking at dead and dying trees. Root systems are extremely complex and interesting. It is like looking into an alien world. From the microscopic to the macroscopic, this invisible world is extremely important and understanding it will make your gardens more beautiful.

Dr. Ford volunteers at the Christian Charitable Clinic, is a past president of the Hope Rotary Club, and is the Vice-President of the Hope-Hempstead Chamber of Commerce. He is active in the Society of American Foresters and belongs to the Soil Science Society of America. For about ten years, he was active in youth sports as a coach, league president in two different states, and a certified umpire. He is currently working with Hope High School in the formation of Career Academies for grades 10-12. Dr. Ford and his wife, Cindy, live in Hope and share five children and six grandchildren. They are members of Unity Baptist Church. He loves singing, sports, fly-fishing, hunting, computers, ham radio, and travelling.

Michelle Farland joined the team at Chapelwood Florist twelve years ago. She is also a certified Texas Master Florist, certified at Benz School of Floral Design. Michelle worked in floral design in Michigan for a short but quickly returned to Texarkana, her hometown. She is currently working toward earning her Advanced Texas Master Florist certification.

Gina and Michelle have worked together so long that they often finish each other’s sentences! Their personalities perfectly complement each other, and they make a great team. Join them to learn how to create amazing “Floral Design from Your Flowerbed.” Attendees will learn how to create stunning home displays from the everyday flowers grown in most gardens. Gina and Michelle use various household items instead of vases, and have endless ideas to help the home gardener be creative in the floral design department.

Aaron Harding is the owner of Whippoorwill Gardens located in Atlanta, Texas and has served as the president of the Cass County Master Gardeners for the last four years. He is a Texas-certified Master Gardener and speaks regularly to groups/associations about gardening concepts and practices. After working in healthcare for thirty years, he retired to devote more time to do the things he enjoys most.
Aaron will present “Keyhole Gardening - Meeting Today’s Gardening Challenges”. The presentation looks at the concept of "keyhole" gardening: its beginning, its benefit, and its implementation. The attendee will learn how to combine composting, dense planting, and water conservation for larger yields, less maintenance, and renewable plant nutrition in a very small space. The focus of this class is on vegetable crops, but can be easily adapted to other applications.

**Keith Kridler** has a passion for Daffodils. What started out as a rescue mission saving a few clumps of daffodils from a highway expansion in the late 1960’s turned into a raging case of “Daffodil Fever”. There is no cure for the malady, the only treatment is to continue to collect, grow and share this “disease” with others who are likely to also become infected!

Keith is a native Ohio native but Texan by choice. He is the current vice-president of the Texas Daffodil Society and an American Daffodil Society Judges instructor. He grows over 1,000 named varieties of daffodils and has more than one million daffodils growing on his property near Mt. Pleasant, Texas. He is a charter member of the Cypress Basin Texas Master Gardeners, founded in 1998.

He will present “Landscape Daffodils: From the Horse and Buggy days to Facebook and Twitter.”

Daffodils survive for generations at old abandoned homesteads. They continue growing, blooming and multiplying as they patiently wait for the next generation of humans to “move back to the farm.” The program will have rural, homestead shots of years gone by to the most modern show daffodils and will include historical fields of abandoned flowers along with the more modern daffodils.

**Belinda McCoy McLaughlin** is co-owner of Black Mountain Gardens, a nursery featuring natives, heirlooms and herbs and located outside Daingerfield, Texas, in the scenic countryside on the farm where her grandmother taught her to garden when she was a child.

Belinda is a past state president of the Native Plant Society of Texas and a co-founder of four chapters of the Native Plant Society— in Texarkana, Longview, Linden and Mt. Pleasant. She has served on numerous state committees for NPSOT and has received the Benny J. Simpson Fellows Award for service to the Society.

Belinda has been a certified Texas Master Gardener for 15 years. She’s a charter member of the Gregg County Master Gardeners in Longview and a member of the Piney Woods Master
Gardeners in Morris County (Daingerfield). She has instructed Master Gardener classes all across Northeast Texas and into Arkansas.

A native and current resident of Daingerfield, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Belinda has been a newspaper editor, a columnist, a freelance book editor, a freelance magazine writer, a garden speaker and a continuing education instructor at a local college. She has been sharing her passion for native plants with audiences and anyone else who will listen for 19 years now.

She will present the following seminar at the state conference: “Berry Delicious Bugs & Other Ughs: Why Birds Need Native Plants.” Today’s savvy gardeners know native plants, with their drought hardiness and ability to withstand temperature extremes, are a key to creating lovely, healthy gardens. But native plants do more than just ensure beauty in our landscapes despite the elements—they can mean life or death for all sorts of wildlife species. “Berry Delicious Bugs & Other Ughs: Why Our Birds Need Native Plants” addresses the vital role native plants play in the terrestrial ecosystem that includes beneficial insects and the beloved birds that all gardeners enjoy seeing in their yards. Audience members will learn how important native plants are to the survival of native wildlife and which natives attract specific birds and their insect food sources to the garden.

**Gina Reed** has owned Chapelwood Florist for the past fourteen years. She is a certified Texas Master Florist, earning her certification at Benz School of Floral Design in College Station, Texas. Gina is a Texarkana native and is working toward earning her Advanced Texas Master Florist certification.

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**John Turner,** Miller County Extension Agriculture Agent will present “Establishing Landscape Pecan Trees.” The training will teach gardeners how to select and purchase their pecan tree(s), select the variety for their growing zone, plant the pecan trees, pecan tree fertilization and water requirements, and insect control and pruning pecan trees.

From there, he attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, receiving a B.S. degree in the field of Agriculture Education in May of 1973.

John started teaching agriculture education at Central High School, West Helena in 1975. During that time, John started pursuing his graduate degree. He received his master degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, where he earned a M.S.E. in 1980.

After earning his M.S.E., he pursued a Specialist Degree in Secondary School Administration, completing 24 hours. In 1988, John was called to his present position where he has worked for the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, as an Agriculture Agent for the past 26 years. John’s job responsibility is horticulture, Community development, cattle, and 4-H. John specializes in pecan production and leadership training. He has attended pecan production training at Texas A&M University in 1989, 1990 and 1992. He is presently the number one authority on pecan production in Arkansas. He also works with pecan producers in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, California, and Tennessee.

John organized the Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners in 1992 and remains the agent and advisor to the Master Gardeners.