



Home and Garden Show continues today

BY LARRY CAUSEY
FME NEWS SERVICE

BELTON — Vegetable Gardening in Containers was among the free seminars Saturday for the Home and Garden Show at the Bell County Expo Center.

Sponsored by Temple Area Builders Association, the show continues from noon to 5 p.m. today. Multiple homebuilding and remodeling information booths, a Kids Zone, seminars by Bell County Master Gardeners and the SPJST Car Show will again occupy Garth Arena, the Assembly Hall and the livestock building. Today's BCMG schedule is Insects at 1:30 p.m. and Vegetables at 2:30 p.m.

Pamela Dragoo, a five-year member of BCMG, brought the seminar on Vegetable Gardening in Containers. Motivation for this type of gardening could be having rocky soil, not much yard space, or modest harvesting goals, she said. Some gardeners might just want a few tomatoes, a few vegetables or to add a little color to the landscape, she said.

Versatility, accessibility and mobility are three advantages to container gardening, she said.

"You can put containers on the balcony," she said. "You can grow plants you aren't really able to grow in this area."

With containers raised above the ground, she said, the gardener doesn't have to bend down, or muscle a tiller.

"And I like the idea that there's not a lot of weeds," she said. "Your soil is going to be a lot nicer."

As for mobility, she said if the spot is too shady, or too sunny, the gardener can move the container.

She listed other advantages of container gardening. For example, it controls against invader plants like mint or

oregano, she said.

"And if you move, you can take all that with you," she said.

She recommended making your own soil mix for the containers. That would be one-third amounts of coarse vermiculite, peat moss and compost. And it is better, she said, to mix several composts together, rather than staying with one compost.

She encouraged the class to consult AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website for gardening information. She also recommended they visit the Municipal Garden in Killeen for an example of good gardening.

Gail Atchison of Troy, one of 43 people who attended the seminar, said she had a regular garden in Florida but this is her second growing season in Texas.

"My first year, I didn't have good success," she said. "I think I planted too late. I had a lot of green on top but no fruit."

Her grape and cherry tomatoes turned out well, but she had trouble with large tomatoes, she said.

Lou Hight, longtime BCMG member, said a lot of booth visitors asked about turf grass and how to maintain their lawns.

"It's been a wet, warm winter, and weeds are just loving this kind of weather," she said. "We tell them to mow the weeds before they go to seed."

It may not be too late to use a pre-emergent, she said.

"The turf grass is dormant at this time," she said. "The weeds carry on. It's too early to fertilize, so they're just going to have to deal with the weeds in the best way possible."

People should consult the A&M website for suggestions on weed-killing products, she said.



PHOTOS BY NAN DICKSON (SPECIAL TO FME NEWS SERVICE)

Billy Backmayer, left, of Temple, and Merrill Sunde, of Killeen, look at cars at the Temple Area Builders Association's 44th annual Home and Garden Show at the Bell County Expo Center in Belton on Saturday.



Michael Brown, of Jarrell, talks about hot tubs with Tammy Gill with A-Tex Family Fun Center at the Home and Garden Show on Saturday.



Onur Bildik, of San Antonio, talks with his wife, Zera, about their handmade lamps from Turkey at the Home and Garden Show on Saturday.

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