

Gardening Activities Next Weekend

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There are some excellent gardening and landscape events next week. From 9 am to 1pm on Saturday March 11, SAWS will hold its annual Spring Bloom Event at their headquarters at 2800 US Hwy N(Hwy 281 and M). The theme this year is Rain Gardens. Rain gardens are flower beds that double as rain water filters to prevent erosion and reduce pollution. In addition to the lectures on the topic there will be information booths on landscaping and water conservation topics plus the first 1000 attendees will receive a free butterfly weed, blue sage, blackfoot daisy or ponytail grass plant. The Spring Bloom Event is free.

A second event next weekend will require some traveling. It is the South Texas Home Garden and Environmental Show in Floresville. Based on the offering of activities, the 40 minute drive will be worth it. Some of the wildflowers will also be blooming on the roadside. Attend on Saturday, Sunday or both days.

For 10 years the Wilson County Gardening Day was a one day event concentrating on gardening classes and a plant sale to benefit youth gardening in the Floresville area. Beginning on March this year the event is becoming a 2 day program with expanded youth environmental and gardening goals.

Some things won't change: the event is free; the Milberger's Gardening South Texas Radio Show will broadcast from the event and Jerry Parsons and I will be available to answer gardening questions in person; and the Home Depot volunteers will be on hand to help youth build their own toolboxes. Exhibitors promoting home furnishings and gardening accessories will share the space in the Floresville Community Center with environmental organizations.

For the many folks that have picked up bargains at the Silent Auction over the last 10 years, it will be back and be bigger than ever. There will also be a full slate of classes. The topics covered include Attracting Butterflies to Your Landscape; Growing Tomatoes; Gardening Floresville Style; Enjoying the San Antonio River: and Tough Modern and Old-Fashioned Roses. On Sunday morning two editions of a special class on

growing milkweeds for Monarch Butterflies will be offered. Native milkweed seed will be available.

Plant sales continue to be a major part of the program. This year the new Rodeo tomato will be promoted along with tough modern and old-fashioned roses and herbs. The special emphasis on attracting butterflies to the landscape will be supported by sales of native milkweed plants. Milkweeds are favorite butterfly nectar plants and the only species of plants on which the Monarch Butterflies will lay their eggs.

New for 2017, “Last Chance Forever” the popular raptor show will offer programs from 1 to 2 pm on both Saturday and Sunday. Also new is the Plant Exchange offered on Saturday. Gardeners bring their extra transplants, receive credit for the plants and then use the credits to “buy” other plants in the exchange. The new South Texas Plant Exchange is modeled after successful exchanges operated by the Gardening Volunteers of South Texas and the Devine Garden Club. Both organizations will assist with this event.

Water is always an important issue in South Texas. On Saturday from 2 until 4pm Poth High School youth students will conduct a workshop to show attendees how to construct their own rain barrels.

One of the new goals for the South Texas Home, Garden and Environmental Show is to support the creation of a Master Gardener Chapter in South Texas, this is one of the reasons that the Master Gardeners from Guadalupe, Comal, Gonzales and Bexar counties are helping with the show. They will assist with the All Day (9am-3pm) Landscape School offered on Sunday. It is the only part of the Show where there is a charge. Attendees will pay \$25 for the program to cover the long list of handouts. Individual counseling (if desired) on the attendee’s landscape plan will be provided. For more information on

the Special Landscape School call the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office at 830 393-7357 or me at 210 382 4455. The Wilson County News website at wilsoncountynews.com offers the application for the Landscape School and the class schedule.

Additional sponsors of the Show include the Floresville Chamber of Commerce and San Antonio River Authority.