

people

Agrilife Extension Service news



By Dr. Jeanna Godfrey
Aransas/San Pat Master Gardener

Seven sins of a gardener

Watch out during this season of haunting for the seven 'sins'. They aren't really sins of course, just mistakes that are easy to make as gardeners. We often learn more from our mistakes than our successes, but still, we would rather avoid them. Here are seven gardening "sins" and tips on how to avoid them:

1. Not being honest with yourself about how much time, money, and energy you can give your garden. Even the simplest garden will require some maintenance to look its best throughout the year. Weeding, watering, pruning, harvesting, staking, mulching, mowing, and other tasks are all part of the gardening experience. Unless you can afford to pay a full time gardener (in which case you probably are not reading this anyway), it is important to be realistic about how many hours and what type of work you can physically do in the garden.

2. Not making a plan before buying plants. Every gardener has made this mistake at least once. The thrill of seeing all those beautiful, healthy new plants at the nursery makes the gardener's heart beat a little faster. Resist the temptation! Impulse buying can be costly and result in a mishmash of plants rather than a cohesive garden. Take the time to assess your site. Determine the light exposure, soil type, moisture levels, existing structures and plants already in place. Then research the plants you like to see if you can provide the right environment for them. Also consider color and garden theme (cottage, native serenity, rose, tropical etc.) before making a final decision on what plants to buy and how many.

3. Not putting the right plant in the right place. Knowing the horticultural needs and mature size of your new plant is vital to placing it appropriately in your garden. Those petite plants in one gallon pots can become twenty foot monsters in a few short years. If the plant loves acidity, you may have to do extensive amending to grow it successfully in our alkaline sandy soils. Gardening in our climate can be challenging enough without creating problems unnecessarily.

4. Not watering effectively. Too little or too much water stresses plants and may eventually kill them. Group plants according to moisture needs; avoid watering during the heat of the day, and use drip irrigation whenever possible to maximize watering efficiency. Don't water too frequently; and right now, just don't water!

5. Not knowing your soil type and improving it as needed. Sandy soil drains well but loses water and nutrients rapidly. Clay soil retains water and nutrients but can be difficult to work, rapidly becoming waterlogged during periods of heavy rainfall. Amending the soil regularly with organic matter such as compost or well-aged manure improves both sandy and clay soils.

6. Not having a maintenance schedule and sticking to it. Regardless of how beautiful a garden appears when first planted, it is regular maintenance that keeps it looking its best. If you avoided sin number one and were realistic about how much time, money, and energy you can devote to the garden, sin number six will be easy to avoid. Mulching beds to reduce weeds and water use also helps regulate soil temperature, saving time and effort in the garden. Walking through your garden on a regular basis provides enjoyment, but also allows problems to be identified and corrected before they get out of hand.

7. Not keeping a garden journal. A garden journal can be as simple as a few notes jotted on a wall calendar documenting planting times, to books replete with pictures, pressed flowers, drawings, graphs, and lengthy discourses of gardening highs and lows.

Regardless, the notes you take provide valuable information for future use in the garden and just may prevent you from committing the seven deadly sins of gardening.



Church group sponsors Florida help

The Presbyterian Men's Group of First Presbyterian Church of Rockport sponsored John Watters to take donations to Wewahitchka, FL to help in the relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Michael. The congregations of First Presbyterian Church and Coastal Oaks Church, as well as Copano Cove residents, Key Allegro Real Estate and Walmart donated goods, which were gathered and loaded in a trailer Watters took to Florida. **Contributed photo**

History Mystery

What Was Karankawa Language?

By KAM WAGERT
History Center founding board member

Documented by European explorers as early as 1528, the five major Karankawa groups of Native Americans lived along the Texas coast thousands of years earlier. Here in Aransas County, the Copanes lived along the shores of our bays. They were nomadic, staying on the shoreline in fall and winter and going inland in the spring and summer.

Archeological surveys in our county have unearthed artifacts that reveal what the Karankawas made in pottery, stone tools and weaponry, and jewelry. Soil analysis has determined what foods they ate: fish, oysters, deer, waterfowl, etc. But what has never been found is a record of their spoken language.

The Karankawas captured a young French boy, Jean-Baptiste Talon, in 1698 during their brutal attack on Fort St. Louis, near present day Victoria. He lived with the group for several years, and learned their language. He later wrote down the words he remembered from his capture, and their French translations.

Alice Oliver lived on Matagorda Bay with her parents from 1838 to 1848, from age 10 to 20. She befriended the Karankawas living nearby, and in 1871 compiled a list of 134 words she remembered with their English translations. Analysis of the words compiled by Talon and Oliver show a great similarity.

Oliver said in an 1871 interview that the Karankawas spoke with an air of ennui, with a slightly contemptuous expression. She noted they never looked at the person to whom they were speaking. She further stated they held their breath while conversing, and then emitted a gentle sigh when they were through talking.

Some of the Karankawa words that both Talon and Oliver remembered from being with these people include: ka'da (girl); ha'kes (sit); ba'ak (wigwam). Thus, "Ka'da ha'kes ba'ak" would translate to "the girl sits in the wigwam."

The History Center for Aransas County is currently hosting the exhibit "Archeology: Early Peoples of the Coastal Bend." The Center is located at 801 E. Cedar in Rockport, and is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, call (361) 727-9214.



THC's Durst to speak about recent excavations at San Felipe de Austin

Texas Historical Commission (THC) Archeologist Jeff Durst will talk about "Recent Excavations at San Felipe de Austin: S.F. Austin's Original Colony in Texas" at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 4 at the History Center for Aransas County, 801 E. Cedar St.

San Felipe was founded in 1823 and grew to be a center of the colony on the Brazos River. Empresario Austin issued land grants from his office bringing many settlers to Texas. In 1836 a convention gathered and on March 2 approved a Declaration of Independence that was printed on a handbill and published in the Telegraph and Texas Register.

Sam Houston encamped near the town before his retreat east. When Mexican forces were reported approaching, the town was burned on March 29.

Archeological investigations showed much archeological evidence still existed and identified areas for additional investigation. After the park was transferred to the THC in 2008, investigations have focused on town lot 566 because it was one of the most densely occupied sites.

Durst lead crews from the THC, the Texas Archeological Society, the Houston Archeological Society, and the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network. He will show scenes and artifacts from the investigations.

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