



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article July 25, 2016

### Meet the Masters: Bill Walter

by Lydia Holley

Henderson County Master Gardener Bill Walter is also an amateur entomologist. “in my youth, I had an insect collection that received an honorable mention at the El Paso County science fair. Being born and raised in El Paso, a place where desert and tumble weeds are the main characteristics of the landscape, I never really thought of becoming a gardener,” Bill says. “Insects were my main interest.”



Bill’s interests began changing when he moved to the Dallas area. “Plants actually grew there!”, he jokes. “I started out by making hanging baskets for our patio, and even had a small vegetable garden. Winter posed a problem for my gardening endeavors, and it prompted me to build a greenhouse.”

Of course, Bill does not live in the Dallas area now. “We now live on a heavily wooded property at Cedar Creek Lake where the water is the main attraction and the sunsets are sensational. The natural wooded look is the focus of the garden, with some structure. The property consists of oak, ash and cedar trees.” Since shade is so predominant, Bill has added shade loving plants such as ivy, cast iron plants, nandinas, mondo grass, sago palms, redbud trees and dogwoods.

He still has a greenhouse. “The greenhouse is a storage place for plants during the winter, but it is also a great place to work. Many of my hours in the fall and winter are spent propagating new plants for future use”, he explains.

Bill decided to become a Master Gardener after he retired. He says, “The Master Gardener program gave me the opportunity to do more things. It provided a way to meet like-minded people and a way to give back to the community. The course was very informative, but I have found out that the real gardening knowledge comes from working with fellow Master Gardeners.”

The Dream Garden, located at the East Texas Arboretum, is a favorite Henderson County Master Gardener project for Bill. “It is a beautiful place, and a great place to volunteer”, he says. Bill is handy in other ways, too. “One thing I have learned working at the Dream Garden is that gardening requires gardeners, tools, and a fix-it man. Equipment and tools need maintenance and I do not mind contributing in that way.”

Bill is very happy he became a Master Gardener. “The best thing about being a Master Gardener is working with the other Master Gardeners”, he declares. “The knowledge one gets from working with fellow Master Gardeners is what makes being involved worthwhile.”

Of course, Bill has not forgotten his first love, insects. He reports, “I still have an interest in insects and now have beehives. In learning about beekeeping, and pollinators in general, I am also learning which flowering plants they like the best and their importance to gardening.”

The Henderson County Master Gardener program is now taking applications. You can find an application online at <http://henderson-co-tx-mg.org/about-us/becoming-mg/2016-MG-Application.pdf> or by calling 903-675-6130.

*For more information, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com).*