



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article      January 22, 2018

### A Change of Design by Lydia Holley

If you have ever read P. Allen Smith's book, "Garden Home", you will understand the design reference for my having placed three flowering crabapples in one area of my garden. These crabapples did exactly what I wished for them to do - grew together in peace and harmony, their branches reaching out to the other two, all flowering at the same time. I placed a bench close by where I could sit, shaded from the sun's rays in summer, while I watched the hummingbirds dancing acrobatically around their feeder, and enjoying the buzz of the bees that would come to drink the nectar from the blooms of these three trees.



I had dreams of these crabapples living long past my time, with future owners admiring them as much as I. This, however, was not to be. One fell in a storm several years ago. I consoled myself that the remaining two continued to reach out, as if to hold each other's hands, comforting each other. This past week, however, one more toppled over. What remains is one lonely crabapple.

Formal gardens, which are generally symmetrical in nature, contrary to popular belief, are not harder to maintain. They are harder to retain, however, due to the possibility of plant loss. If one plant dies in a formal setting, it shifts the balance, possibly destroying the entire design. Cottage style gardens sustain no fewer losses than other gardens, but plants can be replaced and the overall design will mostly likely still be retained.

This area, fairly formal in design, is now so compromised the only solution is to cut down the remaining tree and start over. All the plants which were planted and growing under these trees will now have to be moved and replaced. This is a daunting task since there is at least one prized and unusual plant that does not like to be transplanted growing there. Still, there is now too much sun hitting the shade-loving plants that were growing there contentedly, sheltered by the long limbs of these trees.

With last week's freezing temperatures, you, too, may have some dead or dying plants in your garden. That is the way it is in a garden. Nothing ever seems to remain the same. If you have a picture-perfect garden, take a picture. It may not be that way for long. Gardeners must be flexible, resilient and adaptable. It may take many years for you to achieve the vision in your mind, only to have it all be lost in one afternoon. Dig out the dead, replace with something you love just as much or more, and continue dreaming of a beautiful garden, even if that means changing its entire design.

*For more information, call 903-675-6130, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com) or visit [www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org](http://www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org).*