

Susan Noonan, our Master Gardener for the fall season, should be well known to most Master Gardeners since she is the person who distributes the service pins to those who have completed their volunteer hours each year and to those who have been Master Gardeners for years in increments of five. In that capacity Susan is present at most monthly meetings as well as at the Christmas party, when the years-of-service pins are awarded. Susan is also a regular during rodeo construction, when she puts her love of cooking to good use by providing construction workers with delicious and much-appreciated meals.

Susan comes by her love of gardening naturally. She grew up on a family farm in Kansas, where her parents raised wheat and beef cattle and feed for the cattle. Susan remembers that her mother always had a large vegetable garden that sustained the family throughout the year. Susan and her three younger sisters worked with her mother to tend that garden and to prepare and can the produce to last throughout the winter.

Although Susan's family had been farmers for three generations since arriving on US soil from Germany, and probably for more generations before then, Susan did not follow in the family farming tradition. Instead she majored in business at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska and then went on to get her MBA at Temple University in Pennsylvania. After graduation, Susan joined the Army. This was a happy choice for her since that was how she met her husband Joe, an Army nurse. However, the Army was not to be a career choice for Susan. Instead, when her tour of duty was over, she chose civilian life and went to work for Merck Pharmaceutical Company. It was that job that brought Susan to San Antonio thirty years ago. San Antonio was also the place where she rekindled her love of gardening.

Susan began by turning her attention to her own yard. She was fortunate that her husband Joe shared her gardening interest. In the 29 years that they have lived in their home in Braun Station, Joe has worked alongside Susan to turn their yard into the beautiful creation that it is today. Both Susan and Joe became Master Gardeners some 10 years ago, and in that capacity, both have worked hard volunteering for Master Gardener events and still taking time to work in their own ever-changing landscape as young trees have grown large enough to shade plants that were once in the sun.

Susan has not stopped with her own yard in her gardening enthusiasm. She shares her gardening skills with her Braun Station community. She gives presentations on gardening topics, particularly on incorporating native plants and Texas superstars into her neighbors' landscapes as she has done in hers. She regularly writes a gardening column for the community newsletter and is active in helping her neighbors combat Oak Wilt, an ongoing threat to a communities like Braun Station, which is graced with an abundance of these stately trees.

Susan has served the Master Gardeners in many capacities. She has been a member of the Board, helped children to learn gardening techniques at the Children's Gardens, and has helped with gardens at local elementary schools. Her advice to other Master Gardeners is to volunteer in a wide variety of activities until they find their niche. She suggests that they don't discount anything, but simply serve where they are needed. That is exactly what Susan has done to her immense satisfaction.