

**Mr. Green Jeans**  
**Greg Grant, Tyler Morning Telegraph**  
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My wife often chastises me about my mundane green jeans. Even the owner at the cleaners once asked about my choice of colors and I told her everything I owned had to be either the color of dirt or grass stains because after one day of work or play, that is what colors they would be.

I used to watch Captain Kangaroo as a kid, not to see the Captain, but to get to see Mr. Green Jeans. *Mr. Green Jeans* was played by Hugh Brannum. He was a musician like several of my family members. His trademark garb on the Captain's show was his overalls and later green jeans by the time I watched him. His obituary said, "he charmed millions of children" and I was certainly one of them. Each show he would feature a different tidbit about plants, caring for the earth, or a new animal addition to the farm. Whatever *Mr. Green Jeans* was serving, I greedily gobbled it up.

Like my Granny Ruth, I was born to love plants and animals. After all, plants provide us food, fiber, energy, clean air and water, birds, bees, butterflies, beauty, and in my case a job and hobby. I am convinced that gardeners and farmers live longer because they know they cannot die. There is way too much work to be done keeping plants and animals alive and healthy to let our own lives slip away.

I am not a parent, but I am convinced it is healthy for young folks to nurture delicate living things whether it be plants or animals. I find it hard to believe that kids can now experience a virtual field or forest through their smart phone but not take the time to go outside and experience the real thing. So many today seem convinced that all plants are poisonous, all animals bite, and everything outside is dirty. Naturally, I saw myself as Pig-Pen from the Peanuts cartoon and relished every minute outside in the dirt, especially growing something or watching something grow.

Kids need appropriate role models. Preferably ones not trying to sell them something, lead them astray, or get them hooked on the latest overpriced gadget. Bob Keeshan (*Captain Kangaroo*) once described Hugh Brannum (*Mr. Green Jeans*) as an "uncomplicated agrarian type who loved to putter in his own garden." I am not sure what today's kids would think of *Mr. Green Jeans*, but I could not have picked a better television role model.

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**Ramblings” blog at [arborgate.com](http://arborgate.com), read his “In Greg’s Garden” in each issue of *Texas Gardener* magazine ([texasgardener.com](http://texasgardener.com)), or follow him on Facebook (“Greg Grant Gardens”) and Instagram (“ggrantgardens”). More science-based lawn and gardening information from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service can be found at [aggieturf.tamu.edu](http://aggieturf.tamu.edu) and [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu).**

**Image caption: *Greg tries to keep both his plants and his pants green.***