



April 2011

COMAL GARDENER

Promoting Knowledge and Volunteerism

A monthly publication of the Comal Master Gardeners Association through the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Comal County, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels, TX 78132 (830-620-3440)

Volume XV

<http://txmg.org/comal>

Number 10

It's Spring and Picnic Time!

Spring has arrived, and it is time once again for the annual Comal Master Gardener Picnic. This year the picnic will be held from 3 to 5 pm on Sunday, April 17 at the Lindheimer Home gardens. Members, trainees and their families are all enthusiastically encouraged to attend. All attending should bring their own chairs. If anyone can bring folding tables for the food and gifts, let Pat Williford (830-885-6762) know.

The organization will provide the meat for the event, and members are asked to bring a dessert or a side dish that complements barbecued chicken and sausage. Thanks in advance to Cindy Sansone and Ron Williford for volunteering to cook the feast this year.

In addition to sharing food and fellowship, there will also be a Gift Grab. Anyone who wishes to participate in the fun should bring a garden-related, wrapped gift, with a suggested value of \$10 or less. Part of the fun is seeing what gifts appear. The rest of the fun is in the grabbing.

Be advised that there will not be a general membership meeting the fourth Monday in April at GVTC. There will be a short business meeting at the picnic.

For further information and to RSVP, contact Pat Williford at 830-885-6762 by April 14, in order to know how much meat to purchase.

Hope you can make it!

CMG Annual Picnic
Sunday, April 17
3 – 5 pm
Lindheimer Home, 491 Comal Ave., New Braunfels

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in meetings are encouraged to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 830-620-3440 for assistance. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names do not intend discrimination or imply endorsement by the Extension Service. Extension forbids employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, or national origin in any term, condition, or privilege of employment.

•••Garden Posts•••

- The next Herb SIG meeting will be a presentation on Horseradish, the Herb of the Year. Come and learn why herbalists call horseradish an herb and how to grow use it. The meeting will be held at 10 am on April 18. Reserve a space by contacting Sally Ann Hnatiuk at mustang_sally6@msn.com. If interested, RSVP no later than April 11 for more details.
- Treasurer Marlene Ballard reports for February: Income, \$150 and expenses, \$1684.70. Balance as of February 28 was \$14,011.71.
- Local garden clubs are making plans to assume maintenance of the Tye Preston gardens. Certified CCMG's may continue volunteering at Tye Preston, but due to lack of supervision, trainees should volunteer in other gardens and projects.
- Pat Williford still has trial tomato plants from Larry Stein. Contact her (r033@gvvc.com or 830-885-6762) if you would like some.
- Don't forget to get your background check, a new TMG requirement of all CMGs. Forms are available on-line at our site (<http://txmg.org/comal>) or by calling the Extension Office (830-620-3440). Send the completed forms and a \$10 fee to the office as soon as possible.
- At the March meeting, Ron Williford showed members the newly improved CMG website. There is a password-protected "members only" section that includes private information like member status and our directory. For the password, contact Ron (r033@gvvc.com or 830-885-6762) or talk to a member who attended the meeting. This password also works on the state website.
- Larry Williamson reminded members to keep up with their hours. The deadline is just around the corner!
- Save the date! The 9th Annual Herb Affair will be held on Saturday, May 7 from 9:30 am – 3 pm at the Antique Rose Emporium. The next planning meeting for the 2011 Herb Affair is Thursday, April 14 at 11 am at the Extension Office. The hours for the Herb Affair are 9:30 am – 3 pm on Saturday, May 7. See the article in this newsletter for more information.
- Committee chairs, it is budget time again. Please get your budgets for 2011-2012 to Treasurer Marlene Ballard (marleneballard@gvvc.com) as soon as possible.
- Don't forget that the 2011 Texas Master Gardener State Conference is just around the corner! You can still register at <http://2011tmgaconference.org/registration/registration.html> to go to Glen Rose for the April 27-29 event. Sign up and take a friend!

Report your CE and Volunteer Hours!

Send your CE hours to Don Tuff. Send to CERecorder@MasterGardener.Comal.TX.US Be sure to include title of talk, speaker's name, date and time of talk, location, CE hours and sponsoring organization.

Chairs, send volunteer hours to Becky Pinkerton, CMGtime@gmail.com

Lest We Forget

The Extension Office Gardens (2006-2011)

by Lu Allen, Barbi Briney, Peggy Hamm, Bonnie Leitch and Mary T Salmón

Interview with Beverly and Larry Williamson, co-chairs from 2006-2007

Beverly Williamson and Eva FitzGerald had worked at Lindheimer together, so when Eva moved, she talked Beverly Williamson into taking over the Extension Gardens. Beverly and her husband Larry started their leadership roles while they were building their dream house by the lake. Eva gave her master landscape plans to the Williamsons, who later passed them on to the Mahaffeys, their successors.

The gardens were divided into sections, and Beverly and Larry took the middle section from the office to the cactus bed. The Master Naturalists created the pond behind the office complex.

Besides their demanding personal schedules, there were several challenges with maintaining the gardens. Water was a continual problem. First was a lack of water, due to an absence of an irrigation system. Beverly remembers going to the Extension Office two or three times a week to water, trying to keep the existing plants alive. After Myles Peinemann's class installed the drip irrigation system, the black gumbo that had been provided never really dried, killing many of the native plants. And then there were the armadillos that just loved to dig in the damp soil.

Beverly and Larry planted several of the most loved additions to the gardens, including the firecracker plant, the grasses and bluebonnets. Other people also added plants without consulting anyone or checking with the master plan. Unfortunately, the hearty zexmenia took over the garden, and the climbing rose in front of the porch turned out to be a less-than-great idea.

The most disheartening difficulty was the dwindling help, despite the special workdays organized by CMG President Viola Espinosa. Looking back, Beverly wishes she had added sand to the gumbo and used raised beds with the new irrigation system. Beverly and Larry indicated that they learned much from that garden experience. BL

Clif Fleming, initial contributor

Born in Vermont, Clif Fleming lived and worked in three other states before finding his way to New Braunfels. After he retired, Clif became involved in the irrigation system for the Extension Gardens as part of the class project. Clif played an integral part in the irrigation system because of his extensive electrical experience.

Each section of irrigation had a control, including the cactus garden, herb garden and front garden. Each section had controller on the side of the building by the AC box. The county electrician hooked up the control box to the main power panel. From there, Clif fed low voltage lines to the controllers for each garden.

Meanwhile, other volunteers laid PVC pipe to the individual gardens. The wiring involves a massive number of wires not unlike telephone cable with red, green, yellow, white or black wires. As Clif explained, "It's just a matter of keeping your wires straight." MTS

Myles Pienemann, perennial contributor

A native of New Braunfels, Myles retired from Goodrich Aerostructures in Chula Vista, California, in 2002 and returned home. In 2004 Tim Barker recruited Myles to join the Comal Master Gardeners as a member of Class VII.

As part of their training, the class was asked to find and complete a major project. The class decided to design and install a drip irrigation system for the Extension Office Gardens. Myles was nominated to be the leader of the project. Class VII completed the drip system by their June graduation.

Myles' class was also recruited to learn about gardening by assisting in the planting and mulching of the Extension Office Gardens. Myles has continued to fulfill his volunteer hours at the Extension Gardens because he is familiar with the layout and design. The Comal Master Gardeners thank Myles for his work installing the drip system and maintaining the Extension Office Gardens and Tim for recruiting him. BB

Interview with Lynn and Mike Mahaffey, co-chairs 2007-2009

Lynn and Mike assumed co-chairmanship of the garden in front of the Extension Office Meeting Room in 2007, right after they completed their work in Class IX. They weren't even officially certified, but they had wanted to jump right in. "We didn't even have name tags," says Lynn. They wanted to do something quickly before they forgot what they had learned in class. Using their love for working in the garden and volunteer help, they dived into the cleanup, following the existing garden diagram the Williamsons had given them.

The first thing they did was to take down the sign that read, "This garden is maintained by the Comal County Master Gardeners." It was embarrassing to claim maintenance that did not exist. Identifying the existing plants was hard, because people had brought and planted anything, anywhere in the garden. Only a few plants were where they were supposed to be. The front garden plan was to have herbs, butterfly plants and native plants with identification for educational purposes.

The CMG board approved a budget for renovating and labeling the gardens. With the funds, the Mahaffeyes, Sharon Deeny and Jean Stacey went to the Wildflower Center plant sale and purchased plants. Mike's job was the "working end" reworking the beds and the watering system. Myles Peinemann helped, because he had knowledge of how the system worked. After months of hard work, the garden started to make sense and a new diagram took shape. The Mahaffeyes gave the board monthly reports, and before long butterflies and visitors were back enjoying the garden.

When the gardens looked good again, the plaque that had been removed was put back. The Mahaffeyes continued as chairs until 2008. VE



Interview with Linda Valdez, co-chair 2009-present

Linda Valdez transferred to the Comal Master Gardeners in 2009 after visiting a few meetings. As Linda explained, "Because learning about butterflies is one of my passions, I immediately hooked up with the Bulverde Spring Branch Library Butterfly Garden and was welcomed by Peggy Hamm."

Donna Welch organized the first planning meeting for the AgriLife Extension Gardens, held September 15, 2009, which was attended by about fifteen people. Linda wanted to help with the extension gardens because she lives close by in Garden Ridge. She learned that several different chairmen for the previous two years had become discouraged because the run off from the land behind the building had washed away much of their work, and the gardens were in need of help.

Donna discussed many options for the gardens. Linda shared her experience with the extensive thematic gardens from

Victoria County. Members discussed many options for gardens at the meeting, but the most important issue was selecting a chairman for the gardens. Without leadership, the gardens would remain the way they were, so, even though she was new and unknown, Linda volunteered to be chair.

The board indicated that the project would be a short-term one. Six other people showed up to help at the first workday: Jodi Hawthorne, Sally Ann Hnatiuk, Linda Ray, Lois Ricci, Karen Scherrer and Jan Womack. First item on the agenda after introductions was to select a co-chairman; Sally Ann Hnatiuk volunteered. In spring 2010, the board made the design committee the permanent Extension Gardens committee.

The committee meets two or three times a month depending on projects. It took the first year just to clean up the gardens. Then the workers waited to see what plants would emerge after the first winter. Now that they are aware of what exists, they look forward to expanding the vegetation in all the areas.

Knowing that the run off was a prime problem, the committee added a dry creek bed to divert the unwanted water. The gardens also included an ugly drive way to the back exit of the meeting room. Sally Ann and Linda wanted to convert it to a walkway to help reroute the water. County Agent Glenn Avriett agreed to the plan as long as there was a way to get to the back exit. The committee laid down sand, brought in crushed granite and laid donated pavers. The Master Naturalists donated a wooden bridge that spans from the walk way to the back of the gardens where the committee is planning shade gardens.

Once the long-planned-for berm was approved, Glenn got the road crew to dump dirt nearby. A sorely needed water harvesting system is in the planning stages.

The committee made two islands around the oak trees in November 2010 and mulched them. There were several problems meeting the requirements of the Environmental Health Inspector. After this experience, Sally Ann and Linda decided that was best to talk to the inspector before making any more changes. This spring the committee will add more plant material under the island that has no mulch and add two swings from the branches of the oak trees. PH

Interview and Tour of the Extension Office Gardens with Sally Ann Hnatiuk, co-chair 2009-present

A member of Class IX, Sally Ann Hnatiuk began working with co-chair Linda Valdez in the Extension Office Gardens in 2010. They decided to make a short and long term plan. The short-term plan started with cleaning up the gardens. The long-term plan included making the area display gardens for the general public. In the future, people who call the Ask-a-Master-Gardener Helpline with questions about plants and gardening will be given the opportunity to see a demonstration garden. The committee is now in the process of developing a database that documents the plants and installing larger tags so the plants can be more readily identified.

One of Sally Ann's special interests is cacti of all sorts, so the tour began with the cactus garden. At one time the cactus garden contained a very old, large century plant that finally bloomed and died. The dead plant was so large that to remove it involved a chain saw, a chain and a pickup. Sometimes brute force is the only way to garden. Most of the cacti in the garden had been planted earlier, but the new committee added some more. The crushed glass in the garden around the cacti plants still looked nice, so workers just added more.

Then the Extension Office gardeners added flat stepping-stones and crushed granite and sand. This area contains many native plants that attract butterflies, bees and other wildlife. At the time of the tour, the poppies and bluebonnets were already beginning to bloom.

Next came a tour of the herb garden, which has several herbs planted and tagged with markers naming each one. There were yarrow, lavender, artemesia, oregano, basil, Mexican mint marigolds, garlic, purple coneflowers and roses loaded with buds.

The next part of our tour led back of the office. This area experiences tremendously damaging runoff when the rains come. To help with this problem CMGs have built a berm along the back of the property and are going to plant native grasses on it. They are developing both a one and a five-year plan for this part of the property.

Because of county and state regulations, the committee has to be careful when working on an Extension Office building project. Larry Williamson was able to get approval for the berm. The committee must work with a state inspector responsible for the aerobic septic system located there. Sally Ann said they make sure they know and follow the rules, because there are so many restrictions involved. They don't want to put something in and find out later that it has to be ripped up. LA

For the Extension Garden committee, the gardens are a work in progress.

Throughout the last year, the newsletter staff has recorded the oral history of Comal Master Gardeners' seven volunteer projects at the Lindheimer Home, New Braunfels Conservation Plaza, New Life's Butterfly Garden, Hope Hospice, the Comal County Fairgrounds, Bulverde-Spring Branch Library's Butterfly Garden and the AgriLife Extension Office. The stories reflected the good companionship of hard work on a shared goal. What has been most striking to the staff, however, is the dedication of the many volunteer gardeners as they strove to make a part of Comal County more beautiful and enjoyable.

Plans Continue for Herb Affair

The 9th Annual Herb Affair will be held on Saturday, May 7 from 9:30 am – 3 pm at the Antique Rose Emporium. The Herb of the Year is horseradish. Based on the "Horse Theme," the event's color scheme is blue denim and yellow, with blue and yellow bandannas, horseshoes, barbwire, cowboy boots and rustic Texas stars. CMGs are asked to contact Catherine Hall if they have decorative items that fit this year's theme. Patty Malek will be contacting the new class to ask them to make specific herb cookies and herbal tea for the Herb Affair.

The Herb Affair Committee would be honored if all Comal Master Gardeners attended. Attendees will experience nature printing, all kinds of basil, tasting herb cookies, herb teas and pestos featuring the Herb of the Year – horseradish. There will be drying and preserving herbs, herbal cleaners and herbal facial cleansers. Learn more about hot weather herbs and hummingbirds. Bring a friend or your mom because it's the Saturday before Mother's Day! Everyone in attendance will receive an informative Herb Booklet.

Marilyn Godwin and Karen Scherrer want to thank the Comal Master Gardeners for making this one of the most successful educational outreach programs of the year.

CMG Class Trainees Work to Complete Studies and Service Hours

Twenty-seven trainees are continuing to attend class each Wednesday, with sixteen of them attending Harold Voges' continuing hands-on training about vegetable gardens. Inspired by the examples of Dan Krueger and Gaylon Lee, who have completed all their volunteer hours, the remaining class members are fulfilling their service hours in the gardens, Ask-a-Master-Gardener Help Line and other service projects. According to Carol McWilliams and Cathy Wonish, coordinators of the class, "We have an excellent group of new CMG members in the making." The trainees have only five more classes before their May 11 graduation at the Grist Mill in Gruene.

Speaker's Bureau Report

March's Speakers Bureau report failed to mention that Jan Waguespack arranged a New Braunfels Library gardening series program by Matt Warnock Turner presenting "Remarkable Plants of Texas." The programs drew a crowd of 45 guests, and 17 CMGs. This month's program featuring speaker Bill Kniffen on "Rain Water Harvesting" had to be postponed because of a family emergency, but Jan hopes to reschedule it.

Programs at the Bulverde Spring Branch Library included a talk by Lee Franzel on "Butterfly Photography," with photographs by Charlotte Trussell. Don Tuff presented his program on "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" there, as well. The Tye Preston Library hosted Michael and Donna Welch's presentation on "Spring Vegetable Gardening." Other presentations included Don Tuff on "IPM (Integrated Pest Management) and Pesticides," Michael and Donna Welch on "Spring Vegetable Gardening" and Richard and Nancy Wackerbarth on "Propagation Lab," for the Comal Master Gardening class.

Presenters in March also included Richard Bradley speaking about "Composting," Barbara Briney on "Container Growing," Lee Franzel presenting a program on "Native and Adapted Plants for the TX Hill County" and Linda Valdez's "On Gardening for Butterflies." Another new member of the Speaker's Bureau is Germaine Tuff. She gave her first presentation on "Yard Gardening," for 45 guests at a local garden club.

There were twelve presentations in March with a total of 368 Guests and 41 Master Gardeners getting CE credit. Grand totals for the year are 1060 guests and 137 Master Gardeners attending for CE credit.

Herb SIG Meeting Report

Twenty-one people attended the tour at Mary Dunford's Nature's Herb Farm on Saturday, March 12. Herb SIG members learned all about making special soil mixes from Ms. Dunford. They also learned about the farm's potting machine and water retention system. In the business for 28 years, the farm is a herb supplier to major supermarkets in the area. Those interested may purchase herbs at the farm.

April Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

This article would be much shorter if I listed what NOT to plant this month. April is the month for gardeners and wildlife lovers! *The Farmers Almanac* says we will have cooler-than-normal temperatures with more rain than normal, too. For those of you still delaying your planting because of that last surprise freeze, go for it! Jump in with both feet. I'm going by the *Almanac*; it hasn't failed me since last September! Here is the list of what to plant this month:

Vegetable seeds: radishes, peas, beets, chard, okra, cantaloupe, sweet corn, cucumber, eggplant, pumpkin and watermelon. I'm trying the Three Sisters concept in one of my raised beds this season: corn, beans and squash growing together in self-sustaining harmony. Corn provides a natural pole for bean vines to climb. Beans provide the extra nitrogen through their roots for demanding corn plants and stabilize the stalks in our heavy winds. Squash vines cover the soil for natural mulch. At the end of the season, all this can be chopped and composted, providing a very healthy soil for the next go-round.

Vegetable plants: eggplant, peppers, summer squash, sweet potato slips, tomatillos and – if you haven't already – tomatoes. Remember, it's supposed to be both cooler and wetter than normal this month. This may be the year for those elusive tomatoes folks! I'm trying one *Celebrity* this year. I know, I'm behind the pack on this one, but I'm afraid I've become a bit of an heirloom snob, so I'm trying to branch out. I still planted my favorite *Black Krim*, however.

Herbs seeds and plants: Too many to list! Try a few scented geraniums this year. The assortment of scents and mini-orchid-like blooms are fascinating. *Orange Fizz*, *Woodsy Nutmeg*, *Lemon Rose* or *Citrosa*, the mosquito plant, are just a few examples worth planting. Geraniums can also be grown indoors in a semi-sunny window.

Annual flowers/ornamental seeds: castor bean, celosia, cleome, coleus, coreopsis, cosmos, cypress or hummingbird vine, gourds, hyacinth bean vine, impatiens and marigolds. My four o'clock and my *Grandpa Ott* morning glory both returned from last year, in spades!

Ornamental grasses: There are more choices in grasses than just pampas. *Zebra grass* is striking during the summer with its white and green stripes. As a bonus, its numerous plumes shoot up like fireworks in the fall. This is a beautiful multi-seasonal grass that has done very well in my yard through the past two freezing winters. Our native, deer-resistant, *inland sea oats* give a whimsical look with their wheat-like plumes. I can almost hear them jingle when the wind blows. *The Natural Gardener* lists purple fountain grass under its "annual" heading. Before the last two winters I would have disagreed, but now sadly I still consider them gorgeous but also "tender."

Fertilize: Time to feed your established plants, trees and lawn.

Be on the Lookout: With all the gorgeous color come aphids, whiteflies, thrips, stinkbugs and ants! Organic growers, arm yourselves with insecticidal soap, orange oil and, for the difficult critters, pyrethrin. For those who like more conventional methods, look for hydramethylnon and malathion. Bon gardening!

April 2011 Gardening Opportunities

Friday, April 1 – Tuesday, May 31. 9 am – 5:30 pm. "Wildflower Days Begin." Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin. For information, see www.wildflower.org

Friday – Sunday in April. "2011 Wildflower Celebration." Wildseed Farms & Pedernales River Valley will host the 11th annual celebration. Chuckwagon-style dutch oven biscuits available for sampling our jams and jellies. All day on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Wildseed Farms, Frericksburg.

Saturday April 9 & Sunday, April 10. 9 am – 5 pm. Wildflower Center's "Spring Plant Sale and Gardening Festival." Did your garden suffer from record drought and heavy freezes? Time for a refill. At this event you can choose from over 270 species of Texas native plants. The event also features artists and authors signing their works in the store, guided walks and talks and tips for your garden from experts. Admission: \$8 adults, \$7 seniors and students, \$4 UT faculty, staff or students with identification, \$3 children 5 – 12, members and children under 5 free. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin.

Saturday, April 9. 10 – 11 am. "Native Plant Walks at San Antonio Botanical Garden." Explore the 11-acre "Texas Native Trail" with a Master Naturalist. Stroll along the "Hill Country Trail" in search of Texas snowbells, mountain laurel, and other plants adapted to the rocky, alkaline soils. On the shaded walk around the lake in our "East Texas Pineywoods," you'll observe acid-loving woodland species such as magnolia, sweetgum, and sassafras. The "South Texas Trail" showcases dry land trees and shrubs such as mesquite, huisache, cenizo, ebony, and sotol. Come take a "walk across Texas!" San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. For information, call 210- 207-3250.

Saturday, April 9, 10 am – 2 pm. "Viva Botanica!" A Garden Fiesta for the whole family will be celebrated at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. Start the fun with a children's parade and the first-ever Fiesta Flower Court. Bring your decorated stroller or red wagon and wear your finest botanical-inspired Fiesta attire. Everyone can learn the "Botanical Shuffle" and participate in the parades! Two parades are

scheduled – at 11 am and at 1 pm. Celebrity judges will choose a Fiesta Flower Court King and Queen at both parades. Many other prizes will be awarded as well. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston.

Wednesday, April 20, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Raven Star Outdoor Education will present The Gruene Planet Gala celebrating Earth Day at the Gruene Door Store in Gruene Village. For more information contact Kelley Clifford at 830-626-1776 or director@ravenstaroutdoors.org

Wednesday, April 27. 10 am. “Math in Nature: Quantitative Critters,” at RavenStar. Put on those thinking caps and garden gloves and head into the creepy crawly world of compost. Use the scientific method to make observations about the critters who call compost home, collect data and create an ecological survey for the Torrey Park Compost. You will also learn how to build a compost pile in your backyard. \$5.00 for ages 4 and up. RavenStar Outdoor Recreation at Torrey Park, New Braunfels. For information, call or email Kelley (830-626-1776 or education@ravenstaroutdoors.org)

Saturdays and Sundays, Ongoing, 8 am – 4 pm. Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Closed Holidays. Weekdays by appointment. Explore a place just minutes from downtown San Antonio. The entrance gate to the center is located on Moursund Blvd. Take Loop 410, Exit 46, Moursund Blvd and go south 0.7 mile, to 10750 Pleasanton Rd. The gate is on the left. Call 210-628-1639 or email mlac@audubon.org

Ongoing, 9:30 am – 6 pm. Butterfly Haus at Wildseed Farms, Fredericksburg. Hundreds of native Texas butterflies inhabit the 3,000 square foot Butterfly Haus. Open 7 days a week. Call 800-848-0078 for more information.

Saturdays, Ongoing, 9:00 am. Lawn and Garden Show, KWED Radio 1580 AM. Call the Show and get your gardening question answered on the air: 830-372-1580 or 1-800-361-1580.

Wednesdays and Saturdays, Ongoing, 9 am - 1 pm. Boggy Creek Farm. Open Year-Round. For more information, go to <http://www.boggycreekfarm.com/>

April 2011 CE Opportunities

Friday April 1 & Saturday, April 16, 10 – 11 am. “Watersaver Walk.” Information about planning, planting and maintaining low water use landscape year-round. San Antonio Botanical Garden Guides, 555 Funston. Free with admission to SABOT. For information call 210-207-3261. **1 CE**

Wednesday, April 6, 1:30 – 5 pm. Class 12a: “Wildscapes — Gardening for Wildlife in Your Landscape” (1:30 – 2:30 pm) by Kelly Bender, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Class 12b: Landscape Trees: “Planting and Pruning; Best Trees for South Central Texas.” (3 – 5 pm) by Mark Peterson. Comal County Extension Office, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels. 830-620-3440. **3 CE**

Thursday, April 7, 10 am - Noon. “Landscape Design,” by Kimberly Wolf, landscape architect. Kimberly explains how she and her team designed the entry courtyard at Bulverde/Spring Branch Library. Attendees will be able to see the entry garden at its best with bluebonnets and other plants blooming into spring. All the plants are native or adapted and show how design skill can take a flat rectangle and create excellent landscape art. Homeowners will benefit from ideas found in this landscape. PowerPoint with Q & A. Bulverde/Spring Branch Library. Free. **1.5 CE**

Wednesday, April 13, 1:30 – 5 pm. Master Gardener Class 13a: “Turf Grasses, Lawn Care” by Dennis Hale, County Agent for Wilson County, Texas AgriLife Extension Services, & Class 13b: “Grass Diseases” by R. Glenn Aviett, County Agent. Comal County Extension Office, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels. 830-620-3440. **3 CE**

Saturday, April 16, 10 – 11 am. “What Makes Heirloom Plants So Great,” by Judy Barrett. Antique Rose Emporium, 7561 Evans Road. Free. For information call 210-651-4565. **1 CE**

Saturday, April 16, 10 am – Noon. “Organic Gardening Basics,” by Michelle Gorham. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Fee \$35. Register: 210-657-8866, or <http://www.communityed.neisd.net> **2 CE**

Saturday, April 16, 9 am – Noon. “Fruit Tree Grafting Seminar,” Fanick’s Garden Center, by Dr. Larry Stein, Ph.D., Horticulturist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service. He will demonstrate grafting of various fruit trees. Bring your questions on the care and planting fruiting trees and bushes. This is a popular event; come early for best seating and parking options. Bring folding chairs if you cannot stand for all of the grafting demonstration in Fanick’s Orchard. Admission is free. Fanick’s Garden Center, 1025 Holmgreen Rd. San Antonio. For more information, email <http://www.fanicknursery.com/Seminars.htm> or call 210-467-6575. **3 CE**

Monday, April 18, Noon – 3 pm. “GVST Essentials of Gardening: Rejuvenating Tired Landscapes; Discovering New Plants for Texas,” by Randy Rodger, Blue Heron Designs, & Dr Jerry Parsons. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels. \$5 donation. Call 251-8101 or email info@gardeningvolunteers.com **3 CE**

Wednesday, April 20. 1:30 – 5 pm. Master Gardener Class 14: “Herbs,” by Patty Godfrey, CMG, Herb Specialist. Class will be held at Patty’s home. **3 CE**

Thursday, April 21. 3 – 5 pm. “Butterfly Gardening and Photography,” by Comal gardener Charlotte Trussell. Outstanding PowerPoint photos of butterflies found in Comal County and tips on how attendees can get great photos of their own nectar seekers. Also, information about plants for butterfly larva and nectar. Free. Tye Preston Memorial Library. **1.5 CE**

Thursday, April 21, 1 – 3 pm. Bexar Co. Master Gardeners Educational Seminar: “Roses of Yesterday and Today,” by Ed Bradley. Antique Rose Emporium, 7561 Evans Road. Call Angel for information: 210-467-6575. **2 CE**

Wednesday, April 27, 1:30 – 5 pm. Master Gardener Class 15: “Plant Diseases and their Management: Comments on Oak Wilt.” by Dr. Mark Black, Extension Plant Pathologist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service—Uvalde County. Comal County Extension Office, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels, Texas. 830-620-3440. **3 CE**

Wednesday, April 27 , 3 - 4:30 pm. “Designing An Herbal Landscape,” by Diane Lewis. Monthly Gardening Series at the New Braunfels Public Library, 700 E. Common. Diane is a noted herbalist, lecturer and member of the San Antonio Herb Society. She is a professional landscaper who uses herbs in her designs. Free. No preregistration. Contact: 830-964-4494. **1.5 CE**

April 2011 On-Line CEU Offering:

Ohio State University Plant Pathology Training Course. It is labeled “New Non-Credit Course: Sick Plants in a Hungry World.” What is this course? It is a ten module (not highly technical) information course you take at your own pace, within a ten week time limit after starting, at a cost of \$35. Time spent on your computer taking the modules, reading the supplied reading assignments, and taking the self-tests, can count as Master Gardener Advanced Training hours. To learn more about the class, go to: Online Plant Pathology Training Course Info. To register for the class, visit: Online Plant Pathology Training Course Registration. **CE based on completion of course.**

National Gardening Association’s horticulturists created the Learning Garden, a series of online courses on plants and gardening for every gardener. The course fees range from \$14.95 (for Perennials, Vegetables & Annual Flowers) to \$35 (for Botany I, Botany II.). Go to <http://store.yahoo.com/nga-gardenshop/lg.html> CE base on credit earned.

Cornell University, Department of Horticulture, offers Organic Gardening, an on-line 8-week course. The course covers one topic during each of the 8 weeks. With a strong foundation in soil health and its impact on plant health, students then explore tried-and-true and cutting-edge techniques for all different kinds of garden plants – annuals and perennials, food plants and ornamentals. Be prepared to spend 2-4 hours a week completing the course. Being an active participant in the discussion boards brings the subject to life, and enriches the learning for all. This course is aimed at those with some basic gardening experience. It includes a number of hands-on activities as well as a group discussion board, quizzes, and readings. Through on-line discussion students share their experiences and contribute to everyone's learning experience. Cost: \$300. The course is non-credit. Certificate of completion to all who participate and finish the course. <http://hort.cals.cornell.edu/cals/hort/teaching/distance-learning/organic-gardening.cfm>
CE based on completion of course.

TAMU AgriLife Extension's Earth Kind program has on-line curriculum presenting core information on environmental stewardship with 12 on-line training modules. Progress is tracked automatically, and results are forwarded to the MG Coordinator. Go to <http://earthkind.tamu.edu/MGtraining.html>. **CE based on class hours, unless otherwise specified by course.**

Horticulture Gardening Institute at Michigan State University in partnership with **Learn 2Grow**. Fees range from \$19.99 to \$29.99 per course. On-line courses of the titles range from specialty topics and general gardening how-to's. Go to <http://www.gardeninginstitute.com>. **CE credit based on proof of completion of course.**

Irrigation Tutorials. Free. Tutorials provide information on sprinkler/drip irrigation design, installation, filters, pumping systems & scheduling. Go to <http://www.irrigationtutorials.com> **CE based on completion of course.**

University of Vermont, non-credit course, "Herbaceous Garden Plants On-line," which covers common annual & perennial flowers of temperate climates and herbaceous garden plant groups (ornamental grasses, roses, aquatics, ferns, bulbs, & wildflowers). Self-paced & available for one year following receipt of access codes. Course fee: \$99; notes and CD: \$10. <http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/hgpo/hgpo.htm>. **CE credit based on proof of completion of course.**

Virginia Tech. Annuals and Perennials. Diane Relf, Professor. The course is self-paced and is available for one year following registration. This lesson provides an introduction to annuals and perennials. Successful completion of the lesson requires no prior knowledge of the subject area. This course is a collection of resources categorized by annuals, bulbs, perennials, and monthly gardening tips. Upon completion of this lesson you should be able to:

- Understand the specific needs of annuals, perennials, and bulbs.
- Cultivate healthy gardens by properly sowing, handling, and propagating plants.
- Utilize each month of the year to foster attractive, blooming flowers.
- Creatively design flower beds using color, a variety of gardening techniques, and proper care for specific plant needs. <http://alumni.iddl.vt.edu/course.php?id=325>

\$25. 1 CE with proof of completion of course.

Dept of Horticulture at Cornell University offers on-line lectures, virtual field trips, discussion, & quizzes to engage you in history, botanical principles, & horticultural applications. <http://hosts.cce.cornell.edu/hortdl/> **CE based on completion of course**

Online Botany Module offered by Oregon State University Extension Service; excellent Basic Botany refresher. <http://irrigationtutorials.com/> Free Irrigation Tutorials provide information on sprinkler/drip

irrigation design, installation, filters, pumping systems & scheduling.
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/botany/> CE based on completion of course

Iowa State University offers an online, non-credit course Horticultural Series; see website for dates.
<http://www.lifelearner.iastate.edu/learners/hortOnlie.htm> CE based on completion of course

CMG Committee Reports

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 6th at 10 am.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The AgriLife Extension Gardens will meet at 8 am on April 5th, the 1st Tuesday, and April 19th, the 3rd Tuesday, barring rain. Members of the committee and the new class will receive an email on the Sunday before each workday explaining jobs and supplies. Anyone interested in working in the extension gardens should email Linda Valdez (ldvaldez@satx.rr.com) or Sally Ann Hnatiuk (mustang_sally6@msn.com) for work assignments. See you in the gardens.

NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION PLAZA GARDENS

The Conservation Plaza Rose Garden workdays will be on Wednesday, April 13th at 9 am. There will be one workday this month. Contact Germaine Tuff (830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com) if you have questions or plan to bring a wheelbarrow.

BUTTERFLY GARDENS AT THE BULVERDE/SPRING BRANCH LIBRARY

Bulverde/Spring Branch Library Butterfly Garden workday is the 4th Thursday of each month. Our next workday will be Thursday, April 28th at 9 am. Contact Peggy Hamm (khamma@gvvc.com) or Lee Franzel (lee Franzel@gvvc.com) for more information.

NEW LIFE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Butterfly Garden workday is the third Monday, April 18th at 9 am. For more information, contact Lois Ricci (poepjr@aol.com or 830-899-5362).

HOSPICE NEW BRAUNFELS

Hope Hospice workday will be Wednesday, April 20th at 9:45 am. For information, contact Harlan Kraft (210-846-5643 or harlankraft@gmail.com).

KIDS IN BLOOM

If you would like to participate in the training class or become active in the school gardens program contact Nancy Pappas (azop@gvvc.com/ or 210-385-5981) or Alba Johannessen (2Johans@sbcglobal.net) to coordinate with a school near you.

COMAL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS GARDEN

The Fairgrounds Committee will meet Thursday, April 21st at 9 am at the Grant Street Gardens. Committee members will receive an email memo. For more information, contact Aleta Meyer (aleta_meyer@hotmail.com or 830-629-2929) or Jane Langley (830-620-4264).

LINDHEIMER GARDENS

The Lindheimer Garden workday will be Tuesday, April 12th at 9 am. Workers will probably be working on general maintenance. Contact Germaine Tuff (830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com) if you have questions.

NEWSLETTER

The planning meeting for the April issue will be Wednesday, April 6 at 11 am at JW Marriot in San Antonio. Contact Editor Bonnie Leitch (830-660-2335 or bleitch@earthlink.net) for information about the meeting or contributing to the newsletter. If you have any information about gardening activities that should be in the newsletter, contact Julie Siliven (rejhs@gvtc.com or 830-885-2665).

WEBSITE

Check the website on-line at <http://txmg.org/comal> for everything you need to know.

Comal Gardener

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Comal Master Gardeners Association Bylaws

“Members must complete recertification once every year. Recertification will include 12 hours of training, 12 hours of approved volunteer work and attendance at a minimum of two general membership meetings.” (Article III, Section 4)

Post the following calendar for easy reference to April CMG activities.

APRIL 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4	5 8 am Ext Office Gardens	6 10 am Exec Board Mtg 11 am Newsletter Committee at JW Marriott Class 12 a/b Wildscapes	7	8	9
10	11	12 9 am Lindheimer Gardens	13 9 am Conservation Plaza Gardens Class 13 a/b Grasses/Disease	14	15	16
17 3 – 5 pm Comal Master Gardeners Annual Picnic at Lindheimer	18 9 am New Life Garden 10 am Herb SIG Mtg	19 8 am Ext Office Gardens	20 9:45 am Hope Hospice Class 14 Herbs Patty Godfrey's Home	21 9 am County Fairground Gardens Grant St	22	23
24	25	26	27 Class 15 Plant Diseases	28 9 am Bulverde SB Library	29	30