



August 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 XIV

<http://txmg.org/comal>

Number 2

CMG Thanks Glenn!

Glenn Avriett, County Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, retires at the end of this month. Glenn has been the CMG sponsoring agent since 2004. He has assisted in guiding our organization and has become a good friend to many of the members. Glenn is spending his last month on the job still helping CMG, by making sure that CMG has a fence and water source installed for the new vegetable garden before he leaves.

CMG President Mike Welch asks that Comal Master Gardeners join in honoring Glenn at a dinner from 6 to 7 pm before the August membership meeting on August 22. The organization will present Glenn a money tree gift; members can give to the tree at the August meeting. Send an RSVP to Pat Williford (830-885-6762 or r033@gvvc.com) by August 15 if you plan to come to the dinner so a count can be made for the meal.

In addition, the Extension Office staff is planning a farewell party for Thursday, August 25 from 4 to 6 pm. The staff asks that CMGs come and join in saying farewell to Glenn at that time.

CMG thanks Glenn for all he has done for the organization and wishes him best wishes upon his retirement.

It's Fair Time!

For Comal Master Gardeners, the Comal County Fair time means three very different experiences: attending the annual fajita social at the CMG fair site garden, participating in the County Fair Parade and helping staff the CMG booth that the organization hosts at the fair.

Fajita Social: The annual CMG Fajita Social at the fairgrounds CMG gardens will be on Sunday, September 18 at 6:30 pm, near the Grant Street entrance. If it rains, the picnic will be held under the covered food court.

County Fair Time! cont'd on Page 2

CMG General Membership Meeting

6 pm Monday, August 22

Retirement Dinner for County Extension Agent Glenn Avriett followed by
Presentation on Groundwater and Wells Management by John Hoyt, *Edwards Aquifer Authority*
Place: *GVTC*

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.

It's Fair Time from Page 1

Wil Voges and Dave Keeler will grill their famous beef and chicken fajitas. The fairground committee will provide tortillas and tea. Those attending are asked to bring a potluck dish that complements the fajitas, any additional beverages and if you wish, a lawn chair. There are picnic tables in both areas.

All CMG members and their families are invited. Please contact Aleta Meyer (aleta_meyer@hotmail.com or 830-629-2929/830-660-5132) or Sharon Wright (sharonawright@att.net or 830-606-6027) if you have large tables that you can bring to the social. Sign up sheets will be available at the August CMG meeting. Contact Aleta or Sharon if you have questions or wish to sign up late.

Parade float: CMG will be entering a float in the Comal County Fair Parade that will take place Friday, September 23 at 10 am. The float has become a great way to spread the news about the organization and to participate in the civic life of the community. CMGs accompany the float and hand out information about the upcoming class. This year Mike and Donna Welch are the head honchos for this project. If you are interested in participating in decorating the float and the parade itself, contact Mike or Donna at welch580@yahoo.com.

Information booth: CMG will set up its annual information booth at the Comal County Fair again this year. The CMG booth will be open on Friday, September 23 and Saturday, September 24 from noon to 6 pm and on Sunday, September 25 from noon to 4 pm. To help staff the booth, sign up to work a 2-hour segment and receive a free pass to the fair for that day at the August meeting of by calling Aleta Meyer or Sharon Wright.

Visitors to the booth can receive 4-inch potted plants, seeds, gardening knowledge and information about the Comal Master Gardener program and our next class. Please help with this endeavor by starting cuttings and bagging seeds. Be sure to label them. You can take your plants and seeds for the Fairgrounds Gardens at the Grant Street entrance after noon on Friday or Saturday.

A couple of years ago some of our members gave short educational lectures during the fair. If you are interested in talking about a topic like mulching, worm composting or perhaps a short segment on drip irrigation, contact either Aleta or Sharon so they can set up times and information to provide to the *New Braunfels Herald Zeitung*.

Anyone needing 4-inch pots, having extra pots to donate or wanting to volunteer at the CMG Fairgrounds Garden booth, contact Aleta (aleta_meyer@hotmail.com or 830-629-2929/830-660-5132) or Sharon (sharonawright@att.net or 830-606-6027).

Speakers' Bureau Report

The Speakers Bureau added Alba Johannassen and Richard Wackerbarth as presenters this summer in the public schools. Alba spoke in June, and in July Richard talked about "Garden Basics" to 45 fourth and fifth graders. Eight adults attended both presentations. Linda Ray delivered a presentation to the Bulverde Garden Club on "Harvesting and Drying Herbs" with 17 guests in attendance. Lee Franzel presented a PowerPoint program to the Canyon Lake United Methodist Church's adult group on "Native and Adapted Plants for the Texas Hill Country." Twenty-one people attended this talk and asked many questions during the two-hour presentation. Lee sold eight Grow Green books. The Speaker's Bureau will increase community outreach once the fall starts.

Report your CE and Volunteer Hours!

Chairs, send volunteer hours to Linda Ray at lray@satx.rr.com

Send your CE hours to Don Tuff at 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.

•••Garden Posts•••

- The August Herb SIG will meet at 10 am on August 8 at the Extension Office. The program features Martha Joyce, our own Comal County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences, who will present a program on canning foods at home. Martha will highlight proper and safe techniques that avoid bacteria and other problems. She will emphasize the use of herbs and demonstrate the preparation of rose petal jelly. This feature is especially timely because the 2012 herb of the year is the rose. The Herb SIG is open to ALL Comal Master Gardeners and their friends.
- Congratulations to Liz Harlan and John Richie, 2011 CMG Class members, for achieving Master Gardener certification and becoming members of the organization.
- During the July general meeting, CMG President Mike Welch presented Sharon Deeny and Viola Espinosa with their 5-year pins and Mikki Tharp her 10-year pin. Class 1 members Marlene Skaggs and Ray Elizondo belatedly received their 10-year pins. Susan Rench received her 5-year pin *in absentia*. Thank all of you Comal Master Gardeners for your invaluable service to our organization!
- Get your 2011-12 dues for \$20 (individual), \$25 (with mailed newsletter) or \$35 (couple) to Treasurer Rosalie Meier. Dues must be paid by September 1. Make your check to “Comal Master Gardeners.”
- Background checks must be requested by September 1 to remain a Comal Master Gardener. Get the correct form on the CMG website (<http://txmg.org/comal/staying-connected/cm-g-forms/>). The name of the form is Volunteer Background Check Interactive. Make check payable to “4H Fund” and return to Marie Atkinson at the Extension Office.
- President-Elect Carol McWilliams, bylaws committee chair, welcomes Karen Scherrer and Evelyn Nielson to the by-laws committee. They will join present committee members Myles Peinemann and Willie Hagen.

The Joint's A-Jumpin'

There are three new recently formed CMG committees: the Gardening Calendar Committee, the Extension Office Vegetable/Rose Garden Planning Committee and the Garden Seminar Planning Committee. If you are looking for a new challenge and a chance to work with great people, choose the one that strikes your fancy and get involved.

The Gardening Calendar Committee Meeting is planning to produce a gardener's calendar for the local area. The nine members have volunteered for a month of the calendar, so the committee needs at least three more members. The next meeting will be on Monday, August 15, at 1 pm at the Extension Office Classroom. The meeting's agenda involves deciding the best places to sell the calendars and attention grabbing design ideas. For more information, contact Sonja Howard (830-964-4618 or sonja.howard@gmail.com) or Juleen Randall (mom2sky@hotmail.com or 512-749-2587).

The CMG board is planning a seminar on Backyard Vegetable and Herb Gardening for members and the general public on February 11, 2012 at the NB Convention Center. The next planning meeting will be on Tuesday, August 30 from 9 am to noon, at the Extension Office Classroom. Call Rich Bradley (830-980-2081 or mbrad@gvtc.com) or Jan Waguespack (830-964-4494 or jwag@gvtc.com) for more information.

The Extension Office Vegetable/Rose Garden Planning Committee will not meet this month but meet again September 13 from 10 am to noon. If you are interested in this project, call Mike or Donna Welch (welch580@yahoo.com or 830-237-2294).

A Lesson in Xeriscape from the Pros, Part I

by Carmen Butts, Viola Espinosa, Mary T Salmón and Margo Woollven

The theme this month and next was prompted by our present historic drought and a newsletter writer's comment a couple of months ago. As we were all moaning over our desiccated gardens, she mentioned that she always checked out the landscape on commercial businesses to see what their professional gardeners were planting. So we decided to go through the county, checking on the way the pros cope with the lack of rain while fulfilling our love of natural beauty.

Town Center at Creekside



New Braunfels is expanding north. First housing communities north of Gruene developed. Then gated communities started eating up open land on Hunter Road and north of Hoffman Lane. As expected, medical facilities and doctors followed with Commons Street changing into medical row.

It was only a matter of time before shopping centers followed. One large shopping facility is off of I-35 and FM 306. Town Center at Creekside is a major hub for one-stop shopping. Creekside is called the gateway to New Braunfels, Canyon Lake, Schlitterbahn, Gruene and the New Braunfels airport.

There is always heated debate when outside companies come and change the environment by cutting trees and covering what used to be fields. To

lessen the ecological blows to nature, New Braunfels' city council implemented environmental constraints that included water detention and natural landscaping. One result is the landscaping at Town Center at Creekside.

What is pleasing to the eye is not immediately seen from the car when approaching the shopping center. The entrance has a lot of hidden treasures. If you want to explore and possibly spend relaxing down time, you must park at the first set of buildings and walk around to the back. There you will find babbling brooks, a waterfall, a pond and several benches. Although not actively used yet, it is most attractive and inviting.

The majority of landscaping is native and drought tolerant. The spectacular roses are Knockouts. There is an abundance of native grasses, lantanas, desert willows, ground covers, salvias and blooming plants. All landscaping is mulched with cedar or crushed granite. Drip irrigation has been installed using copper piping. My efforts to identify the landscaping crew were fruitless. Xeriscaping predominates, but I have yet to see a crew dead-heading. Plants are not identified by signage, but would attract more visitors if they were, along with signage leading customers to the water feature. MTS

A Visual Invitation to Old New Braunfels

Pat and Becky Wiggins, owners of McAdoo's Restaurant and the Market Place Mall, have enriched several spots around New Braunfels by planting a variety of native plants along with hardy non-natives. McAdoo's is especially interesting for serious gardeners to look at and learn from.

Becky Wiggins is an interior designer and landscape wholesaler. Her design genius around McAdoo's Restaurant and the parking lot on the corners of Castell Avenue and West Mill Street turned otherwise hot, barren cement and asphalt into walk ways with the feel of a nature trail. Purists might not appreciate the use of non-natives like crape myrtles and sago palms mixed with natives, but the textures and colors work well with the restored Old Post Office Building.

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Xeriscape like the Pros from Page 4

In the parking lot across the street, Becky used cactus, grasses and blooming plants like esperanzas. Rocks and crushed granite mixed with native plants line the West Mill Street side. The other side of the lot houses the old Winn's Store building and is dressed up with containers and a wire sculpture on the side of the building to support Confederate jasmine.

Along are Shrubs highlighted along the sides of McAdoo's include blackfoot daisies, daylilies, Japanese ferns and sago palms that add textures and colors. The patio continues the garden motif, making it a comfortable, inviting place to visit. The Wiggins thoughtfully created a lovely setting for a popular eatery in New Braunfels, and their maintenance and upkeep of the Market Place Mall with cactus and grasses also dressed up an otherwise hot, desolate parking lot. CB

Green Gruene

On any given summer day in Gruene next to Gruene Hall, visitors wander among the whiskey barrels overflowing with colorful flowers. They stop to take pictures, using the bright colors as part of their background as they snap a memory of their visit. Annual periwinkle vinca in vibrant pinks, deep purple verbena, yellow Damianita, bulbine, orange zinnias and marigolds are among the cascading flowers of all colors that spill out of the barrels, creating a lush garden next to the hot pavement and asphalt. All are flowers that hold up well in hot, dry Texas summers. Lani Howell, a founding member of CMG who has since moved, was responsible for a significant amount of the original garden plantings in Gruene.



Throughout Gruene around the shops and restaurants, much thought and care has been given in the selection of landscape plants. Flowerbeds are filled with xeric favorites such as purple heart, penta, wild petunia, Turks cap, *Salvia greggii*, mistflower, skullcap, mealy blue sage and many other familiar perennials and annuals. Other xeriscape standouts in the beds are spineless cactus, rosemary, zexmenia, hybrid lantana, artemesia and sedum. Between rows in the parking lot you'll see some hardy, drought-resistant favorites including Mexican bush sage, Russian sage, lantana, *Salvia greggii*, cenizo and esperanza. Flowering shrubs and trees accent the area: who could forget the burst of red from the berries on the possum-haw holly next to Buck Pottery in the winter?

Ken Raba, who is also a singer and songwriter, is responsible for keeping all the vegetation looking good throughout the year. He oversees the upkeep of the areas around Gruene Hall, the Grist Mill, Cantina del Rio, Hampe House Antiques and the winery, as well as the parking areas. During the summer, gardeners work every day. Their summer hours are from 7 am until noon, dictated by the amount of traffic in Gruene in the afternoon more than the summer heat, with hours totaling the equivalent of three fulltime gardeners. Offseason the work hours are equivalent to two gardeners working a three-day-week. With current drought conditions and watering restrictions, according to Raba, he has had to let some of the areas go in order to concentrate on watering the more visible storefront areas.

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Xeriscape like the Pros from Page 5

One of the biggest challenges faced by Gruene's gardeners is the destruction of plants caused by deer and, to a lesser extent, armadillos. The gardeners use deer repellent and netting, but the deer are accustomed to both and circumvent these measures, browsing many of the plants and pulling out many others. Some weeks Mr. Raba must replace as much as \$150 to \$200 worth of plants destroyed by deer or armadillos. Much time is also spent replanting flowers that have been pulled or dug out by tourists, leading to a certain amount of frustration. Another challenge, particularly to lawn areas, is the large volume of foot traffic – although, as Raba hastens to add, the whole point of having the landscaping is the enjoyment it provides for visitors.

Every effort is made to use well-adapted plants that will survive the challenges of drought, heat, deer, armadillos and traffic. To this end, Raba meets with CMG friend and landscaper David Will on a monthly basis to discuss the best approach to overcoming these challenges. Twice each year, once in the spring and once in the fall, Raba also meets with a commercial landscape contractor and owner Mary Jane Nalley to talk about what is and is not working and to decide which new seasonal plantings will replace the old. MW

Starbucks' and Panda's Eye-openers

The Starbucks on the corner of I-35 and Walnut St. has landscaping that is managed by Brien Sanders of Paisaje Landscaping. The plants he chose for this area are all native because the location has no sprinkler system or water source. The plants thrive with mostly gravel mulch. The Starbucks manager was thrilled to have the garden featured in the Comal Master Gardener Newsletter. She is a past Guadalupe County Master Gardener and suggested xeriscape plants to her supervisor.

The plantings consist of the following selections: Desert willow, *Chilopsis linearis*, is native to the Southwest US and Northern Mexico. This small deciduous tree grows at a moderate rate to twenty feet high and about twenty feet wide. It has narrow bright-green leaves and colorful trumpet flowers that vary from white to purple, although pale pink to lavender most common. Very few flowering trees are as beautiful in the summertime. A perennial, the willow flowers from spring to summer in full sun or partial shade. It requires little water and is hardy to ten degrees Fahrenheit. Hummingbirds are highly attracted to the flowers. Best of all, it produces seedpods.

Texas sage, *Leucophyllum frutescens*, also called cenizo, is durable, easy to care for and one of the most popular shrubs used in xeriscape gardening. It thrives in the hot days of summer, flowering when the humidity is high. They say if the Texas sage is flowering, it will rain soon. Its flowers are purple, pink or white, and it grows up to six feet by six feet. It loves good drainage and the heat, but it tolerates temperatures down to 10° F.

Chaste tree, *Vitex agnus castus* is a perennial multi-trunked shrub that grows slowly in full sun to about fifteen feet. It is fairly drought resistant but will grow faster if watered regularly. During a cold winter it loses all its leaves and goes dormant. Its flowers grow in a long stem flowering from the bottom up during four to five weeks of stunning bloom. The flowers are used fresh or dried for crafts. As the flowers fade, small purple berries follow; the berries can be dried and used for medicinal purposes.

Thornless prickly pear cactus, *Opuntia ficus-indica*, is a succulent that blooms mid-spring to mid-summer. Its blooms are deep yellow and it grows from three to eighteen feet tall and fifteen feet wide. It loves a dry climate and full sun in Zones 9 through 11. It is considered an evergreen. It produces an edible fruit called a tuna. The new leaves, or pads, on the cactus can also be eaten. They taste like green beans. Although it is considered thornless, there are fine spines that should be shaved off before preparing.

Lantana, esperanza and huge agave Americana also grace the landscape. Esperanza, or yellow bell, produces bright yellow trumpet flowers that bloom from May to October and grows up to six feet tall and four feet wide.

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Xeriscape like the Pros from Page 6

It is best grown on the side or back of the garden because it can get quite large. It produces large bean pods with seeds that can be planted easily. Removing the seedpods will produce more blooms. Esperanza is considered a perennial, but needs to be protected from a hard freeze.

This xeriscape garden is a perfect example of for all to admire any time they pass by or stop at that intersection.

At Panda, the nearby Asian fast food restaurant, the plants vary a bit from Starbucks because some of these plants require more water. For instance, the orchid tree, *Bauhinia variegata*, known as “Pata de Vaca” (cow foot) in Mexico, is a perennial that requires regular watering. This tree can grow twenty to thirty feet and is considered invasive.

Chaste tree, crape myrtle, knockout roses, Texas sage and salvia are found in the front and side parking lot. All of the landscaping is covered with red wood mulch. It appears to have a drip irrigation system. In the back of the property there are several small trees like a weeping willow and burr oak. With this awful heat, it is amazing that all these plants survive. This is another wonderful example of heat-tolerant plantings in and around New Braunfels.

Xeroscape like the Pros Part II will be continued in September.

August Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

August temperatures during one of the worst droughts in Texas history prompts the question, “Do I slow drip or do I allow slow death?” While the gardener inside all of us feels compelled to water every suffering plant, now is the time to choose those plants that are most important to us and to our landscaping designs. Think trees, shrubs and groundcovers; these are the “bones” of our yard and the plants that would cost the most to replace. Try one or all of the following to save your investments:

1. Water each tree one to four inches every ten days. Do this in the early morning or right before sundown using a slow drip. Make *Mulch heavily, Water slowly, water deeply* your mantra, and your trees roots will go deep. This will help not only during our droughts but also during our winter freezes. Deep roots are protected roots. Fall is always the best time to plant trees, but if you have a newly planted ornamental, give it special care right now. Water twice a week and fertilize with turf fertilizer one to two cups depending on trunk diameter. This will help maintain strong growth.
2. Most **established** turf grasses will be fine using the *water slowly, water deeply* method every 10 days. The two exceptions are St. Augustine, which should be watered every five days, and buffalo grass, which can go as much as twenty days without water. Instead of mulching, leave your grass high. St. Augustine and buffalo grasses should be kept three inches high; centipede and zoysia grasses do best at two inches; Bermuda, at one. Tall grass offers the same root protection as mulch. Do not fertilize right now, but you can spread pre-emergents. Keeping your weeds down with eliminate their competing for water.
3. Do not prune spring-blooming shrubs like redbuds, once blooming roses, wisterias, spireas, mountain laurels and lorapetalums. At this point, you will be cutting off next year’s blooms and forcing growth that will overstress the plants. However, you can prune and fertilize your butterfly bushes and vitex right now for more fall blooms next month. Put your shrubs on the same watering schedule as your trees.

You will notice some yellowing and/or dropping leaves on most ornamentals and fruit trees. This is a normal survival process for most plants during drought conditions. If your stressed trees are dropping more than a few leaves, begin watering every two days with a gallon of diluted Super-Thrive. Do this for two weeks and you should see a noticeable overall improvement. Some folks have told me they are doing this for all their plants, instead of fertilizing, to get them through this season.

On a cooler note, fall is not too far away. If you enjoy growing from seed, now is the time to start them indoors for September planting. Try alyssum, calendula, ornamental kale and cabbage, snapdragons, pansies or violas. All of these do extremely well in our autumn temperatures, and by then we will need as much color as we can get!

Herb SIG Learns to Tussie

The Herb SIG met on July 11 at the Antique Rose Emporium. Catherine Hall, assisted by Patty Godfrey, presented a program on the history and construction of Tussie Mussies. After the presentation, the attendees tussied and mussied their own creations. Members used blooms from home, roses, herbs and other supplies for the creations.

For those who don't know, tussie mussie (aka as tussy mussy) is a small bouquet creation that was presented to loved ones or to females of interest during the Victorian era. The creations were not only known for their beauty and creativity, but with the use of various flowers, herbs and colors, "messages" were also intimated in the tussie mussie. Victorians had a better way of sending sentiments than using cards, emails or twitter; they did it with flowers and herbs. Scents were sometimes incorporated into the tussie mussies to make them even more appealing.



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Catherine treated the group with an exhibition of her antique silver Victorian tussie mussie holders, a part of gardening and herbal history that attendees were able to view, admire and touch. It was like holding a bit of floral and herbal history in one's hands, with the vibes of a bygone era. After creating their tussies, the group gathered for a sack lunch get-together. Patty Godfrey prepared a basil lemonade for the group that many in attendance swore was the best lemonade that they had ever tasted.

The Herb SIG meets monthly. All CMGs and their friends are invited to attend. If you have interest in the group or about learning more about herbs, contact the Herb SIG chair Mary Moses (marycm@me.com). Check the CMG newsletter for information about the August SIG meeting.

August 2011 Gardening Opportunities

Saturdays and Sundays, Ongoing, 8 am – 4 pm. Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Closed Holidays. Weekdays by appointment. Explore a nature preserve and bird sanctuary 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 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.

August 2011 CE Opportunities

Friday, August 5, 10 – 11 am. “Watersaver Walk.” Information about planning, planting and maintaining low water use landscape year-round. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Free with admission to SABOT. For information, call 210-207-3261. **1 CE**

Friday, August 5, 10 – 11 am. “Organic Vegetable Gardening 101,” by S. K. Rosina Newton, Horticulturist at the Natural Gardener. Learn site selection, soil preparation and fertilization, planting methods and pest control. Rosina is a 1984 graduate of Texas A&M University in Horticulture and has been assisting customers and serving as horticulturist at the Natural Gardener for over 14 years. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Saturday, August 6, 10 am – Noon. “Fall Vegetable Gardening,” by Travis County Master Gardeners. Broccoli, lettuce, Swiss chard, radishes and spinach are just a few of the favorites that grow well here. Join Master Gardener Patty Leander to learn about these varieties and strategies for bringing a bountiful fall harvest to your table. Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin. **2 CE**

Saturday, August 6, 9 – 10 am. “Texas Wildscapes,” by Kelly Bender, Urban Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Whether you have an apartment balcony or a multi-acre ranch, the Texas Wildscapes program gives you the tools you need to provide a home in your backyard for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Tuesday, August 9, 10 – 11 am. “How Does Your Garden Grow?” by Stefanie Lane, Assistant Grounds Supervisor at the Natural Gardener. Stefanie will share an hour’s worth of answers with us. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Saturday, August 13, 9 – 10 am. “Organic Lawn Maintenance 101,” by Teresa Stephens of Pollydog Organic Landscapes. Knowing how to care for a lawn organically can prevent many of the pitfalls of lawn ownership. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113 **1 CE**

Saturday, August 20, 9 – 10 am. “Tree Pruning 101,” by Don Gardner. Trees are the most valuable plant in our landscape. One of the most common gardening mistakes is pruning trees incorrectly. Untimely or incorrect pruning cuts can ruin the beauty of a tree forever, invite diseases and pests and lead to premature death of a tree. Gain specific skills in simple pruning methods, along with a greater understanding of trees in general. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113 **1 CE**

Saturday, August 20, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Earth-Kind® Landscape Series: “Growing a Fall Vegetable Garden,” by David Rodriguez. Learn about improving your vegetable garden production or starting from scratch. Limit 30. Fees: \$20.00 per session. Make your check payable to Bexar County Master Gardeners. To register, contact Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov. Participants must register by noon on Friday, August 19. S.A. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. **2 CE**

Saturday, August 20, 9 am – Noon. “Rainwater Harvest Workshop,” by John Kight, engineer and rainwater catchment owner gives the latest technological information and the most practical advice. Learn about design and materials from someone who has done it himself!. Members: \$25/person; non-members \$35/person. Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616. Location: CNC Auditorium and visit to Kight installation. **3 CE**

Saturday, August 27, 9 – 10 am. “Allies in the Garden: Beneficial Insects,” by Skip Richter. Have you ever wondered if that bug is good or bad? Skip will provide for us tips on how to identify the most common beneficial insects in our Central Texas landscapes and gardens, the types of pests they target and how nature works to regain a balance in the garden. We will also learn how to attract and keep these beneficials in our gardens, and gain a new appreciation for these fascinating insects. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

ON-LINE CEU OFFERINGS -- NEW Training Opportunities:

Earth-Kind Drought Preparedness.

Go to: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/drought/> Go through the entire section, then complete and submit the On-line Evaluation to earn **2 CEs**.

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://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/> **CE based on class hours, unless otherwise specified by 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.**

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.**

CMG Committee Reports

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 3, at 9 am.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The Comal County AgriLife Extension Gardens will meet on the first and third Tuesdays, August 2 and 16, at 9 am. Each workday we will do most of our work in the meeting room as we develop a five year landscaping plan for the Extension Office Gardens. The regular volunteers will meet at 8 am and we would like to invite any Master Gardeners with extensive knowledge of landscaping with native plants to join with us at 9 am in the meeting room. For more information contact: Linda D. Valdez, chairman, at ldvaldez@satx.rr.com or Rich Bradley, co-chair, at rmbrad@gvtc.com.

NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION PLAZA GARDENS

There will be one workday in August on Wednesday, August 10, from 8 – 10 am. We will rake the mulch from the base of the roses, so if you have a shrub rake, bring it. We will then fertilize and hand water because the irrigation system is undergoing some needed maintenance. This will be an important workday for the fall flowers. Lots of good master gardener helpers needed! If you have questions, contact Judy Chantos (4c-sons@earthlink.net or 803-608-0535), Dan Krueger (dan.krueger1@gmail.com or 830-639-5338) or Janis Womack (gwomack1@satx.rr.com or 830-620-7002).

BUTTERFLY GARDENS AT THE BULVERDE/SPRING BRANCH LIBRARY

Bulverde/Spring Branch Library Butterfly Garden workday is the fourth Thursday of each month. Our next workday will be Thursday, August 25, at 8 am. Contact Bill Puckett (bnpuckett@gmail.com) or Peggy Hamm (khamma@gvtc.com) for more information.

NEW LIFE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The New Life Butterfly Garden workday is the third Monday, August 15, at 8:30 am. For more information, contact Lois Ricci (poepjr@aol.com or 830-899-5362).

HOSPICE NEW BRAUNFELS

Hope Hospice workday will be the third Wednesday, August 17, at 8 am. For information, contact Jean Petersen (jeanpetersen@sbcglobal.net).

NEWSLETTER

The planning meeting for the September issue was Tuesday, August 2, at 11 am at The Fork and Spoon Restaurant at 651 N. Bus I-35, Suite 1150, in New Braunfels. Contact Editor Cindy Sansone (830-515-4540 or cindy.sansone@yahoo.com) for information about the meeting or contributing to the newsletter.

COMAL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS GARDEN

The Fairgrounds Committee will meet on the third Thursday, August 18, at 8 am at the Grant Street Gardens. Committee members will receive an email memo. For more information, contact Aleta Meyer (830-629-2929 or aleta_meyer@hotmail.com) or Sharon Wright (sharonawright@att.net or 830-606-6027).

LINDHEIMER GARDENS

The Lindheimer Garden workday will be the second Tuesday, August 9, at 8:30 am. The garden looks great, but will need to be “refreshed.” The new tags for the Lindheimer named plants will be in the garden. See you there! Contact Germaine Tuff (germainetuff@hotmail.com or 830-629-1127) if you have questions.

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@gvtc.com or 210-385-5981) or Alba Johannessen (2Johans@sbcglobal.net) to coordinate with a school near you.

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

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)

Comal Gardener

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