



February 2010

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)

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Number 7

Thirty-one New Trainees in Class 2010

Thirty-one trainees began the Comal Master Gardener Training Class on January 27. The day started with a get-acquainted luncheon at noon attended by trainees, mentors, officers, AgriLife staff, class coordinators and helpers and interested CMG members. The program included discussions on the course requirements and the handbook, as well as CMG projects and activities. Glenn Avriett, County Agent, explained the connection between Texas A&M, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Master Gardeners, plus some of the history of CMG. A PowerPoint presentation on CMG projects and gardens, as well as some of the social events involved with being a Master Gardener, was presented to introduce the trainees to the organization. Garden chairs spoke to the group to give the students more information about the variety of gardens.

Nineteen mentors will work with the new trainees this spring to help in any way and to encourage them to finish the class and to meet the service requirements. Mentors include Tim Barker, Peggy Carmody, Lee Franzel, Marilyn Godwin, Jodi Hawthorne, Jane Langley, Bonnie Leitch, Patty Malek, Meredith Nyman, Becky Pinkerton, Lois Ricci, Linda Sanchez, Frank Scalise, Karen Scherrer, Linda Sickles, Beverly Williamson, Larry Williamson, Janis Womack and Sharon Wright. The mentors met on January 13 to discuss the program and ways to motivate the new students. Lois Ricci is chairperson of the Mentors. Juleen Randall, chairperson of the Ask-a-Master-Gardener Help Line, was there to discuss the new files, reference books, new telephone system and the available computer that are all organized to handle county residents' questions.

Angie Martinez, Evelyn Nielson, Linda Ray, Juleen Randall, Lois Ricci, Judie Waechter, Donna Welch and Pat Williford are all part of the committee that has been working to prepare the materials and speakers for the new class. Cathy Wonish and Carol McWilliams are coordinators of Class 2010.

CMG February Meeting – Note Location Change

Tuesday, February 23 at 6:00 pm

Speaker: *Calvin Finch*

Topic: *Water Conservation and Environmentally Appropriate Landscaping*

Place: *Bulverde/Spring Branch Library*

--See directions on next page--

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•••

- Roses Are Herbs Too! Join the Herb SIG at the Antique Rose Emporium on Tuesday, February 9, at 10 am for a program presented by Robbi Will that explores the history and varied uses of roses in medicine, cosmetics, cultures and cooking. Bring a sack lunch and stay to visit after the program.
- Glynn Mann, Class 2009, has volunteered to serve as chair of the Hope Hospice Gardens, the Garden of the Month for February. James Teeling, Class 2009, has volunteered to serve as assistant chair. Please congratulate these two gardeners and offer to help them. They will be announcing workdays for the garden clean up soon. This worthy project needs your help. Contact them in one of the following ways: Hope Hospice Gardens: hospice@mastergardener.comal.tx.us, Glynn Mann: 830-935-3703 or charlottewmann@yahoo.com, and James Teeling: 830-935-4748 or jim.teeling@yahoo.com
- Congratulations to Merri Veritas for certifying as a Comal Master Gardener! She is part of the fine class of 2009, and we welcome her into the organization.
- Special congratulations to our own Nancy Horne who was honored as Volunteer of the Year by the New Braunfels Conservation Society for her work in the Conservation Gardens.
- From Treasurer Donna Lehr: Balance as of January 26: \$7564.57. Income: \$107.19. Expenses: \$856.44.
- Mark your calendars! Gartenfest is Saturday, March 20. CMG will sponsor an herb sale at the event.
- Don't forget Donna and Michael Welch's talk on "The Spring Vegetable Garden" Wednesday, February 24, at 7 pm in the New Braunfels Library Meeting Room.
- Looking ahead ... Arbor Day will be commemorated March 18, at 10:30, by an Arbor Day presentation and program. Meet at the Pavilion in Landa Part for the annual dedication of the trees. Cookies and refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Meredith Nyman at 830-620-0753.

About the Next Speaker and Place...

Dr. Calvin Finch is currently the Director of Regional Initiatives and Special Programs for SAWS. He appears regularly on television in the San Antonio area. His popular column is published in the *Express-News SA Life* section every Saturday. His articles are archived on the web at plantanswers.com. Dr. Finch also answers horticulture and water conservation questions every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 2 pm on KLUP 930 Radio. The SAWS water conservation program and Dr. Finch's media work have received numerous state and national awards.

In his tenure as Extension Agent for Horticulture from 1989 to 1999, Dr. Finch started the Bexar County Master Gardeners and developed it into one of the premiere MG Chapters in the nation. He is also a familiar participant at horticulture charity and planting events all over the community.

Our next meeting is at the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library, located at 131 Bulverde Crossing, in Bulverde. To get there, go west of the 281- FM 46 intersection on FM 46 and turn south on Bulverde Crossing. The library will be on your left. You can also find the directions on-line.

Keep Up-to-Date on 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 Richard Wackerbarth, Timekeeper@MasterGardener.Comal.TX.US

So Dear to Our Hearts

by Lu Allen, **Barbi Briney, Sherrie Brammal**, Peggy Hamm, Bonnie Leitch and Mary Salmón

In honor of Valentine's Day, the staff decided to write about the gardening items that were dearest to them. That led to a discussion about great books, plants, gardens and gardening experiences. While you read these selections, we hope you will think of your own best gardening memories and fall in love again.

Moonlight Overcomes Me

OK, I admit it. I am a romantic. Yes, I love Jane Austen and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. I cannot resist white roses and white chocolate. It takes no arm twisting to get me to watch *Sleepless in Seattle* for the umpteenth time! That is why I have a love affair with my moonlit garden. It actually might have been the pull of the moon that enticed me to seek white, sweet-scented plants. The world that comes alive when the sun goes down and night shadows fill the garden draws me to sit on my white bench and reflect on my day.

Flowers that bloom at night produce some of the strongest and most magnificent fragrances. The first indication of the awakening night world is the shadows in my garden as sun fades when the crickets or cicadas start their chirping dance. My trees take on a different hue and once-bright flowers of the day garden look like a sepia photo.

Originally when we bought our house, I had no idea of the nighttime world around me. I planted brightly-colored plants to attract birds during the day. Then I noticed huge moths on the back wall in the early evening. I had planted Mexican Spider Lily without really knowing what a draw it would be.

Then I met Scott Ogden, author of *The Moonlit Garden*. After listening to his lecture and reading his book, I learned what to plant and why those gigantic moths were coming around at dusk. I learned that white reflects moonlight. The bats I heard flying over the yard at night rely on scent to find my flowers. I learned that most night-blooming, highly-scented plants are white or light in color. My moonlit garden began taking shape in a semi-shady part of the yard where a white crepe myrtle became the focal point.

What comes alive in this nocturnal world? Moths and bats are attracted to sweet-smelling plants like four o'clocks and angel's trumpet. These plants also draw nighttime visitors like the night-flying hawk moth. Plant these delightful, scented evening flowers near a patio or porch so you can relax and enjoy the fragrant air while trying to catch a glimpse of their mysterious pollinators.

Some other plant varieties you might try are evening primrose, showy fragrant flowers that last for only for one evening; moonflower, white, very fragrant with a one-evening bloom; and agaves and yuccas. You might not witness the white yucca moth feasting on blooms at night, but these moths are the only creatures able to pollinate the yucca flowers. The moths deposit eggs on the ripening yucca stalk so that their hatching larvae can feed and grow. Other choices for a moonlit garden include Carolina jessamine, sweet peas, phlox, Queen Anne's lace, Texas sages, clematis, flowering tobacco, jimson weed, wild honeysuckle or gaura and many herbs.

The list above is just a sampling to whet your appetite for a moonlit garden. To learn more, read Scott Ogden's book and I promise you will fall in love with what the evening can bring. MTS

My Favorite Garden Book

My new favorite garden book is Doug Welsh's *Texas Garden Almanac*. It is a great book for reading all at once or for reference when a question arises. It can be used as a monthly guide for what to do at a particular time in the garden. A seasoned gardener or a novice will find this book a good read.

One of my favorite sections, "Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac," is included in the August chapter. A bad case of poison ivy can squelch the desire to garden even faster than losing new plants to

drought, freezes or hungry deer. This contains a good description of these poisonous plants, methods for dealing with exposure and ways to eliminate them from the garden. An aside on anger management is appropriate.

This book not only discusses gardening issues, but also includes topics related to gardening issues. The February chapter includes instructions about to ensure that an irrigation system is in proper working order. The December chapter includes information on holiday plants, living Christmas trees and gift ideas for gardeners.

As you can see, this book has become very dear to my heart. PH

Bulbs Are Dear to my Heart

During the few cold, rainy days we have in the winter, I take comfort in knowing that the bulbs I have planted in the past are lying in the soil getting ready to pop up even before the first signs of spring. Their emergence signals the fact that life is returning to the garden. The early crocuses, daffodils, jonquils and narcissuses begin to peak from the earth even before cold weather has left.

Scott Ogden's book *Bulbs for All Seasons* focuses on the splendor of bulbs, the four seasons of bulbs and a catalog of favorite bulbs. According to Ogden, "One has only to think of a few popular bulbs (daffodil, tulip, iris, hyacinth and gladiolus) to realize that there is considerable difference in appearance among the plants we casually refer to as bulbs."

Botanists distinguish between true bulbs and other structures with a similar function, but generations of gardeners have used "bulb" as a generic term for plants that grow from bulbous organs. Although these "other bulbs" differ in actual structure from true bulbs, all of them function in the same fashion. They bring forth each year, from unglamorous packages, varied and beautiful blossoms.

Ogden's book lists and describes the five basic bulbous varieties: (1) true bulbs: amaryllis, crinum, hyacinths, some iris, narcissus and tulips; (2) corms: gladiolus, crocus and freesia; (3) rhizomes: tall bearded iris, calla lilies, canna, agapanthus and oxalis; (4) tubers: anemone, begonia, caladium and cyclamen; and (5) tuberous roots: dahlia, daylily and ranunculus.

During my CMG training class (VIII), David Will spoke about bulbs. One of his handouts was *A Guide to Bulbs for South Texas and the Hill Country*. It includes several varieties of bulbs for our area that will naturalize and return year after year with little or no care. David offers many good reasons that bulbs are cheaper than annual flowers. "Spending a dollar for a bulb that naturalizes will give you years of pleasure. Bulbs are low maintenance, and most require a little fertilizer once or twice a year." He claims it is possible to have a bulb blooming in your landscape every week of the year.

If you are interested, look at Judy Barrett's January and February 2010 issue of *Homegrown*. It has a great article on spring bulbs that includes tulips and antique bulbs. LA

I Love Succulents

Succulents are hardy plants that can add color and interest to any home – indoors and out. The term "succulents" covers a wide range of plants that can store water in leaves, stems and/or roots. More than sixty plant families have evolved succulent species as an adaptation to limited water availability. But that is where the similarity ends. Succulents include plants as diverse as orchids, bromeliads, aloes, kalanchoes, agaves and cactus.

In general, succulents are very easy to grow and propagate. Most require little water and many are drought-tolerant. The majority prefer shade or part sun, and some can withstand the brutal South Texas summer sun. Good drainage is essential.



My love affair with succulents began when I got my first jade plant, *Crassula portulaca*, four decades ago. It grew into a two-foot-diameter potted plant. Several moves – and occasional over-watering -- took their toll, but I kept growing cuttings of the original plant. My last remaining descendent developed a downward-growing stem, and turned into a “hanging jade,” which spends the summer under a roof eave in our courtyard.

Sedums are hardy succulents that can thrive in outdoor Hill Country gardens. There are about 400 types of sedums, including fast-spreading groundcovers, mounding plants and erect varieties. Most are evergreen perennials that add color to winter gardens, but many will not tolerate a hard freeze. Sedums can produce colorful flowers ranging from delicate stars to dramatic spikes.

Surprisingly, most local plant nurseries carry very few types of sedums. However, there are dozens of dazzling sedums and other succulents available online. With so many choices, an ambitious gardener could create a diverse garden with nothing but succulents. In fact, I just might give it a try. SB

My Favorite Book

I have many favorites in my garden, but I chose a book that is dear to me. My favorite garden book is *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Name*, written by Diana Wells and illustrated by Ippy Patterson.

This book is an interesting read. It gives the history of one hundred plants and how they got their common and botanical names. But be warned, sometimes the common name given for a particular plant is not the term we Texans use. For example, the plant the book calls a mountain laurel is a member of the Heath family, not the Texas mountain laurel.

Diana Wells gives a short history lesson about each plant’s discovery. She discusses “ambitious explorers, clever hucksters, arbitrary monarchs, and patient scientists” who found and named common plants we know. The book delves extensively into the horticultural history, etymology and the lore of plants. Wells includes myths, legends and folk beliefs to give us a book that is both scientific and very entertaining. Some of the stories are heartbreaking, some entertaining, all are interesting.

Do you like to know the history of plant names? Are you a collector of trivial information? Do you like to impress people with odd bits of information? If so, this book is a must read for you. Grab a “cuppa,” sit back, relax and enjoy. BB

Oma’s Gift

In a number of articles I have mentioned one or another plant that we inherited when my husband and I bought Herman Schoenfeld’s parents’ 1906 house from their son Herman and his wife Lila. The house itself was a gem, but the trees and gardens that Bruno and Elizabeth Schoenfeld planted and tended have been a source of joy since we became their owners in 1971. Their plants have become my dearest gardening treasure, a true gift, I feel, from Oma and Opa.

Part of that gift that I shared with both my mother and mother-in-law was the set of pecan trees that Opa grafted right after they moved into the house in 1948. Now the house is surrounded and shaded by four great pecans, and two of the trees produce absolutely fine pecans in great abundance, depending on the year. Oma had three other trees, an apple tree, a pear tree and a pomegranate tree. The pomegranate still lives but has never produced anything except gorgeous flaming-orange flowers. The pear produced a pear so hard that, the first time we took a pear off the tree, we broke a knife trying to cut it. Of course, we found out that the Kiefer pears need to ripen awhile and then are fine to cut and eat. We even had a few apples right before the apple tree died.

There were several varieties of roses that the Schoenfelds left us. We have two kinds of antique roses, seven sisters by the front door and two white rose bushes along the front rock wall. There were three cerise rose bushes along the drive, a pink rose in front of the house, and a gorgeous scarlet rose in the back corner bed by the house.

Oma planted a wisteria by the kitchen window because, Lila says, she knew wrens loved to nest in wisteria. One year a cardinal nested in it, and my Mama and I would turn off the kitchen lights, stand on the chopping block in front of the window and watch the young birds until they flew the nest.

Oma, of course, had many bulbs, especially purple and white iris and snowbells along the north side of the house and narcissus on the other side. Her Mexican petunias, pink clover and purple dianthus still survive. The Barbados cherry, hypericum and shrimp plants that she grew are still hanging on, also. She even planted some apple mint by the front faucet that lives there still.

As you might have gathered, I have not been the best steward of Oma's precious efforts, but I have enjoyed the fruits of her labor immensely. I have learned a bit from her example, and I feel that I have grown to know her a little by loving the plants that she loved. BL

February Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

Last year was a year of weather extremes, from 105° last summer to the twenties last fall! The deep freeze was extremely premature. I lost my fall tomato plants, Thai pepper tree and geraniums. The only plants that really made it through with flying colors were my herbs. We might get tired of planting lavender and rosemary in the summer because they are deer resistant, but they are also tried and true greenery for our winter landscapes.

January is another good month for transplanting winter vegetables like cabbage, spinach, broccoli and the crowns of both asparagus and artichokes. It is also time to plant kohlrabi. If you haven't tried this vegetable, please do; it has a wonderful crisp, fresh taste. Start onion sets the last week of the month. January is a good time to start tomato seeds indoors, but wait until the last week in January to sow carrots, leeks, lettuce and shallots outdoors.

Keep sowing larkspur, delphinium, petunias, phlox and poppy seeds. Now is a great time to plant strawberries, roses and fruit and nut trees. Gala and Mollie's Delicious apples grow and produce well in our area, and so do June Gold and La Feliciana peaches. Try Tifblue blueberries if you can keep the soil in their bed's pH between 4 and 4.5. Rabbiteye blackberries grow well and produce for many years. Remember apples need to be cross-pollinated by planting two different varieties. Stone fruit trees do not need cross pollination, although production might be better with two or more trees. If you already have fruit trees or grape vines, see <http://www.muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/hort/index.htm> for advice, but ignore any varietal and chemical recommendations. Be sure to keep the dormant oil handy and spray every two weeks until bud break. Keep an eye out for scale. Even though it is cold, shrubs and trees still need at least one inch of water per week.

For those of you who either bought or received the usual Christmas poinsettias, amaryllis, Norfolk pines or cacti, the following sites will help keep those beautiful plants alive:

Poinsettias - http://www.ehow.com/how_4457371_keep-poinsettia-alive-after-christmas.html

Amaryllis - <http://www.gardengatenotes.com/2009/12/15/>

Norfolk Pines - <http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/342/>

Christmas Cactus - <http://www.wikihow.com/Care-for-a-Christmas-Cactus>

Go to <http://www.naturalgardeneraustin.com> or <http://www.klru.org/ctg/> if you would like further information on monthly gardening activities.

February 2010 Gardening Opportunities

Saturdays & Sundays, 8 am – 4 pm. Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Learn about the natural world just minutes from downtown San Antonio. 10750 Pleasanton Rd. The entrance gate to the center is located in south San Antonio, on Moursund Blvd. Take loop 410, exit 46, Moursund Blvd and go south 0.7 mile. 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. Call 800-848-0078 for more information.

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

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

February 2010 CE Opportunities

Monday, February 1, 1:30 – 3:30 pm, “You’re in Texas Now. Gardening is Different Here!” by Tom Harris, “The Hill Country Gardener.” Boerne Community Center at the corner of Adler Rd. and Plant St. \$19 fee. For registration and information, contact 830-895-4386 or www.clubed.net **2 CE**

Friday, February 5 & Saturday, February 20, 10 – 11 am. Watersaver Walk. 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**

Saturday, February 6, 1 – 3 pm. “Growing Berries in South Texas,” by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist with Texas AgriLife Extension Service. New! Earth-Kind® Landscape Series. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Fee: \$20 per session. To register, contact Sasha Kodet at sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov or 210-207-3270. **2CE**

Saturday, February 6, 9 am -noon. “Tree Selection, Planting and Watering,” by Mark Peterson, tree and water conservation expert. Features SAWS presentation of Texas Hill Country trees and their care with focus on most efficient and effective ways to water trees and includes tree-planting demonstration. Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Rd, Boerne, TX 78006. Cost: CNC members \$20/person; non-members \$25/person. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616. **3 CE**

Monday, February 8, 1:30 – 3:30 pm. “There’s Nothing Like the Taste of Homegrown Tomatoes in Spring!” by Tom Harris. Boerne Community Center, GA22, corner of Adler Rd & Plant St. \$19 fee. Contact: 830-895-4386. For registration information, contact www.clubed.net **2 CE**

Saturday, February 13, 9 am – noon. “Rainwater Harvest Workshop” by John Kight, engineer and rainwater catchment owner. The Kight home with no well or outside water source is in a traditional development. The system comfortably supplies water for all household and landscape needs. 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, February 13, 10 am - noon. “Antique Roses are Easier than You Think!” by Mike Shoup, owner of the Antique Rose Emporium. February is the time to prune roses for their health and for more blooms this spring. This class is approximately two hours long and will be outdoors, so please dress for the weather. No registration is required, but it is a very popular class, so be sure to come early. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road Austin, Texas 78735, 512-288-6113. **2 CE**

Saturday February 13 & Sunday, February 14, 1 pm - ? Rose Pruning Seminar by Mike Shoup and Robbi Will. The presenters will be conducting a free demonstration on pruning roses. Antique Rose Emporium, San Antonio display gardens. Contact: Robbi 210-651-4565. **CE: Based on length of seminar**

Saturday, February 13, 9 -11 am. “Growing Your Own Potatoes,” by Travis County Master Gardeners Association. Grow your own potatoes? Yes, you can! This hands-on demonstration includes planting potatoes in the ground and in baskets, recommended varieties, and tips for success. Free, open to the public and requires no reservations. Texas Agrilife Extension Office, 1600-B Smith Road, Austin, TX, Phone: 512-854-9600. **2 CE**

Monday, February 15, 1:30 – 3:30 pm. “What You Can Do Before You Call the Landscaper — Baby Steps in Landscaping!” by Tom Harris, “The Hill Country Gardener.” Boerne Community Center, GA22, corner of Adler Rd & Plant St. \$19 fee. Contact: 830-895-4386. For registration information, contact www.clubed.net. **2 CE**

Saturday, February 20, 9 am – noon. “Designing Herbal Landscapes,” by Diane Lewis, herbalist and designer. Design herbs into your existing or new spaces. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston, \$41 (includes Gardens admission) and \$5 materials fee (includes snack). **3 CE**

Monday, February 22, 9 am - noon. “Raised Bed and Drip Irrigation Hands-On Workshop” by Tom Harris, “The Hill Country Gardener.” Boerne Community Center, GA22, Corner of Adler Rd & Plant St. \$99 fee. Contact: 830-895-4386. For registration information, contact www.clubed.net **3 CE**

Saturday, February 27, 9:30-11:30 am. “Everything's Coming up Roses” by Texas AgriLife Extension Office of Travis County. Seminar on selecting, planting and caring for roses in your garden, including a hands-on demonstration of pruning roses in the Extension Demonstration Garden. We will discuss site selection, soil amendments, and bed preparations plus showcase a number of Earth-Kind Roses worthy of consideration in your garden. Free and open to the public, but space is limited so call the Travis County Master Gardener’s desk at 512-854-9600 to reserve a spot. Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County 1600-B Smith Road, Austin, TX, **2 CE**

Sunday, February 28, 1 pm - ? “Heirloom Tomatoes & Vegetables,” by Keith Amelung. This is a free presentation about heirloom vegetables. Antique Rose Emporium, San Antonio display gardens. Contact: Robbi 210-651-4565. **CE: Based on length of seminar**

ON-LINE CEU OFFERINGS:

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 COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 3, at 10 am.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The Extension Garden committee will meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, February 2 and 16, at 10 am. Upcoming events include picking up recycled glass at the Austin Landfill, reworking the road to the back exit, making it a walkway instead of a road and cutting back vegetation as the days warm up. For more information and to volunteer, please email Sally Ann Hnatiuk at mustang_sally6@msn.com or Linda Valdez at ldvaldez@satx.rr.com

NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION PLAZA GARDENS

Rose garden workdays in February will be the 10th and the 24th at 9 am. Crews will need mulch and will prune if the weather permits. Contact Harriet Aristeguieta at 830-609-1311 or haintx@att.net if you have any questions.

KIDS IN BLOOM

Hope you enjoyed the KIB newsletter. Contact Nancy Pappas at azop@gvtc.com/ or 210-385-5981 or Lee Franzel at lee Franzel@gvtc.com for more information.

BUTTERFLY GARDENS AT THE BULVERDE/SPRING BRANCH LIBRARY

We have two workdays in February scheduled for the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library Butterfly Garden, the 2nd Saturday, February 13 at 10:30 am and the 3rd Tuesday, February 16 at 3:00 pm. We welcome your participation and look forward to seeing some of the new class members. Contact Peggy Hamm at khamma@gvtc.com or 830-438-9023 for more information.

NEW LIFE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Butterfly Garden workday is Monday, February 15 at 9 am. For more information, contact Peggy Carmody at 830-226-5216 or carmody@gvtc.com or co-chair Lois Ricci at poepjr@aol.com or 830-899-5362.

COMAL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

We will meet on our usual date, the 3rd Thursday, February 18 at 9 am for general clean up and pruning. Bring nippers, clippers, rakes and green waste paper bags. Don't forget your gloves! We also might move some plants so a couple of sharp shooters would be helpful. Snacks provided. Contact Aleta Meyer if you have any questions, at aleta_meyer@hotmail.com or 830-629-2929.

LINDHEIMER GARDENS

The Lindheimer Garden workday will be on Tuesday, February 9 at 10 am, weather permitting. We will have an after-the-freeze cleanup, including pruning the roses and other perennials and raking up LOTS of Red Oak leaves. Contact Germaine Tuff at 830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com if you have questions.

NEWSLETTER

Contact Editor Bonnie Leitch at 830-660-2335 or bleitch@earthlink.net for information about contributing to the newsletter. If you have any information about other gardening activities that should be in the newsletter, contact Julie Siliven at rejh@gvvc.com or 830-885-2665.

HOSPICE NEW BRAUNFELS

See the garden post about the new leadership. Work dates will be forthcoming.

WEBSITE

Check the website on-line at the website <http://grovesite.com/mg/comal> for new “how to” videos.

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

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)

February 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 10 am Extension Gardens	3 10 am – Exec Bd Mtg 1:30 pm Class 2a – Landscapes Class 2b – Soil, Rainwater Harvesting	4	5 11 am Newsletter Mtg at the Huisache	6
7	8	9 10 am Lindheimer Gardens Herb SIG	10 9 am Conservation Plaza 1:30 pm Class 3 – Plant Growth and Development	11	12	13 10:30 am Bulverde Library Garden
14	15 9 am New Life Garden	16 10 am Extension Gardens 3 pm Bulverde Library	17 1:30 pm Class 4 – Vegetable Gardening	18 9 am Fair Garden	19	20
21	22	23	24 9 am Conservation Plaza Class 5 – Roses (ARE)	25	26	27
28						