



February 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)

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Twenty-eight Students begin Class 2011

Master gardener students began the Comal Master Gardener Training Class on January 19. The day began with a luncheon at noon and concluded with an introduction of mentors and officers; discussions about the curriculum, assignments and field trips followed. The new trainees include Patricia Boucher, Ruth Brock, Carmen Butts, Robin Engel, Louise Foster, Liz Harlan, Lucy Huff, Sally Johnson, Cherie Kittle, John Kittle, Christa Knatt, Dan Krueger, Gaylon Lee, Susan Logue, Doris May-Averitt, Claudia Mendenhall, John Norris, Margaret Ogden, Betsey Payson, Bill Puckett, John Richie, Doug Sawin, Staci Shults, Judith Stanley, Harry Sutherland, Beth Sylvest, Sandra Urguieta and Margo Woollven.

Twenty mentors will work with the new students to assist them in any way and to encourage them throughout the class and the fulfillment of their service requirements. Mentors include Julia Anders, Marlene Ballard, Tim Barker, Richard Bradley, Linda Dufour, Lee Franzel, Jim Hartman, Patty Malek, Martha McRae, Rosalie Meier, Aleta Meyer, Lois Ricci, Kathleen Scott, Linda Sickles, Mikki Tharp, Bill Waechter, Judie Waechter, Jan Waquespack, Janis Womack and Sharon Wright. The mentors met on January 10 to discuss ways to help the trainees succeed in their attempts to become master gardeners. The Mentor Program is part of the Texas Master Gardeners' Five-Year Plan. Mentors receive service hours for working with new students.

Angie Martinez, Evelyn Nielson, Linda Ray, Judie Waechter and Pat Williford have agreed to be Class 2011 Assistants. They also met on January 10 to plan the luncheon for the first class day. Carol McWilliams is Vice President of Training and Cathy Wonish is co-director of Class 2011. Graduation is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11 at the Gristmill.

CMG February Meeting

6 pm Monday, February 28

Topic: *Birds*

Speaker: *Denise Weaver of Wild Birds Unlimited*

Place: *GVTC*

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•••Garden Posts•••

- The Herb SIG will have a special Valentine treat for all gardeners on February 14 – worm composting! Alfred Stremmel of The Worm Haus will be talking to us about worms and composting. RSVP to Sally Ann Hnatiuk at mustang_sally6@msn.com or 830-980-5645 by February 5. You may invite your friends and fellow gardeners to this informative session. Refreshments will be provided.
- The hosts for the February 28 general meeting are Tim Barker, Bonnie Leitch, Robert Franks and Mary Salmon. From now on, Pat Williford will be responsible for the hosts of the general meetings.
- From Sharon Wright, Secretary: “As you look through your new ‘Membership Handbook and Directory’ that you received at the January 24 CMG General Meeting, PLEASE look for errors, and email them to me (sharonawright@att.net). I will have a ‘Corrections to the Directory and Handbook’ for you at the February CMG General Meeting. Thank you for your help.”
- Save the Date! The 2011 Herb Affair, “Herbs for All Reasons,” will be Saturday, May 7 from 9:30 am to 3 pm. The next planning meeting is Thursday, February 10 at 11 am at the Extension Office.

Suggested Bylaws Changes

Do you have any suggested changes for the CMG bylaws? The Bylaws Committee is currently discussing six or seven changes suggested by our members. President-Elect Michael Welch discussed the suggested changes with a PowerPoint presentation at the January business meeting. Committee members Myles Peinemann, Willie Hagan, Elizabeth Bowerman, Patty Godfrey and Michael Welch are meeting during January, February and March to deliberate suggested changes so that they might present any proposed changes at the April meeting. The membership will vote on the proposed changes at the May meeting. Some suggested changes being discussed include the following:

- Adding the leave of absence or hiatus status, emeritus status and retirement status to the bylaws. Currently the only statuses mentioned are active and associate members.
- Changing the Nominating Committee to five members and allowing nomination of officers from the floor at the April, May and June meetings. Currently the Nominating Committee can have only three members, and nominations are only allowed from the floor at the June meeting.
- Adding the following Standing Committees: Publications/Publicity, Hospitality and Awards.
- Dividing the Secretary’s responsibilities into two parts: Secretary and a new Director of Membership.
- Changing the Executive Board to those who are elected by the membership. This would cause some title changes and the election of seven positions each year instead of four, as we do now.
- Asking both the Volunteer-Hours and Continuing Education Timekeepers to report directly to the Director of Membership and the Executive Board.

Other suggested changes include some minor wording changes and corrections in English usage. If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to Michael Welch at welch40@sbcglobal.net. The Bylaws Committee appreciates all comments, both positive and negative.

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 Comal Fairgrounds Garden

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

A Letter from Gwen Garza, one of the Fairgrounds Garden founders. A former CMG, Gwen now lives in Laredo.

My family has been involved in the Comal County Fair for over thirty years. I grew up at the fair grounds while my parents volunteered for various projects. My father had taken on the responsibility of the grounds and was working on a beautification project involving planting trees throughout the grounds. He told me he thought it would be nice to create a garden at the side entrance where people could relax during the fair. It was once used as a turn-around/parking lot, and the fairgrounds committee wanted more for the area.



While I was in the 2002 Comal County Master Gardeners Class I got the idea for the fairgrounds project. I really wanted to be the coordinator for the project, so I made sure that I had all of my required hours before graduation. That way I could graduate as an official master gardener in May. I outlined my vision for the area and with Elizabeth Bowerman, a fellow classmate, went to the CMG board to ask permission to make the fairgrounds an official garden. Elizabeth and I designed it from a broken area in the parking lot to what it is today. It had a little bit of grass, the queen's crown vine, a few rose bushes and two trees on the sides.

Our plan involved building six raised beds and four water trough planters. We also built the fence around the main garden. We had everything donated by local businesses. Then we organized the building and planting based on the new class' help, but many other CMGs came to help us. We used only native plants and tried to be as organic as possible. The planting took three and one-half months to complete. We even had to deal with the Flood of 2002. Ironically, however, it might have been what saved the garden.

The hardest obstacle by far when we started the garden was watering. We had to water by hand or by minding the sprinkler, because the fair grounds did not have a staff to help us. So we had to create a watering schedule to keep everything going in the middle of the summer so we could be ready for the Comal County Fair in late September – not exactly the best time to create a new garden without living on the premises or having a sprinkler system.

We lost our friend Paul Hewitt during the process. He was in our class and helped us build the garden. We planted a tree in his memory in the garden, along with one in honor of my dad. The Comal County Fairgrounds Garden was my dad's vision; I created it for him and my love for the Comal County Fair. The annual social, another CMG tradition, was started the first year.

The Comal County Fair has been a part of this community for 118 years. Thousands of families come to the fair each year, and it has great importance for the community. Fairs are meant to be places to show off homegrown creations. The Fairgrounds Garden is just that. Through the years many people have learned what they should be planting in this area and received seedling gifts from our members. Education is an important aspect for the master gardeners' mission.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to every Comal Master Gardener who has ever worked at the Fairgrounds. It means so much to my family. I will never forget my time working with everyone on this project. PH



An Interview with Elizabeth Bowerman, first assistant, then first co-chair, later second chair

One does not usually just adopt an instant family, but that is actually what happened to Elizabeth Bowerman. Little did she know that by attending the Comal Master Gardener class in 2002, she would soon have a family of friends to last a life time.

Elizabeth comes from a navy family and traveled extensively in her early years. Following in her father's footsteps, she joined the Navy and saw the world as he did. With travel in her blood, it was only logical to work for a cruise line after retiring from the navy.

Elizabeth worked in human resources on a major cruise line, and when she had a six-week leave, she headed for Texas for a break. As it turned out, she was booked to stay at Canyon Lake, not her desired destination of San Antonio. Arriving at night, Elizabeth was not impressed. However, when she opened her curtains the next morning, the beauty of her surroundings really struck her. Hopping into her rental car, she saw as much as she could in a short time. She came back to the Hill Country on her next vacation and bought a home in Spring Branch so she could spend all her vacations in Texas. Now with a place to call home, all she needed was a family.

The tragedy of 9/11 affected everyone, even the cruise industry. Although Elizabeth found herself jobless, she had her home in Texas. One day while reading the paper, an ad for the upcoming Comal Master Gardener class caught her attention. The class was scheduled to start in January 2002, perfect timing for Elizabeth. The Eastern-born-and-bred girl had no idea what to plant or how to make things grow around her new little house. This class would be perfect. As fate would have it, Elizabeth sat in her first class session beside Gwen Vogues and behind Aleta Meyer.

Given the way students like to sit in the same place and find their comfort zone in class, the three became good buddies. One day, Gwen leaned over to Elizabeth and whispered, "I have an idea for a project at the fairgrounds." Elizabeth answered, "What's a fairground?" Little by little, Gwen educated Elizabeth on the history of Comal County Fairgrounds and Gwen's association with them that went back generations. Not long after this, Elizabeth tapped Aleta on the shoulder to suggest they start the fairgrounds garden. It would be fun. It would be an adventure.

Admittedly, Elizabeth likes to take charge, but with Gwen and Aleta the project took off. The garden's official acceptance from the Fairgrounds Association came in May, and master gardeners, local nurseries and the public swept the project along quickly. With water and work schedules in place, the gardens did in fact welcome the public on opening day of the 2002 Comal County Fair. The garden introduced visitors to the Comal Master Gardener program and distributed information, free plants and seeds. Under the watchful eyes of Elizabeth and Gwen, the MG booth was beautiful and well staffed.

With passion comes nurturing. The fairgrounds became Elizabeth's love. "Gwen was definitely the mamma, and I am the auntie," says Elizabeth. As time passed, the gardens exceeded their expectations. Elizabeth is especially pleased that this project has brought so many Comal Master Gardeners together, giving them the recognition from the community they deserve. Each fair the CMG volunteers give away hundreds of four-inch plants to eager children and adults, along with information about nurturing the little plug into a beautiful plant. Most important, the fairgrounds garden has brought children and parents together in their journey to plant discovery. Each year children run into the booth excited to tell about their successes from the previous year's four-inch pots and excitedly pick another plant or seeds for the next year.

That's what Elizabeth has helped to do. She planted the seed of knowledge in hundreds of children. When Gwen moved to Laredo, Elizabeth became chair of the fairgrounds garden. And when Elizabeth stepped down to become chair of RavenStar Outdoor Education, she passed the nurturing seed to Aleta. So it goes, and it all started with a four-inch plug. MTS

An Interview with Aleta Meyer, second co-chair

Aleta was in the fifth Comal Master Gardener class in 2002. She said she had seen an article in the newspaper about the master gardener program, signed up on the last day and was accepted. As Aleta recalls, "I learned the most in the class because I started out knowing the least. When I learned about chill hours, I thought the instructor might be trying to pull one over on me."

Two of her classmates, Gwen Voges and Elizabeth Bowerman, sat behind her in class. Gwen's family was and still is very active in the Comal County Fair Association. Gwen started the garden project at the fairgrounds in 2002, and Aleta has worked in the gardens since its inception. Elizabeth took over as chairperson when Gwen married and moved to Laredo. Aleta assumed the garden leadership responsibilities two years later, and Jane Langley became co-chair.

The fairgrounds workday is the fourth Thursday of every month. Jane and Aleta are both full-time critical-care nurses at Christus Santa Rosa Hospital in New Braunfels. This makes it difficult for both of them to be at every workday. They usually send an email to people on their work list a few days before the workday so everyone can bring the proper tools.

As Aleta put it, "Everything we do at the gardens culminates at fair time in September. The committee tries to have the gardens looking their best at this time. This is not always easy to do after a hot, dry Texas summer. We set up a booth inside the fairgrounds at the garden entrance on Grant Street and man it with Comal Master Gardener volunteers."

The booth is open Friday through Sunday during the fair. Volunteers have information about joining CMG, teaching materials about gardening and guidelines on the plants, in addition to free seeds and plants provided by members. A volunteer sign-up worksheet is circulated during the August and/or September meeting.

According to Aleta, "It's a lot of work but I have a great time during the fair because I see my peers in a different setting. We have time to get to know one another better. Those who need volunteer hours have a chance to make some, and we teach gardening practices to the public. It makes my day when a youngster comes to me and says his plant from last year is still alive and he wants another one." LA

Interview with Jane Langley, Fairgrounds Garden, co-chair, 2008-present

Jane Langley, while born in San Marcos, grew up in New Braunfels. Jane is a wife and a mother of three, Brady, Allison and Olivia. She is an intensive care unit nurse at Christus Santa Rosa Hospital and since 2008 a Comal Master Gardener. Jane and fellow Master Gardener Aleta Meyers have been friends and co-workers since 1991. It was Aleta who convinced Jane to become a master gardener.

One of Jane's favorite things about Comal Master Gardeners is the way it takes people out of their normal environment to mix with people of various backgrounds. Also, master gardeners don't need to be rocket scientists; they just need to have a love of plants and a desire to work with plants. Jane has worked in the Fairgrounds garden with Aleta since she joined Master Gardeners and is now the co-chair.

Jane and Aleta's two garden goals for 2011 are to move some plants that have become too large for their space and to re-work several of the beds. Although the original spot might have been perfect for a bush, plants themselves can cause a change of mind as they outgrow their beds.

Jane loves the plants in the Fairgrounds Garden because they do so well under drought conditions. With a little water to see them through the worst of times and with care once a month, the gardens will still look

good in the fall for the Comal County Fair.

Jane's favorite plant is the pink Queen's Crown vine that grows on the fence. Jane says that her garden is a "mixed" cottage garden. By "mixed," Jane means she grows both flowers and vegetables in the same bed.

Jane wanted to remind members that the fairgrounds workday is the third Thursday of the month. The time is 9 am in the winter and 8 am in the summer.

The membership appreciates Jane and Aleta for their hard work at the Fairgrounds Garden. Their project is a showcase for xeriscape gardening and a source of information and budding plants every year at fair time. BB

Speaker's Bureau Report

For the month of January, the Speakers Bureau has been busily giving programs. Lee Franzel and Richard Bradley reported on "Soil and Compost." Mary Moses gave her presentation on "Leaf Prints" and Kathleen Scott talked about "Limiting Deer Damage." Lee Franzel explained about "Native and Adapted Plants for the TX Hill Country." Michael and Donna Welch presented "EarthKind Environmental Stewardship Programs for the Urban Landscaper" at the new Master Gardener Class. A total of 192 guests saw these presentations. Thirty Master Gardeners attended these presentations as well. That means a total of 537 guests and 77 Master Gardeners have attended CMG programs this calendar year. Thanks to those who presented programs in January.

January Herb SIG Meeting Report

The January Herb SIG meeting was special fun for everyone. Regardless of how much you know, there is always something new to learn, and this SIG proved it. Eight of our SIG members presented a 5-to-10 minute talk on an herb that began with the first initial of their last names. We learned about epazote, wormwood, mint, ginger, sassafras, thyme, the opium poppy and horseradish, which is the herb of the year for 2011. Then we had lunch together. Everyone brought a bag lunch and enjoyed horseradish mac and cheese, a special fruit salad and mint brownies.

February Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

The Farmer's Almanac has been "spot on" with its weather prediction, so I decided to consult this extremely wise magazine once again for February. If the report is true, February will be a cold and wet month for us in southern Texas. According to the almanac, Northern Texas will have some icy cold winter days; such forecasts assure me that I have chosen the right place to live. Let's hope these rains will bring us another gorgeous wildflower showing this year! Keep the digital cameras ready!

I am growing incredibly eager to begin tilling my yard for both spring vegetables and landscape plants. My garden has sat dormant since late summer, and I've been dumping wheelbarrows full of composting "gold" into my vegetable garden for months. My "gold" is actually pine shavings, chicken droppings and feathers, but it makes cleaning the coop a lot easier if I think of it as a garden supplement. Alas, if February is a rainy month, my tilling will have to wait, and I will spend my time watching my tomato and pepper seedlings grow on the windowsill.

This is the month to start your seeds indoors. If begun now, tomatoes, peppers, basil, eggplant, cucumbers and melons will all be ready for planting outdoors after our average last frost date of February 28th. Seeds are such an economical way to garden because most seeds remain viable for 5 years past the package date. If I have seeds left over, I mark the expiration year on the package and keep them in an airtight container in

the back of my refrigerator. Consider planting heirloom varieties; you may never have to buy seeds again. Just save your seeds from your harvest.

Another plus for seed growers is the number of different varieties available in each species that those who purchase only seedlings miss. Purple carrots, black tomatoes and yellow two-foot-long cucumbers that smell like cantaloupes are just a few of the unusual vegetables I've grown from seed. Beets, broccoli, carrot, chard, collards, endive, kale, kohlrabi, leek, lettuce, mustard, parsnip, peas, seed potatoes, radishes, rutabaga, spinach, shallots and turnips can still be directly sown outdoors for a late spring or early summer harvest. With annual flowering seeds, it is too warm for cool-weather varieties and too cold for warm-weather varieties.

This is still a good month to plant fruit trees and berry plants. Remember to give your trees two applications of dormant oil during the winter followed by one application of a copper fungicide when you begin to see buds swell. This regimen will help protect your trees and their fruits from insects and diseases during the hotter months.

Apply a pre-emergent to your lawn and get one step ahead of the spring and summer weeds. Keep in mind, however, that some weeds, including those much-hated grass burrs, take up to two years to germinate, so repeated applications will be needed to maintain your advantage.

One last tip should be easy to remember: Prune your roses on Valentine's Day!

February 2011 Gardening Opportunities

Saturday, February 5 thru Sunday, March 13. 9 am to 5:30 pm Tuesday thru Saturday, Noon to 5:30 pm Sunday, and closed on Mondays. "Flowers in Art." McDermott Learning Center. This exhibit combines the charming flora of Stella Alesi's paintings with Richard Reynolds' photographic plant portraits. Alesi painted the 2011 Wildflower Days™ art print as well as the Wildflower Center's 2010 holiday card. Richard Reynolds has devised his own technique for creating large and incredibly detailed photographs of flowers without the distortion that usually accompanies extreme close-ups. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin. For more information, call 512-232-0100.

Saturday, February 12, 10 am – 2 pm. "Chocolate Day & Plant Sale." Celebrate the history, scent and taste of chocolate. Plan a day "choc-full" of fun at the garden. Plus the Botanical Society Plant Team volunteers will host a plant sale at the greenhouse. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. For information, call 210-207-3250.

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. 10750 Pleasanton Rd. The entrance gate to the center is located 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. 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/>

February 2011 CE Opportunities

Wednesday, February 2, 1:30 – 5 pm. “Plant Growth and Development; Nomenclature” by Andrea Wakefield of TSU. Class 3 of the CMG 2011 Training. Comal Extension Office Classroom, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels. **3 CE**

Thursday, February 3, 10 am – Noon. “Basics of Vegetable Gardening” by Michael and Donna Welch, Bulverde/Spring Branch Library, 131 Bulverde Crossing, Bulverde. **2 CE**

Fridays, February 4 – February 25, 12:30 – 4 pm. “Tree Care Classes at the Garden.” Designed to help prepare professional arborists to take the ISA Certified Arborist examination. Nonprofessionals are also welcome to attend the entire course or individual sessions to gain a better understanding of the benefits of trees and to develop their tree ID and tree care skills. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. To register, contact Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **3.5 CE per class.**

Friday February 4 & Saturday, February 19, 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**

Saturday, February 5, 11 am – 1 pm. “Earth-Kind Landscape Series: Preparing for the Spring Vegetable Garden” by David Rodriguez. Ed Room, S.A. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Fee \$20. Call Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **2CE**

Saturday, February 5, 10 am - Noon. “Everything’s Coming Up Roses” by Travis County Master Gardeners Carolyn Williams and Holly Plotner. Learn how to select, plant, prune and care for roses in your garden or landscape. Speakers will discuss Earth-Kind and Antique roses known for their high performance, disease resistance and insect tolerance. Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin. Free. For information call 512-477-8672. **2 CE**

Tuesday, February 8, 10 – 11 am. “The Good, The Bad, The Ugly” by Don Tuff. Learn all about insects in the garden. Bulverde Spring/Branch Library, 131 Bulverde Crossing, Bulverde. Free and open to the public. **1 CE**

Wednesday, February 9, 1:30 – 5 pm. “Vegetable Gardening” by Michael and Donna Welch. Class 4 of the CMG 2011 Training. Comal Extension Office Classroom, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels. **3 CE**

Saturday, February 12, 2 – 4 pm. “Fruit Tree Clinic” by David Rodriguez. Join him for a free seminar on how to grow healthy, productive fruit trees. Schulz Nursery, 100 W. Huebinger, Marion. More information at www.schulznursery.net or 830-914-2384. **2 CE**

Saturday, February 12, 10 – 11 am. “(Antique) Roses Are Easier Than You Think” by Mike Shoup, owner of the Antique Rose Emporium. Now is the right time to prune roses for their health and for more blooms this spring. Come learn how best to care for these jewels of the garden. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road Austin. For more information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Saturday, February 12, 10 am – Noon. “Planning and Planting the Spring Vegetable Garden.” Hands-on seminar on plant and seed selection, tips for increased germination, spacing and other techniques to ensure gardening success. Only street parking. Sunshine Community Garden, 4814 Sunshine Dr., Austin. **2 CE**

Tuesdays, February 15 - March 22, 6:30 – 9:30 pm. “Introduction to Landscape Design” by Mike Pecen. Learn landscape designer’s tools and materials to realize your own concepts. Understand theoretical background and develop one well-formed landscape concept of your own. Southwest School Of Art, Ellison Lecture Hall, Navarro St., San Antonio. Fee for 6 class sessions: \$150 (members); \$165 (non-members). Registration office hrs: 9 am – 5 pm. Phone 210-224-1848, ext. 317 or 334, or go to information@swschool.org **3 CE per class**

Wednesday, February 16, 1:30 – 5 pm. “Roses—Planting, Pruning, Pests and Propagation.” by Robbi Will. Class 5 of the CMG 2011 Training. CMGs are also invited to bring a sack lunch to the emporium at 12:30 for lunch on the patio. Antique Rose Emporium, 7561 East Evans Road, San Antonio. **3 CE**

Thursday, February 17, 3 – 4:30 pm. “Soil and Compost” by Lee Franzel and Rich Bradley. Tye Preston Library, 16311 South Access, Canyon Lake. **1.5 CE**

Saturday, February 19, 11 am – 1 pm. “Earth-Kind Educational Program: Pruning and Q&A Gardening Seminar” by David Rodriguez. Why should you prune your plants? How should you prune your plants? Have general gardening questions? Don’t hesitate to bring plenty of questions and garden samples. Hosted by Schulz Nursery, 3700 Broadway, San Antonio. Free. For more information, go to schulznursery.com or call 210-804-0600. **2 CE**

Saturday, February 19, 10 am – Noon. “Taking Care of the Lawn.” Two sessions on lawn care: “It’s Dead! How to Establish a New Lawn” from 10 – 11 am and “How to Promote Lawn Health” from 11 – Noon. Learn what to do to start a new lawn or replace a lawn, including grass varieties, soil preparation, and watering. Discover easy mowing, irrigating, and fertilizing tips for maintaining your lawn. Sunset Valley City Hall, 3205 Jones Rd., Sunset Valley near South Austin. Parking in Tony Burger Center across the street from location. **CE based on length of course**

Saturday, February 19, 9 am – 4 pm. “Native Plant Spring Symposium— Grasses: They’re not just for mowing!” An overview of Texas native grasses and how they can enhance the beauty of your landscape. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin. See www.wildflower.org for information and to register. \$75 per person. **CE based on length of course**

Wednesday, February 23, 1:30 – 5 pm. “Native Plants, Perennials and Bulbs” by David Will. Class 6 of the CMG 2011 Training. Comal Extension Office Classroom, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels. **3 CE**

Wednesday, February 23, 3 – 4:30 pm. “Remarkable Plants of Texas” by author Matt Warnock Turner. He discusses little-known facts behind our most common Texas native plants and how they figure in human history, culture and subsistence. Gardening Series at New Braunfels Public Library, 700 East Common Street, New Braunfels. **1.5 CE**

Saturday, February 26, 11 am – 1 pm. “Spring Vegetable Seminar” by David Rodriguez. Vegetable varieties, planting and care of your garden. Fanick’s Garden Center, 1025 Holmgreen Rd., San Antonio. Free. For more information call 210-648-1303 or go to www.fanicknursery.com/Seminars.htm **2 CE**

Saturday, February 26 9 am - Noon. “Rainwater Harvest Workshop” by John Kight. The workshop gives the latest technological information and the most practical advice. Learn about design and materials from someone who has done it himself. Auditorium at Cibolo Nature Center, Boerne. Members: \$25/person; non-members \$35/person. Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616 for visit to Kight installation. **3 CE**

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 based 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/hortOnline.htm> **CE based on completion of course**

CMG Committee Reports

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 2 at 10 am.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The Comal County AgriLife Extension Gardens will meet on Tuesday, February 1 at 10 am in the meeting room to discuss plans for the upcoming gardens. Weather permitting, we will also mark the oak trees for the road crew to cut. We will also meet on Tuesday, February 15 at 10 am. Linda Valdez will post an email the Sunday before the workday to let you know what we will be doing. If you wish to volunteer to work in the gardens and to obtain first hand emails about on going projects, contact Linda (ldvaldez@satx.rr.com) or co-chair Sally Ann Hnatiuk (mustang_sally6@msn.com).

NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION PLAZA GARDENS

The Conservation Plaza Rose Garden workdays will be on Wednesday, February 9 and 23 at 9:30 am, weather permitting. We will fertilize the beds on the 9th and probably mulch on the 23rd. We will have hot drinks and snacks. 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, February 24 at 10 am. Contact Peggy Hamm (khamma@gvtc.com) or Lee Franzel (leefranzel@gvtc.com) for more information.

NEW LIFE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Butterfly Garden workday is the third Monday, February 21 at 9 am. For more information, contact Lois Ricci (poepjr@aol.com or 830-899-5362).

HOSPICE NEW BRAUNFELS

The Hospice workday is Wednesday, February 16 at 9:30. For information or to arrange to work other times, contact Harlan Kraft (210-846-5643 or harlankraft@gmail.com).

KIDS IN BLOOM

Kids In Bloom will be having their Spring Teacher Training on February 12 from 9 am to noon at the Extension Office Meeting Room. 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.

COMAL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS GARDEN

The Fairgrounds Committee will meet Thursday, February 17 at 9 am at the Grant Street Garden. 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, February 8 at 9:30 am, weather permitting. We will fertilize the beds. Some herbs will still need to be divided or just dug up. Contact Germaine Tuff (830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com) if you have questions or plan to bring a wheelbarrow.

NEWSLETTER

The planning meeting for the February issue will be Monday, February 7 at EnJoy Café, 20630 Highway 46 West, Spring Branch. 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 other gardening activities that should be in the newsletter, contact Julie Siliven (rejhs@gvvc.com or 830-885-2665).

WEBSITE

Check the website on-line at the website <http://mastergardener.comal.tx.us/> for new “how to” videos.

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 February CMG activities.

FEBRUARY

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--|--|---|---|--------|---|
| | | 1 10 am Ext Off Gardens | 2 10 am Exec Board Mtg 1:30-5 pm Class 3 Plant Growth | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 11 am Newsletter Mtg At EnJoy Cafe | 8 9:30 am Lindheimer Garden | 9 9:30 am Conservation Gardens Class 4 Vegetables | 10 | 11 | 12 9 am - Noon Kids in Bloom Teacher Training Ext Off Mtg Room |
| 13 | 14 | 15 10 am Ext Off Gardens | 16 9:30 am Hospice Class 5 Roses at ARE | 17 9 am Fairgrounds Garden | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 9 am New Life Butterfly Garden | 22 | 23 9:30 am Conservation Gardens Class 6 Native Plants | 24 10 am Bulverde/SB Butterfly Garden | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 6 pm CMG Meeting At GVTC | | | | | 29 |