



June 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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CMG Class of 2011 Graduates

Students of the Comal Master Gardener Class of 2011 graduated May 11 at the Grist Mill in Gruene. Class leaders Carol McWilliams and Cathy Wonish recognized the graduates. Seven class members earned their CMG certification. Carol and Cathy presented Comal Master Gardener certificates and pins to Cherie and John Kittle, Dan Krueger, Gaylon Lee, Susan Logue, Betsy Payson and Bill Puckett. Carol presented the following interns their certificates: Tricia Boucher, Ruth Brock, Carmen Butts, Robin Engels, Louise Foster, Liz Harlan, Lucy Huff, Sally Johnson, Christa Knapp, Susan Logue, Doris May-Averitt, Claudia Mendenhall, Sam Norris, Margaret Ogden, John Richie, Doug Sawin, Judith Stanley, Harry Sutherland, Beth Sylvest, Sandra Urquieta and Margo Wollven.



Carol recognized mentor coordinator Lois Ricci and the class mentors Julia Anders, Marlene Ballard, Tim Barker, Richard Bradley, Linda Dufour, Lee Franzel, Jim Hartman, Patty Malek, Martha McRae, Rosalie Meier, Aleta Meyer, Kathleen Scott, Mikki Tharp, Bill and Judie Waechter, Jan Waguespack, Janis Womack and Sharon Wright for their help and guidance during the training. She also recognized the five class assistants: Angie Martinez, Evelyn Nielson, Linda Ray, Judie Waechter and Pat Williford.

CMG General Membership Meeting

6 pm Monday, June 27th

Election of Officers & Voting on Changes to By-Laws

Place: *GVTC*

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In describing the class, Carol said, "I was constantly amazed by the class' grasp of the subject matter and the profound questions class members asked the speakers. Their enthusiasm was inspiring. They will definitely be an asset to the Comal Master Gardener organization."

•••Garden Posts•••

- Up next for the Herb SIG is a visit to Blanco on Friday, June 10. Members will meet for lunch and then browse the Lavender Market. Afterwards, those interested can go individually to the various lavender farms on the Blanco Lavender Festival tour. You don't have to be a Master Gardener to attend, so bring friends. Contact Mary Moses at marycm@me.com for more information.
- Treasurer Marlene Ballard's report for May: Beginning Balance: \$12,850.32, Income: \$111.00, Expenses: \$1,182.18 and Ending Balance: \$11,779.14.
- Congratulations to Karen Scherrer, Marilyn Godwin and all of the Comal Master Gardeners who helped to make this year's An Herb Affair another resounding success! And kudos to Ray Elizondo and Mary Moses for winning 3rd place statewide in the publication category with the 2010 An Herb Affair booklet.
- The hosts and hostesses for the June 27 general meeting are Germaine Tuff, Nancy Horn, Cindy Sansone, Janis Womack and Judy Chantos.
- Don't forget to get your background check, a new TMG requirement of all CMGs. Forms are available on-line at our site (<http://txmg.org/comal>) or by going by the Extension Office. Get the completed forms and a \$10 fee to the office as soon as possible.
- Members, don't forget to check your CE and volunteer hours. The deadline is June 30!
- Committee chairs, it is budget time again. Please get your budgets for 2011-2012 to Treasurer Marlene Ballard (marleneballard@gvtc.com) as soon as possible.
- President Larry Williamson announced at the May meeting that the Comal Master Gardeners will no longer maintain the Conservation Plaza Gardens, because the organization cannot find a chair. Special thanks to Harriet Aristeguieta, Germaine Tuff and Nancy Horne for their dedication to the garden.
- Aleta Meyer is resigning as cochair of the Fairgrounds Garden Committee. If you are interested in leading this committee, contact Larry Williamson (830-899-2928 or lwilliamson@gvtc.com). Thank you, Aleta, for all your dedication to and work with the garden.

Meet The CMG Officer Nominees

Comal Master Gardeners will vote for next year's officers during the June 27 membership meeting. Candidates introduced themselves during the May meeting.

President Elect candidate Carol McWilliams explained that after she came to the area from South Arkansas and then Baytown in 2007, she joined the CMG Class of 2009. This year, as Vice-President and Leader of the Class of 2011, she feels she has helped lead the organization in a period of great growth and the challenges that accompany change.

Vice President candidate Lee Franzel was a member of the CMG Class of 2009, also. He has loved gardening since he helped this grandmother as a boy. He has been Volunteer Coordinator for the last two years and loves to learn and share his knowledge of plants with others in projects like the Bulverde-Spring Branch Library Butterfly Garden. He feels he has the energy necessary to be a good class leader.

Report your CE and Volunteer Hours!

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

Treasurer candidate Rosalie Meier was a member of the CMG Class of 2010. She came to Comal County from the Dallas area. The founding CMG archivist, Rosalie ended her remarks with a request to members to share their master gardener memorabilia with the archives.

Wedding Flowers Through History

by Lu Allen, Barbi Briney, Peggy Hamm, Betty Jackson, Bonnie Leitch, Mary T Salmón and Cindy Sansone

For the month of June the staff thought an examination of wedding flowers would be appropriate. We hope you find something in the following articles that you didn't know or will find interesting or amusing.

The History of the Bridal Bouquet

Since ancient times when brides carried bunches of garlic, herbs and spices to ward off evil spirits, the bridal bouquet has been an important part of the wedding ceremony. Brides and grooms in ancient Rome and Greece wore flower garlands around their necks to symbolize new life, hope and fertility. The traditional Celtic garlands were made of strong-smelling herbs and spices worn to ward off evil spirits. Authorities believe "the flower language" dates back to Turkey in the seventeenth century, where lovers used bouquets to convey messages.

These meanings were based on a science known as Florigraphy. This practice continued up to the Victorian times, when the posy, a tight, trim bouquet with a handle made of the flower stems, became most favored by lovers when sending secret messages. A variation of the posy is the *biedermeier*, a very structured posy with concentric circles of same-colored flowers in each circle, which originated in Switzerland in the late 1800s. This bouquet often had lemon and orange peels added for fragrance. The nosegay was originally a small posy popular for flower girls and bridesmaids.

When Queen Victoria married Prince Albert, she had flowers, especially marigolds, added to the herbs and spices. Her herbs included dill, the herb of lust. The bridal party and the guests ate the dill during the reception, supposedly to increase desire. Now a bride chooses her flowers not because of symbolic meaning so much as because of their colors and shapes, how they fit her personality, match her gown and express her own sense of style.

In the early 1900's arm sheaves, a floral shield, first became popular as a complete departure from posy-based floral arrangements. "Bernhardt bouquets" were inspired by the flowers presented to Sarah Bernhardt after a performance. Designed with cascading flowers and long ribbons, they were both large and heavy.

Posies became the bridal bouquet of choice around 1910. Other styles that have enjoyed brief popularity include fans, the crescent bouquet, the composite-flower bouquet, the muff and shower bouquets. By 1920 the shower bouquet, literally a shower of flowers and ribbon, had become an exaggerated, large arrangement favored by many brides. "Lovers' knots" were incorporated into the design; yards of ribbons streaming out of the bouquet featured knots along their length into which buds and foliage were inserted. Interestingly, the custom of tossing the bridal bouquet to unmarried girls is only half of the original tradition. The catcher of the bouquet was entitled to untie a lover's knot and make a wish that would come true. Lovers' knots are the evolutionary forerunner of "swing flowers," tiny blossoms swinging on narrow ribbons attached to a posy bouquet.

During early 20th century, the lack of a wide range of colors and year-round availability of flowers and roses necessitated the method of constructing huge "roses" from the petals of gladioli. Called a "glameria," the oversized blooms were worn by themselves on a hat or as a corsage, or several could be fashioned into a bouquet for the bride with an unlimited budget. The wedding muff embellished with flowers is still very popular in Europe, although it is seen mainly in winter weddings. After the wedding, the bride can still have the use of her muff.

After reaching the peak of their popularity in the 1930's, extravagant arrangements like the shower bouquet almost disappeared in World War II. The opulent style did not match the austere life-style of the times and was at odds with the simple suits and dresses worn by most war-time brides. Corsages often replaced hand-held

bouquets during the war years. Abbreviated variations of the shower bouquet are called cascades and are currently popular with modern brides.

Popular today are the hand tied bouquet, the pomander or ball of flowers, the nosegay, the posy, the cascade, and a large variety of freeform and unique arrangements. Superstitions and herbal lore are becoming a thing of the past, as are hidden messages. BJ & MTS

Hydrangeaceae and Zantedeschia: A Bouquet Fit for a Bride

Hydrangeas are shrubs originating in China and Japan that have four basic needs: cool conditions, compost covered roots that are **never** allowed to dry out, shady to bright light and acidic soil. England has hedgerows of solid Hydrangeas, seemingly left to their own devices to grow and bloom. I can attest to the fact that they are definitely not easy to grow in Comal County.

Lace Caps are the only scented hydrangeas and make wonderful flowers for a bridal bouquet. Lace Caps are a group of very small blossoms surrounded by flowerlike brackets. The name "lace caps" alludes to their similarity to maids' caps in bygone days. The center blossom of this variety of hydrangeas is scented, but not the surrounding brackets. Lace Caps come in several colors: white, pink, blue and even red.

The hydrangea *macrophylla* or the mop Hydrangea is the shrub most of us know best. It grows several feet high, has big leaves, and long-lasting flowers that bloom spring to fall. The resiliency of the flowers makes this a popular choice of brides. The blossoms grow in clusters of white, pink or blue. The blossoms are sterile and have no scent.

The hydrangea *macrophylla*, however, has a unique trait. By changing the Ph of the soil, which changes the amount of aluminum available to the plant, a gardener can change the color of the blossoms. A more acidic soil gives blue blossoms and a more alkaline will give pink.

There is a third type of hydrangea. It is the hydrangea *quercifolia* or the oak leaf hydrangea. As the name implies, its leaves are oak shaped and its blossoms are held upright in large cone clusters. The plants are very impressive because the leaves turn a beautiful bronze/rose color in fall. It is the one hydrangea I have in my garden.

The second highly popular wedding flower is the regal looking calla lily. I have gone to a wedding where the bride carried only one calla lily and the bridesmaids, all dressed in black, also carried one Calla Lily. The effect was both beautiful and elegant!

The calla lilies have gone through many name changes. First they were named arunms, then callas, and now *zantedeschia*. Now I ask you, which name is easier to remember, spell or pronounce, *zantedeschia* or calla lily?

The calla lily originated in South Africa. It is a long flowering bulb, has arrow shaped leaves and thrives in bogs or near water. It can survive temperatures down to 10° Fahrenheit, but will freeze to the ground. The blossoms come in white, gold, lemon yellow, pink, wine red and, would you believe, almost black. The leaves are generally green but some have white spots.

Due to their love of moist soil, calla lilies are grown in pots around here most of the time. If the pot is large enough, the lily will survive outside. If the pot is small, take it into your garage or greenhouse to be safe.

Both hydrangeas and calla lilies are such lovely, showy flowers, it is easy to see why brides love them. BB

Wedding Arches

The arch, a symbol for entering into a new area or phase of life, is often used as part of a wedding setting. Arches may be unadorned or decorated with ribbons, fabric or plant materials.

Archways covered with climbing roses and vines or made of trees trimmed to form the arch may be used to shape the aisle to the altar for an outdoor wedding. Pear trees and crepe myrtles are sometimes pleached, a technique to train trees into a raised hedge, to make garden arches. Obviously, these are multi-year gardening projects and are usually planned as a part of a garden rather than to support a single wedding. Gardens with existing archways are favorite spots for ceremonies of all types.

A single arch, as opposed to a walkway of arches, is usually chosen for an altar site with outdoor or indoor weddings. The size of arch depends on its intended use. If it is only a backdrop, it can be any size the site will accommodate. If it is intended to be the actual altar site, it should be large enough for the couple to stand side-by-side underneath. Popular choices for flower and vine materials to cover arches include ivies, clematis and bridal wreath. The flowers can be selected to match the bridal bouquet. Roses, lilies and daisies tend to be favorites. Intertwining fabrics, like tulle, or ribbons with the vines and flowers adds to the stability of the plant material and reduces the number of flowers needed to make an arch look full. PH

Traditional Herbs in Wedding Ceremonies

Even in ancient history, herbs and flowers had cultural and religious meanings. They have been used for ages to express attitudes, emotions and commitments.

Ancient Greeks are reported to have used mint and dill in wedding garlands as aphrodisiacs especially for the bride. Sage was meant to give the bride domestic virtue or wisdom. Roman wedding garlands or wreaths might have included wheat to symbolize fertility and rosemary to symbolize the virility of the groom. Today, rosemary is more commonly accepted to mean remembrance. Both Greek and Roman weddings included garlic to prevent jealousies or other evil thoughts and spirits. Ivy was used to symbolize fidelity and everlasting love. Many times the customs were especially meaningful. The wedding official might weave a wreath of ivy into which the wedding guests would be invited to weave additional flowers or herbs to symbolize their wishes for the newly wedded couple.

There are many different meanings attributed to specific herbs, and they are not always the same. Some lists of symbols are even internally inconsistent. Here are a few variations of meanings that I found particularly interesting about wedding flowers: Sunflowers have been symbols of both pure thoughts and haughtiness; mustard, both faith and indifference; mint, both virtue and lust; and lily of the valley, both content and contrite.

Unlike the ancient societies, our culture is not heavily steeped in specific traditional meanings of herbs in weddings. Brides today have the freedom to include or exclude any herb they choose without much concern about the “statement” that they are making. The sheer joy of the smell, color or texture is enough to stick a sprig of thyme or lavender into wedding arrangements. PH

Sources included:

The Herb Companion, Herb Love: A Wedding Tradition <http://www.herbcompanion.com/Projects/The-Language-of-Love.aspx>

Herb Gardening Guru, Symbolism of Herbs provided by Richters Herbs
<http://www.herbgardeningguru.com/symbolism-herbs.html>

Lifestyle Lounge: Society, History of Wedding Flowers
<http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/history-of-wedding-flowers-3485.html>

A World of Flowers for the Bride

The first recorded use of wedding flowers in Europe can be attributed to the Greeks. Bundled flowers and plants formed a garland wreath the bride wore on her head, much like the better-known Caesar’s laurels. The wreath was considered a gift of nature, and so perfect for a wedding. Traditionally, the Greek bridesmaids were responsible for making the bride’s headdress.

The bride's garland bouquet would often contain bulbs of garlic. This was meant to ward off any evil spirits that might want to intervene in the ceremony or curse the couple's future together.

Wedding flowers and fragrant herbs played another important role in weddings during Europe's middle ages. At that time, it was traditional to bathe only twice a year because of the labor involved in preparing enough hot water for the process, as well as the rarity and expense of soap. These bath times usually fell before Christmas, an important time of year for everyone, and during the summertime. Unfortunately, weddings usually took place in the spring. As a consequence, members of the wedding party weren't usually at their freshest. To solve this problem, herbs were sewn or placed into the bride's dress, and she would carry a large bouquet of flowers. She often wore them in her hair as well, masking any bodily odors and making the wedding more enjoyable for both bride and groom.

Many European countries have widely varying wedding customs associated with weddings. In Sweden, it was tradition for young girls to carry small bouquets of fragrant herbs down the aisle. The groom would also put thyme in his pockets to ward off any trolls that might decide a wedding was a perfect place to find a tasty snack. In Germany, the bride and groom both would hold candles that had flowers and ribbons tied to them. In England, it was tradition for the bride and her bridesmaids to proceed to the church together, led by a small girl who would sprinkle blossoms in their path to assure long life and happiness for the bride. The tradition of "flower girls" remains to this day.

An ancient Belgium custom that is designed to unite the two families calls for the bride to stop as she walks up the isle and to hand her mother a single flower. After a Dutch wedding, newlyweds might plant lilies-of-the-valley around their house. This tradition symbolizes "the return of happiness," so the couple can celebrate and renew their love with each blooming season.

In Eastern Europe, other bridal customs involve flowers. At a Bulgarian reception, the bride's mother throws flowers in the path of the newlyweds to insure their future health, happiness and purity. In Hungary a new bride wore an elaborate headdress at her wedding in which strands of wheat were woven as a symbol of fertility.

Plants other than flowers are also important to European wedding ceremonies. According to German wedding tradition, when a baby girl was born in Germany, several trees were planted in honor of her birth. When she set her wedding date, her family sold the trees and used the money for her dowry. Swiss newlyweds living in their first house, planted a pine tree in their yard to represent fertility. In Czechoslovakia, the bride's friends would traditionally plant a tree in her new yard and decorate it with ribbons and brightly-painted egg shells in the belief that the bride would live as long as the tree.

There are many South and Central American wedding customs that involve plants, also. In Latin America, to represent the unity part of the wedding ceremony, some couples include the *lazo* or lasso to their ceremony. The *lazo* is usually a large loop of rosary beads that is placed around the necks of the couple in the shape of an eight that symbolizes a love that binds the couple as they share the responsibility of marriage. Some couples, however, choose to be entwined in orange blossoms because this symbolizes fertility and happiness.

In Mexico the ceremony site and the pew bows are decorated with flowers and bows in the bride's wedding colors, as are the flowers or petals on the bridal path. Orange blossoms are the flowers of choice for both Spanish brides and their Latin American counterparts because they symbolize happiness and fulfillment. These flowers can be seen in the bouquet, decorations and even in the bride's hair. Particularly touching, in Mexico at a Catholic wedding ceremony, the bride offers her bouquet to the Virgin Mary and leaves it at the foot of the statue in order to thank her and ask her for a good life and for her blessing.

Asia represents a vast array of cultures and religious influences. Here are three Asian countries and some of the customs relating to flowers used in weddings. The ceremonies are typically very ornate and use flowers to symbolize the importance of the occasion. One of the distinct differences between Asian and Western cultures in the use of flowers is the Asian avoidance of any white flowers during the wedding celebration because white is associated with death and funerals.

In Japan flowers are among the most important features of a wedding. Peonies and roses are very popular among the Japanese wedding flowers, because the color red is bold and lucky. If the theme of the wedding involves fusion, then wedding arrangements in Japan represent both contemporary and traditional styles. The bouquet always holds six or nine Japanese wedding flowers because these numbers depict success and wealth, crucial elements for a successful marriage. Japanese avoid the number three because they associate it with death.

The gerbera daisy is the most popular of the daisies and represents joy, purity and simplicity. Hydrangea is also perfect as a summer Japanese wedding flower; it symbolizes gratefulness. Irises are the next popular summer flowers because the fragrance and tenderness they imbue make them perfect wedding decorations. Freesias come in blue, pink, purple and yellow. In addition to these flowers, snapdragons are often used in wedding arrangements. The most important flower, however, is the cherry blossom because it symbolizes love, beauty, good fortune, peace and happiness.

Chinese weddings are filled with tradition and symbolism. This is true from the clothing worn, to the colors used, to the flowers displayed in the bouquets. According to the Chinese History and Cultural Project, red is the most common and popular color for Chinese weddings, because red symbolizes life and happiness.

Peonies are considered symbols of renewed life, so they are popular in Chinese weddings because the bride and groom are beginning a new life together. The lotus is a flower that symbolizes four virtues to Buddhists: purity, scent, softness and loveliness. Chinese brides often include lotuses in their weddings both for their traditional symbolism and for respect to Buddhism. Daffodils are one of the first flowers of spring and are often used in weddings to symbolize positive change and an awakening of new life. Chinese brides choose yellow or pink daffodils. Orchids are symbols of love and fertility so are a popular choice for weddings. These delicate flowers are traditionally used in corsages as well as in the bride's bouquet. Orchids also have a beautiful fragrance, which adds to the romance of the wedding.

Flowers have always been a part of Indian weddings, especially blooms with exotic fragrances. Many celebrants decorate with yellow and orange marigolds to give a traditional ambiance to the ceremony. Some other commonly used flowers are roses, jasmine, gerbera, lilies and orchids. The main ceremony takes place under a *mandap* frame, or hooded canopy, decorated with garlands of flowers and herbs. Many brides use seasonal flowers, like yellow, red and brown ones in autumn and pastel shades in summer. Another important custom involving flowers is the exchange of fresh flower garlands by the bride and groom.

Flowers are also used extensively after the ceremony. *Shamianas*, decorated tents used in wedding receptions and celebrations, are decorated elaborately with flowers. CS & BL

Flowers and Trees for Kate and William's Wedding

As Kate Middleton walked down the aisle in Westminster Abbey on April 27, 2011 toward her husband-to-be, she passed by six 20-foot maple and two hornbeam trees. Hornbeams are relatively small hardwood trees in the genus *Carpinus*, in the birch subfamily. It was a lovely way to conjure the feeling of getting married in the middle of the English countryside, with the hustle and bustle of London kept outside.

The trees were part of the "wow factor" florist Shane Connolly wanted to create. Connolly has a royal warrant, which is rather like being the official florist of the British Royal family. He is known for his use of live growing plants and trees in wedding ceremonies. All of the flowers and trees for Kate and William's wedding came from the Royal estates. Kate chose a neutral color scheme using white, cream and green, accented by the wedding plants.



According to the florist, things that are very important to Kate are the meaning and language of flowers. She chose blossoms of white azaleas because they represent romance; rhododendrons representing caution; euphorbia for persistence; wisteria for mutual trust; white lilac for memories of youth and the happy innocence

of days past and lily of the valley, which stands for the return of happiness. Both field maple and hornbeam represent resilience.

After the wedding, the flowers and trees remained in Westminster Abbey until Friday, May 6 so visitors to the historic church could enjoy them. After that date, the trees and flowers were taken to the Prince of Wales' Highgrove estate, where they were planted as a permanent reminder of the wedding day. Another tradition for royal brides has been to send their bouquets back to the abbey to be put on the Grave of the Unknown Warrior, a poignant memorial to the dead of World War I.

Connolly also designed Kate's bridal bouquet, which was a shield-shaped wired bouquet of lily of the valley, sweet william and hyacinth blossoms. The greenery in the bouquet was ivy with a mixture of traditional myrtle, which is the emblem of marriage and love. The stems of myrtle came from the gardens of Osborne House, Isle of Wight and were originally planted by Queen Victoria in 1845. The bouquet also had a sprig from the myrtle plant used in Queen Elizabeth's bouquet in 1947. The bouquets held by the junior bridesmaids replicated the flowers used in Kate's bouquet. They also wore hair wreaths of ivy and lily of the valley. LA

References: Flowerona, a website created by Rona Wheeldon, and *The Secret Language of Flowers*, by Shane Connolly

Bylaws Changes Proposed

During the May meeting President Elect and Bylaws Chair Michael Walsh explained the proposed bylaws changes to the membership. They involve only two articles in the bylaws: membership and elections.

The proposed changes to Article IV, Membership, involve the addition of different categories that our organization has created in the past two years and a more organized explanation of the different types of members: active, associate, retirement and emeritus. The article also spells out the reinstatement and leave of absence status more clearly. Finally, a section on SOPs and a section on the state-mandated background checks are also proposed.

The bylaws committee also proposed changing Article IX, Elections, so that it agrees with the process in the recent past. There are also other changes other than the above.

To see the exact proposed bylaws changes, go to our web site (<http://txmg.org/comal/>). Under Administration, click by-laws and then open the pdf on "proposed changes" for the details.

Partial Cost Recovery and the CMGs

Because of the Texas legislature's inability to fund state projects as it has in the past, cities, schools, counties and hospitals, among others have had to either cut services or find other sources of revenue. Texas AgriLife Extension Service is no exception. The service has cut staff and instituted other cost-saving programs. One of the ways the service plans to raise revenue is through Partial Cost Recovery.

Comal Master Gardeners will experience PCR almost exclusively through student application fees. This will most likely constitute \$10 per student in the CMG classes, started in 2012.

The county agent responsible for the master gardener program in a county decides what activities fall within the PCR guidelines, so Glenn Avriett will determine which activities may fall within the purview.

Speakers' Bureau Report

The Comal Master Gardener Class offered two presentations from CMGs in April. Nancy and Richard Wackerbarth gave a program on Propagation. Patty Godfrey, with the assistance of Sharon Denny, Marilyn Godwin, Beverly Williamson and Patty Malek, gave a presentation to the class at her home on Herbs.

Kim Wolfe explained Landscape Design at the Bulverde Spring Branch Library. At the Tye Preston Library, Lee Franzel presented Charlotte Trussell's Butterfly Photography. Rich Bradley presented his program Raised Beds to the New Braunfels Men's Garden Club. The New Braunfels Library will host a presentation by Diane Lewis later in April, and those figures will be included in next month's newsletter. Melissa Skasik explained about Drip Irrigation in a public meeting with two non-Master Gardeners attending. Linda D. Valdez gave a talk to PEO-Professional Educational Organization on Annuals and Perennials.

In April 130 guests received gardening information and 20 Master Gardeners attended to receive CE credit. Totals for the year: Guests – 1225, CMGs – 167, Volunteer time, including preparation, over 400 hours.

In May, the Bulverde Spring Branch Library hosted Germaine Tuff and her new presentation "Easy to Grow Native Plants." Fifty-two people attended, with nine Master Gardeners earning CE credit. Tye Preston Library hosted Richard Bradley and his program "Raised Beds" for eight guests. He presented this program again at the New Braunfels Library on May 25 to 11 CMGs and 32 others. Linda D. Valdez presented her program "Gardening for Butterflies" to the Men's Garden Club of New Braunfels and reported nineteen guests present. This year, 1259 non-members and 176 Master Gardeners have attended our presentations.

The Speakers Bureau is inviting all Master Gardeners, including the new class, to join us June 16 at 1:30 pm at the AgriLife Meeting Room for "Presenter Training: A Guide to Effective Informational Presentations," by Betty Jackson, who has done this training professionally. We will also review how to set up the computer and projector. This is part I of two presentations. The next presentation will be a hands-on workshop for developing a power point. The date for the second session is still to be announced. A lap top is required for that presentation.

Editor's note: The Speaker's Bureau Report, which is a regular item in the newsletter, was inadvertently left out of the May issue.

Herb SIG Report

The SIG bade farewell to its chair Sally Ann Hnatiuk at its May 9 meeting. After a spirited presentation by Sonja Howard and Patty Malek on using herbs in spirits, the group gathered for a potluck lunch honoring Sally Ann. She has served as the group chair for almost two years, but as she leaves Texas with her husband, the group wanted to express its appreciation, regard and friendship. The SIG gifted Sally Ann with a James Avery guardian angel key ring.

Mary Moses has volunteered to be the new SIG chair. The SIG is open to anyone who has an interest in herbs. Whether you know a lot about herbs or nothing and wish to learn more, all are invited to participate. The group simultaneously learns and enjoys.

In July the SIG will learn about creating a Tussy Mussie (aka Tussy Mussy). If you don't know what one is and want to learn, come to the July meeting when Catherine Hall will show those in attendance how to tussy some mussies. You are missing one of a gardener's treats, if you have not tussied; you will never forget your first mussie.

If you are interested in attending a meeting, being on the mailing list or joining, or if you just have an interest in knowing more about the group, contact Mary Moses (marycm@me.com) for details.

June Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

I'll start this month's list with a bit of trivia. The US Senate has designated the last week in June as National Pollinator Week, a fact very important to me because May 1 of this year I became a beekeeper. I was walking around my vegetable garden last year and realized I had not seen a single bee in days. My cucumber plants covered a six foot trellis, with flowers every two inches and not one cucumber in sight. Not only that, but I only got four zucchini last year! That, in my book, is extreme vegetable garden failure. Who in the world only gets four zucchini!? I decided I was going to have to buy bees to better my efforts in becoming a self-sustaining gardener by the time I retire.

Honeybees, of course, are not the only pollinators in our gardens. Hummingbirds, butterflies and moths all help our landscapes and vegetables. The honeybee, however, provides 85% of all pollination, and pollination produces one-third of our country's vegetables and fruit. Think of it this way: one out of every three bites of food is made possible by pollination. Without pollinators we can say goodbye to avocados, watermelons, strawberry shortcake, blueberry cobbler, apple pie and chocolate anything! Is it too bold to believe that as master gardeners we not only help others learn how to garden and care for their landscaping investments but also assume a sort of stewardship of the land we work and its wildlife and pollinators? In the lists below of plants and seeds we can start this month, I have italicized the plants that are considered favorites or pollinating insects.

Vegetable seeds: chard, *corn*, *cucumber*, eggplant, okra, black-eyed peas, New Zealand spinach, Malabar spinach, *summer squash*, *winter squash* and tomatillo. In early June: Lima beans and beets. Interestingly enough, corn is wind pollinated, but my bees are all over my corn stalks.

I keep trying to get them over to the cucumbers, but they are not budging. Some people cannot grow tomatoes. Apparently, I cannot grow cucumbers!

Annual flower/ornamental seeds: amaranthus, aster, castor bean, *cosmos*, *cypress vine*, feverfew, four o' clocks, heliotrope, impatiens, marigold, moonflower, morning glory, nasturtium, nicotiana, periwinkle, *salvia*, torenia or wishbone flower, vinca and *zinnia*. In early June: Sunflower, Mexican sunflower.

Annual flower/ornamental plants: wax begonia, blue daze, coleus, *cosmos*, *marigold*, Mexican heather, *penta*, *portulaca*, *purslane*, vinca and *zinnias*.

Perennial plants: *beebalm*, *butterfly weed* or *Asclepias tuberosa*, copper canyon daisy, cupheas, *coreopsis*, daisies – including ox-eye and shasta, *echinacea* or *purple coneflower*, *eupatoriums* – including *Gregg's mistflower* (a butterfly magnet), *gayfeather*, goldenrod, ornamental grasses, lamb's ears, *lantana*, mexican hat, plumbago, ruellias (aka Mexican petunias), *salvias*, santolina and sedums.

Vegetable plants: okra, tomatoes, and peppers. Remember, foliar feeding with sea tea helps with blossom set during these hot days!

Also, keep native plants in mind. As we learned at the May meeting, natives require very little water or pesticides, something else that is extremely important in our efforts to keep pollinators around. In caring for my bees, I have learned that products containing neem oil, diatomaceous earth or Bt are all effective in killing the non-beneficial insects without harming the beneficials. As an extra safety measure, always apply pesticides in early evening when the pollinators are not around.

For more information on pollinators and their plants of choice, go to www.xerces.org – www.wildflower.org/plants/ (from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center) – or www.pollinator.org. Thank you also to Neil Sperry's Gardens magazine and The Herb Companion.

June 2011 Gardening Opportunities

Saturday, June 4 and Sunday, June 5, 10 am – 5 pm. “The Garden Club of Austin’s Flower and Vegetable Show and Plant Sale.” Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin. For more information, contact the Garden Club of Austin <http://www.thegardenclubofaustin.org>

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

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

Saturdays, Ongoing, 9 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/>

June 2011 CE Opportunities

Friday, June 3, 10 am – Noon. “Plant Propagation,” by Travis CMGs. Learn propagation techniques that create multiple plants from a single plant. Discover the importance of the propagation media, moisture, light, humidity, temperature and rooting hormones to ensure success. Examples of propagation by seeds, leaf and stem cuttings will be covered. Travis County AgriLife Ext Off, 1600-B Smith Road, Austin. **2 CE**

Fridays, June 3 thru Friday, July 8, 12:30 – 4 pm. “Tree Care Classes.” This 21-hour course was designed to help prepare professional arborists to take the ISA Certified Arborist examination. Nonprofessionals are also welcome to attend the entire course or other sessions to gain a better understanding of the benefits of trees and develop their tree ID and tree care skills. San Antonio Botanical Garden Guides, 555 Funston. Free with admission to SABOT. For information, call 210-207-3261. **3.5 CE per class**

Friday June 3 & Saturday, June 18, 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, June 4, 9 – 10 am. “Perfect Herbal Teas for Summer,” by Ellen Zimmerman of EZ Herbs. Learn how drinking herbal teas can easily become your favorite route to health, relaxation and well being. You can grow herbs in your backyard, enjoy their beauty and harvest them fresh daily. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Saturday, June 11, 9 – 10 am. “The Benefits of Getting Life in Your Soil,” by Betsy Ross and J.R. Builta of Ross Farm. Betsy is one of our region’s authorities in compost tea and soil biology. Don’t miss this opportunity to learn about the importance of life in your soil, whether you have a suburban home or acres in the country. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Thursday, June 16, 1:30 – 3 pm. “CMG Presenter Training – A Guide to Making Informational Presentations,” by Betty Jackson. She will review the basics of preparing and presenting informational lectures and ways to connect and use the presentation projector and computer. Open to all Master Gardeners. Comal County Extension Office meeting room. **1.5 CE**

Saturday, June 18, 9 am – Noon. “Rainwater Harvesting Workshop,” by John Kight, Engineer & Rainwater Catchment Owner. Learn latest technological info and most practical advice. Cibolo Nature Center Library, City Park Rd, Boerne Cibolo Nature Center. Members \$25, non-members \$35. To register, call 830-249-4616. **3 CE**

Saturday, June 18 10 am – Noon. “Rain Gardens,” by Dr. Dotty Woodson, Water Resources Specialist with Texas Agrilife Extension. Excess storm water carries urban landscape contaminants into storm drains, and soil erosion causes sediments to accumulate in our water resources. The speaker explains how to protect streams, rivers and lakes by building a rain garden. These lovely gardens are attractive landscape features planted with perennial native plants designed to absorb storm water that filters through plant roots and soil microorganisms. Attend this free presentation and be ready to make your own rain garden. Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin. **2 CE**

Saturday, June 18, 9 – 10 am. “All About Tomatoes,” by Judge Harley Clark, local organic farmer and tomato and pepper expert. He will inform us about which varieties are best for our area, which are best for fresh eating or for canning and the different varieties for spring versus fall growing. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Wednesday, June 22 thru Friday, June 24, Wednesday & Thursday, 8 am – 5 pm; Friday, 8 am – Noon. “Master Gardener Specialist Composter Training” by Lou Kellogg and the Bexar County Master Gardeners. Topics include building a compost bin, hands-on lessons in how to compost, a visit to the state’s largest compost operation, soils science, and presentations from leading compost experts. The classes will be held on the grounds of the beautiful San Antonio Botanical Gardens. Attendance is limited to Master Gardeners. The fee is \$225 for the classes and meals. For more information and an application, contact David Rodriguez, County Extension Agent – Horticulture, at 210-467-6575 or dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu. **CE based on length of class**

Saturday, June 25, 9 – 10 am. “Composting,” by Forrest Arnold. Almost all of the plant material wastes from your yard and kitchen can be transformed into a free fertilizer and soil amendment, if you know how to compost. Forrest will explain how to compost, how to construct various bin styles and how to compost correctly to produce your own rich, fertile, garden soil amendment. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, Austin. For information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

CMG Committee Reports

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 1, at 10 am.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The Comal County AgriLife Extension Gardens will meet on the first and third Tuesdays, May 7 and 21, at 8 am. The Sunday before the workday an email will go out with information on what the group will be doing and the supplies to bring. Anyone interested in working in the extension gardens should email Linda Valdez (ldvaldez@satx.rr.com) for work assignments. See you in the gardens.

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, June 23, at 9 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, June 20, 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, June 15, at 8:30 am. For information, contact Harlan Kraft (210-846-5643 or harlankraft@gmail.com).

NEWSLETTER

The planning meeting for the June issue will be Friday, June 3, at 11 am at EnJoy Café in Bulverde. Contact Editor Bonnie Leitch (830-660-2335 or bleitch@earthlink.net) for information about the meeting or contributing to the newsletter. If you have any information about gardening activities that should be in the newsletter, contact Julie Siliven (rejhs@gvtc.com or 830-885-2665).

COMAL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS GARDEN

The Fairgrounds Committee will move its workday to the fourth Thursday this month, June 23 at 9 am at the Grant Street Gardens. Committee members will receive an email memo. For more information, contact Jane Langley (830-620-4264).

LINDHEIMER GARDENS

The Lindheimer Garden workday will be the second Tuesday, June 14 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 (830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com) 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.

WEBSITE

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

Comal Gardener

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Comal Master Gardeners Association Bylaws

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

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

JUNE 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 am Executive Board Meeting	2	3 11 am Newsletter Committee Mtg Cindy Sansone's	4
5	6	7 8 am Ext Office Gardens	8	9	10	11
12	13 10 am Herb SIG Meeting	14 8:30 am Lindheimer Gardens	15 8 am Conservation Plaza 8:30 Hope Hospice	16	17	18
19	20 8:30 am New Life Garden	21 8 am Ext Office Gardens	22	23 8 am County Fairgrounds Gardens Grant Street 9 am Bulverde SB Library	24	25
26	27 6 pm MG General Meeting GVTC	28	29 8 am Conservation Plaza	30		