



March 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)

Volume XII

<http://comal-tx.tamu.edu>

Number 8

Bylaws Committee Proposes Possible Changes

The Bylaws Committee has received some proposals for possible changes to the bylaws from the general membership. These changes are not being proposed by the Bylaws Committee itself, but rather these were ideas that were submitted to the committee for consideration. Because the Bylaws Committee reports to the membership, the committee would like to know how the membership feels about the proposals and requests feedback. One of the responsibilities of the bylaws committee is to address issues of interest from our members.

Please study these suggested changes submitted by some of the Comal Master Gardeners, and address any questions, concerns and/or recommendations you might have to any member of the Bylaws Committee: Larry Williamson (chair), Patty Godfrey, Willie Hagen, Richard Wackerbarth and Nat Warner.

Proposed Change in Officers' Term Limits

The Executive Board is currently comprised of six members elected by the general membership: President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and immediate Past-President. The elected officials select three additional board members: chairpersons of the Educational Enrichment Program, Volunteer Service Coordination Committee and the Newsletter Committee (or the Vice President of Communications – see below).

Any officer other than the President and President-Elect may be re-elected to the same office for a consecutive term. A new proposal would limit the following officers to two terms: all members of the Executive Board, all chairmen, members of the Bylaws Committee and timekeepers.

Proposed Change in Officers' Titles

The Vice President would become the Vice President of Master Gardener Training. The Volunteer Services Coordinator would become the Vice President of Volunteer Services. The Educational Enrichment Chairman would become the Vice President of Education.

(Bylaws continued on page 2)

CMG March Meeting
Tuesday, March 23 at 6:00 pm
Speaker: *Jeff Pavlat*
Topic: *Using Cactus and Succulents in the Landscape*
Place: *St Paul Lutheran Church (see details in Garden Posts)*

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•••

- For the March 23 CMG meeting: St Paul Lutheran Church is located at 181 S Santa Clara Ave. in New Braunfels. The church is next to the Children's Museum. Enter from the parking lot on San Antonio Street, and the entry is in front of you.
- The Herb SIG will be meeting at Sally Ann's house to learn all about the Herb of the Year. Yes, it is dill and it has everything that the International Herb Society could ask for in an herb. Not only is it healthy for us and for the swallowtail butterfly, it is beautiful to look at and a culinary wonder. Come explore a fabulous herb on March 8, 2010. To reserve a spot, contact Sally Ann by March 1, 2010 at mustang_sally6@msn.com.
- **Did you know?** According to the *Texas Master Gardener Management Guide*: "Master Gardeners should wear Master Gardener name badges and/or shirts/apparel to activities that receive volunteer hours."
Read it all at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/mastergd/tmgmgal.html>
- From Treasurer Donna Lehr: Balance as of January 26: \$10,095.79. Expenses for February: \$1504.78. Income in February: \$3736.00 – mostly from Class 2010 fees.
- Please reserve May 8 for the annual Herb Affair that CMG sponsors jointly with the Antique Rose Emporium. If you would like to volunteer to help on that day, please contact either of the co-chairs Mary Moses (marycm@me.com or 830-226-5552) or Ray Elizondo (tu1964@earthlink.net or 830-606-0198).
- Don't forget ... Arbor Day will be commemorated March 18, at 10:30 am, by an Arbor Day presentation and program. Meet at the Pavilion in Landa Park for the annual dedication of the trees. Cookies and refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Meredith Nyman at 830-620-0753.
- Marilyn Godwin, Meredith Nyman, Karen Glisky and Germaine Tuff will provide refreshments for the March meeting.

Possible Changes in Bylaws from page 1

Proposed Creation of New Officer

A new position of Vice President of Communications would replace the Newsletter Chair on the Executive Board. The Newsletter Committee, Website Committee and Advertising Committee would report to the Vice President of Communications.

Proposed Change in Executive Board Criteria

An additional proposal would stipulate that no two members of the Executive Board may be from the same household.

Proposed Changes in the Nominating Committee Structure

Another proposed change in the bylaws would revise the Nominating Committee as follows:

- Committee members would be chosen by the entire Executive Board rather than the president.
- The committee would be increased from three members to five.
- The committee would include no more than one member from the same Master Gardener class or from the same household. Members from each Master Gardener class, including the most recent, would be eligible for the committee.
- Committee members would serve from January to June and would not be eligible to serve the following year.

- Nominees would be presented to the membership at the General Membership meeting in March. Nominations accepted from the floor during the March meeting would be accepted at the April General Membership meeting.
- Elections would be held during the May General Membership meeting. Prior to the vote, each candidate would have three minutes to address the membership.

Proposed Addition of Non-Voting Officer

It is also recommended that the organization elect a Parliamentarian or Sergeant-at-Arms, who would not be a voting member of the Executive Board.

Proposed Change in Volunteer Hours Criteria

Another suggestion is to consider counting travel time in volunteer hours served. This would not reduce the amount of required service hours. The change would allow the organization to report a larger number of volunteer hours, which better reflects the actual time spent by our members in service to the community.

Proposed Executive Board Spending Limit

An additional proposal would impose a limit on the amount of funds the Executive Board can spend on any one item without membership approval.

Come to Gartenfest!

What better way to welcome in the first day of spring than by attending Gartenfest on Saturday, March 20 at Conservation Plaza? Comal Master Gardeners will be hosting an Herb Plant Sale at Gartenfest. Stop by and purchase herbs you have been wanting from 9 am to 3 pm, but come early because the great selection of herbs will go fast. CMG will have dill, chives, comfrey, four kinds of lavender, 3 types of mint, bay, 2 types of sage and oregano, parsley, three varieties of rosemary, Mexican mint marigold, lemon verbena and even basil, if the weather cooperates.

The Theme for this year's Gartenfest is "A Gardener's Green Approach to Life, Featuring the Dirty, the Squirmy, and the Tasty." Admission to the Conservation Plaza Grounds is free. Gartenfest will feature vendors, like The Antique Rose Emporium and Garden Clubs from around the area, and there will be guest lectures with ticketed admission at Forke Store. Two of our own Comal Master Gardeners will be presenting demonstrations for Green Living. Karen Scherrer will present "Green Pet Care" at 10 am and noon. Marilyn Goodwin will present "Green House Cleaning" at 11 am and 1 pm. For information, call 830-832-9699.

Conservation Plaza is the home of the Heritage Rose Garden maintained by Comal Master Gardeners. Forke Store has been the location for the Comal Master Gardener Christmas Party for the last several years. Conservation Plaza has the largest collection of German Fachwerk buildings in Texas. The largest structure on the plaza, The Baetge House, would have been lost under Canyon Lake if not for the efforts of the Conservation Society. A field of wildflowers beside the log cabin and Jahn House is just ready to bloom. Bring your checkbook to take advantage of our Comal Master Gardener Herb Sale, and while you're at it, check out the Conservation Society's Silent Auction.

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**

Growing Like a Weed!

by Lu Allen , Peggy Hamm, Bonnie Leitch, Susan Rench, Julie Siliven and Marlene Skaggs

It seems that every March finds us gardeners in a state somewhere between amazement and horror at the number and size of the weeds that leap apparently from thin air. This spring the weed invasion appears to be more virulent, thanks to a wet fall after a blazing summer. So read and weep – or take some consolation in the shared misery of others. You might even learn of some method to control one of these pests that has decided to bedevil you and your garden.

Henbit or Lamium amplexicaule

One of the prettiest weeds I have in my yard is henbit. I thought it was a wildflower the first time I saw one, but it is a member of the mint family. According to the National Gardening Association, henbit sprouts in the fall and blooms in early spring. The flowers are attractive, but the spreading plants will take over a lawn or garden. Interestingly enough, the “bit” in henbit does not refer to the past tense of “bite” but to the relative size of the plant and flower.

Henbit is responsible for painting many lawns with a pinkish purple in the early spring. It sprouts from seed formed in the fall from the previous spring crop. Beware, for once the weed is established, it is hard to get rid of.

According to *Gardenguides.com*, henbit has square stems, the upper leaves of which appear to encircle the entire stem. It grows in an upright position, seldom reaching heights greater than 12 inches. The flowers range from pink to purple. A related species, purple deadnettle, has foliage that is redder and more compact.

Although henbit does not have herbal or medicinal uses, it is used in flower arrangements because of its unusual leaf shape. It also provides valuable erosion control in many cropland fields of the southern United States.

Henbit is most effectively controlled with a pre-emergent herbicide applied early in the fall before the seeds germinate. In addition, mulch discourages this weed, which needs sun to sprout and grow. Henbit is easily controlled by pulling the plant out by the roots, too. Look for it this spring! JS

Chickweed or Stellaria media

Chickweed got its name because it is a weed often eaten by chickens, according to the National Gardening Association Weed Library. It is a widespread, hardy annual often found in moist, fertile garden soil. Most varieties are succulent and have white flowers. They all exhibit a very interesting trait termed the “Sleep of Plants.” Every night, the leaves fold over the tender buds and the new shoots.

Richard L. Duple, Turfgrass Specialist with the Texas Cooperative Extension, defines common chickweed as a matted, herbaceous, winter annual broadleaf plant. Other common names for chickweed include starweed, winterweed, satin flower and tongue grass.

Chickweed is edible and nutritious and is used as a leaf vegetable, often raw in salads. It also has uses in folk medicine. The 17th-century herbalist John Gerard recommended it as a remedy for mange. Modern herbalists prescribe it for skin diseases, bronchitis, rheumatic pains and arthritis. A poultice of chickweed can be applied to cuts, burns and bruises.

The plant is also used to relieve constipation. An infusion of dried chickweed is used for coughs and hoarseness and is beneficial in the treatment of kidney complaints. New research indicates chickweed might be an effective antihistamine. Fresh chickweed can be eaten in summer salads or can be fed to pets to assist in the expulsion of hairballs and to sooth the digestive tract. It is said to be an effective and gentle laxative. The seeds are food for finches and many other seed-eating birds.

For all its redeeming qualities, do not forget that this plant is an invasive weed. Control is difficult due to the heavy seed sets, although herbicides are effective when the plants are small. Control chickweed by pulling, which is easiest to do with the help of an old table fork. Dry plants in the sun before composting them. Mulching vacant garden space in winter will reduce chickweed problems. JS

Dandelions

Dandelion, or *Taraxacum officinale*, is also known as lion's tooth, puffball, blowball and monk's head. The weed is a major problem in turf, ornamental plantings, meadows, pastures and alfalfa. Dandelion was introduced from Europe and has been used as an herb and medicinal plant since Roman times. It has high vitamin and mineral content. Mature leaves are often dried and used to make a mild tea. Roots also are used to make a stronger tea or dried and used for various medicinal purposes, including a mild diuretic. Salads, beer and wine are also made from the leaves and flowers.

Dandelion is a perennial that grows best in moist areas in full sun; however, it can survive some shade and dry conditions once established. It produces a strong taproot capable of penetrating the soil to a depth of 6 to 18 inches. Buds grow from the uppermost area of the root, producing a crown, which can regenerate new plants even though the plant is cut off at or below the soil surface. Sections of the root as short as one inch in length are also capable of producing new plants. There are no true stems, rather the leaves are clustered in a rosette at the base of the plant. Leaves vary in length from 2 to 14 inches and are ½ to 3 inches wide. Margins of the leaves are deeply serrated, forming a typical "lion's tooth" outline.

Seed germination occurs throughout the growing season and can last 8 to 15 weeks. Flowering begins soon after the seedling stage and continues throughout the life of the plant. Dandelion flowers are not normally pollinated but develop asexually. Flowering occurs nearly year-round in temperate climates. Dandelion plants can survive for many years, developing massive, thickened crowns 6 to 10 inches across.

Dandelion can be a major weed problem for turf and ornamental plantings. It forms dense circular mats of leaves that crowd out desirable species and reduce the vigor of surrounding plants. Because of the extensive root system of established plants, hand-pulling or hoeing to remove dandelions is usually futile unless done repeatedly over a long period of time. Control by this means is most successful in lawns and gardens.

According to Calvin Finch's article in the *San Antonio Express News'* gardening section, this has been quite a year for our lawns. A hot summer followed by a cold winter has given lawns a roller-coaster ride. When the drought was in full attack, we did not have weed problems, but now our usual winter weeds, including dandelions, are sprouting. The best thing to do with the current crop is to keep it mowed and pulled to prevent the production of seeds for next year. Finch says late February or early March is the time for the first application of a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent summer weeds, then another application in late May. LA

References: Pest Notes Publication 7469, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources July 2006

Bane of my Existence

In the spring, just about at the end of cedar season, an invader strikes in our meadow across the street. We named it the noxious weed, but it is officially known as *Galium aparine* from the Rubiaceae family and has many other nicknames. Whether you call it bedstraw, catchweed, cleaverwort, everlasting friendship, goose grass, grip grass, scratch grass, stick-a-back, sticky willie, scarthgrass, white hedge, beggar's lice, velcro weed or any other of the dozens of names it goes by, this weed is obnoxious.

Sticky willie has a series of six long, narrow, sticky leaves arranged in a circle at intervals along a square sticky stem. If left to flower and seed, it will produce tiny star-like white flowers and bright green, sticky seedpods. The weed is a self-seeding annual.

You might have noticed the repeated adjective “sticky” in *Galium aparine*’s description. Walking anywhere close to this groundcover makes the unfortunate animal or person an instant carrier of plant or seed. Brushing against or touching the plant can cause a severe rash to exposed areas. If not removed from the landscape, the weed can crawl up adjacent plants and overwhelm them. Sounds like a monster in a horror movie, doesn’t it?

There are, apparently, some uses for beggar’s lice. The fresh top growth has been used as a spring tonic and as a treatment for various skin diseases. Before the seeds form, the leaves can even be cooked like spinach and eaten. In Seattle, there is an annual contest for *Galium* recipes whose major ingredients are slugs.

The most pressing question about catchweed is how to control or eliminate it. Fortunately, it is easily raked up, many times root and all. Its tiny roots make it an easy target for any type of pulling. That, I can attest, is a very satisfying March activity. BL

A Plague Upon Us

What weed is so epidemic that it is considered one of the nation’s ten worst? The answer is Johnsongrass, *Sorghum halepense*. Johnsongrass was first introduced in the United States around 1830 as a forage crop. Soon, however, it was discovered that during times of drought and stress, Johnsongrass produces an acid that is poisonous to cattle and horses. An invasion of this troublesome perennial grass weed reduces yields in corn, soybean, cotton and other plant crops. This grass grows up to 8 feet tall, crowds out desirable plants and destroys food and shelter for birds and other wildlife.

Johnsongrass is a subtropical weed that does best in the South where cotton flourished. It can now be found as far west as Texas and even California. It thrives in any patch of disturbed soil, whether plowed, bulldozed or just overgrazed and overworked.

The seedling of Johnsongrass resembles a young corn seedling. The mature plant has a stout, erect, smooth stem. The leaf is rolled in, and the bright green bud has a prominent white midrib down the leaf blade. The flower head is open and purplish, with many whorls of pyramid-shaped branches. Johnsongrass propagates by seeds and rhizomes. These extensive rhizomes are thick and fleshy with purple or red nodes. A single plant can produce more than 80,000 seeds and 275 feet of rhizomes in one growing season! Seedlings develop rhizomes 3 to 4 weeks after emergence. Johnsongrass is a formidable pest, making complete eradication extremely difficult. As with most other weeds, the key is to implement multiple control strategies when Johnsongrass is first observed and not wait until it is firmly established. A Johnsongrass control program includes preventing the spread of rhizomes, killing or weakening established plants and their underground rhizomes, controlling seedlings originating from dispersed seed, preventing the production of seeds and using fall tillage to bring rhizomes to the soil surface, where they can be killed by winter conditions.

To reduce Johnsongrass infestations with herbicides, use an integrated approach consisting of soil-applied herbicides, postemergence herbicides, crop rotation and tillage. Solarization removal methods involving mulching with clear plastic can be effective if the weed exists in smaller colonies and has not spread too far. Johnsongrass should always be mowed to prevent it from blooming and going to seed, while you work to remove it from your land.

In a home lawn setting, control Johnsongrass by repeated close mowing, which weakens the plant over time. In gardens and around outbuildings, Roundup or grass-specific herbicides like Ortho Grass Killer will usually eliminate stands with one or two applications. Late summer is an ideal time to spray. In vegetable gardens where the infestation is small, clumps and individual plants may be hand-pulled just after a rain when the ground is soft. All subterranean plant parts, including broken stems and roots, should be dug up and removed from the area to prevent re-growth. SR

Nutsedge

Nutsedge loves water and will thrive in soil that drains poorly or is over-watered. Once the plant is well established, it will survive during droughts. The weed is often confused with nut grass, but it is a true sedge. Nutsedge leaves are thicker and stiffer than grass leaves and are solid rather than hollow like grasses. Nutsedge grows from rhizomes, which produce tubers, and the buds on the tubers sprout new plants. The rhizomes may be as deep as 14 inches below the soil surface, making them all but impossible to completely remove.

Nutsedge, a different shade of green from lawn grasses, gives a spotty appearance to a well-mowed lawn. It also grows faster than lawn grasses. The weed grows well under tall shrubs but does not do as well under low-growing, dense foliage. The tubers multiply quickly, creating large patches of this irritating weed.

To control nutsedge, remove small plants before they have five or six leaves. A frequent weeding program depletes the energy in the tubers, and they will eventually die out. Hand-pulling or digging seems to be the best way to control nutsedge. Mulching with landscape fabric also suppresses growth. Systemic herbicides, like glyphosate, are only moderately successful and must be applied when the nutsedge is in its growing stage. A mature plant will not transfer the herbicide from the leaves to the tuber. PH

For more complete information on nutsedge, go to <http://www.ag.arizona.edu/turf/ccps700.htm>
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7432.html>

Simlax bona-nox L.

Better known as “#@*!# stupid thorny greenbrier” in my garden, *Simlax bona-nox L.* is also called catbrier, bullbrier, chinabrier and tramp’s trouble. It is a prickly undergrowth vine and grows very happily in the same locations as muscadine grape, Virginia creeper and poison ivy. I hate poison ivy more than greenbrier, but not by much. Simlax can rip a long gap in an ungloved hand or an unprotected leg that feels just as uncomfortable as the rash from poison ivy – the pain just doesn’t last as long.

The vines reproduce both by seeds and rhizomes. They tolerate most soils and habitats. The best control I have found is frequent cutting to the ground and digging the rhizomes that are nearest the top of the ground. Hefty doses of herbicides will have some effect, but it seems to require multiple treatments of really strong stuff. I feel more comfortable swearing at it while I cut it back.

The only two good things about greenbrier are deer will browse on new leaves, and the weed provides some groundcover protection for small wild critters. MS

For more information, see http://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=13315
<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/smibon/all.html>



Class 2010 at work

March Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

I am now in countdown mode to March 15. This is the average date of our last freeze, although last year I believe we had an unexpected freeze somewhere around the first week of April. Over the last couple of months, I've written about planning spring gardens, adding compost and other amendments, rejuvenating the soil--and yourselves--and planning where to plant vegetables.

March is a good time to talk about crop rotation. Rotating vegetable plantings is important because it will prevent headaches and disappointments throughout the season. Not only do we have to fight the bugs invading our gardens from the air, but we also fight several mean microscopic enemies trying to kill our plants underground! Moving crops breaks the cycle of these bad guys by moving their food source.

For instance, both verticillium and fusarium wilts live in the soil long after the plants have been pulled and composted. These two viruses affect all varieties of the tomato family. Fortunately, hybrid varieties are usually bred to resist these wilts, but heirlooms are not. If you are an heirloom fan, or fanatic like me, rotation is a wonderful safeguard.

Many of us grow gardens in raised beds, so rotating plants is relatively easy. Just group plants from the same family together and each season, move each plant family to an adjacent bed. The hardest part for me is remembering all the different families. The following list of vegetable groups was a great find from one of my gardening magazines:

Onion – onions, garlic, leeks and shallots

Carrot – carrots, celery, parsley and parsnips

Sunflower – sunflowers, lettuce and a few other leafy greens

Cabbage – cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale, rutabagas, kohlrabi and some leafy greens

Spinach – spinach, beets and chard

Cucumber – cucumbers, melons, squash and gourds

Pea – Peas and beans

Grass – corn, wheat, oats and rye

Tomato – tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and potatoes

According to *The Natural Gardener*, March is the month for planting seedlings of broccoli, chard, endive, collards, leaf lettuce and mustard greens. In late March, plant tomato and pepper plants.

Sow seeds for beets, chard, peas and radishes in early March. Late March is the time to plant cantaloupe, corn, cucumbers, eggplants, summer squash, watermelons, gourds and luffas. Start drying dill and freezing cilantro in olive oil. These two herbs do not like hot weather and will begin bolting very quickly.

March is the last good month for planting trees and shrubs because planting later will expose them to heat stress. Go crazy planting flowers like marigolds, moonflowers, morning glories and sunflowers -- and nicotianas, in shady areas.

Begin to fertilize plants again to encourage new growth, but look out for aphids and whiteflies. Stock up on ladybugs, insecticidal soap or spinosad, a new chemical class of insecticides registered by the EPA, and get ready to do something about every three days, because aphids reproduce quickly and whiteflies can suck the life out of a rose petal in no time!

Let's call March the "back in business" month!

March 2010 Gardening Opportunities

Monday, March 15 through May 31, 9 am - 5:30 pm. “Wildflower Days.” From mid-March until May 31, the Wildflower Center is open every day so you can see our spring wildflowers. Lots of children’s activities and fun for families as they look at the bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush and dozens of other blooms. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. Austin.

Friday, March 19 & Saturday, March 20, Friday: 1 to 5:30 pm & Saturday: 8:15 am to 5 pm, “Creativity with Herbs and a Celebration of the Umbel Family with Dill, Herb of the Year.” 15th Annual Herb Forum. Friday workshops; Saturday presentations. Festival Institute, 248 Jester Rd., Round Top. Fees Vary. Call 979-249-3129 or visit: <http://festivalhill.org/index>

Wednesday, March 24, “Pollinators Return!” Make a return visit to the Mesquite Creek Wildlife Habitat Area to discover the pollinators who are already busy in the springtime garden. Ravenstar Outdoor Education Center. This program will be held at MCWHA on FM 1101, just past the landfill. For more information, or to pre-register, call 830-626-1776 or email info@ravenstaroutdoors.org

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Explore the natural world 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 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.

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

March 2010 CE Opportunities

Thursday, March 4, 9 – 11 am. “Plant Propagation Class.” Learn techniques, take cuttings home, and explore greenhouse. S.A. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Fee: \$20. To register, contact Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **2 CE**

Friday, March 5 & Saturday, March 20, 10 – 11 am. Watersaver Walk. Information about planning, planting and maintaining low water use landscape year-round. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Free with admission to SABOT. For information call: 210-207-3261. **1 CE**

Saturday, March 6, 9 - 11 am. “Square Foot Gardening 101.” Learn all about square foot gardening like how to build it, what kind of soil to use, plant placement, fertilizing and more. Fanick’s Garden Center, 1025 Holmgreen Rd. Free. Limited seating so bring your favorite chair. **2 CE**

Saturday, March 6, 9:30 – 11:30 am. “Backyard Vegetable Gardening,” by Tom Harris. Learn about veggie varieties, planting dates, beds, containers, soils, watering, fertilizing and harvesting. S.A. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. \$35, includes admission. To register, contact Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **2 CE**

Saturday, March 6, 10 am - Noon. "Growing Olives for Fun and/or Profit," by Sandy Winoker. Discussion on varieties, propagation, fertilizing & setting up a grove. Tour included. Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard; IH 37 South, Exit 120 (Hardy Rd) \$27 fee. To register: 210-657-8866 or www.communityed.neisd.net **2 CE**

Saturday, March 6, 10 -11 am. "Organic Gardening Solutions," by Malcolm Beck and Comal Master Gardeners. Antique Rose Emporium, 7561 Evans Rd. Free. Contact Robbi at 210-651-4565 **1 CE**

Friday, March 12, 9 -11 am. "Spring Into Action: Starting Your Vegetable Garden Right." A free, hands-on demonstration, this seminar on soil and the first steps of starting a vegetable garden will increase your vegetable gardening knowledge. Learn about soil amendments, the correct way to prepare and handle transplants and how to prepare and plant seeds. Travis County AgriLife Extension office, 1600-B Smith Road, Austin. Free. Phone: 512-854-9600. **2 CE**

Saturday, March 13, Time TBA. "Tomatoes, Peppers, and More!" by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist. Earth-Kind® Landscape Series. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. Fee: \$20 per session. To register, please contact Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **CE based on length of seminar**

Saturday, March 13, 10 am - Noon. "Spring Vegetable Gardening," by Patty Leander, Master Gardener. Learn how to plant and maintain a spring vegetable garden. This seminar is loaded with basic facts and helpful ideas, useful to both new and experienced vegetable gardeners. Zilker Botanical Garden 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin. Come early to get a seat. Free.

Saturday, March 13, 9:30 - 11:30 am. "Drip Line Gardening," by Tom Harris. Space your plants and your drippers according to growing needs. S.A. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston. \$35, includes admission. To register, contact Sasha Kodet at 210-207-3270 or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **2 CE**

Saturday, March 20, 9:00 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. Location: Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium and visit to Kight installation. Call 830-249-4616. **3 CE**

Wednesday, March 24, 3 – 5 pm. "Drought Avoidance" by David Will. New Braunfels Public Library, 700 E. Common St. Call 830-221-4300 or 830-608-2150. **2 CE**

Saturday, March 27, 9:00 am - Noon. "Natural Landscape Design Class," by Judit Green, TPWD urban biologist. She will offer design, installation, and maintenance tips, as well as ideas about plants to incorporate in your design, especially with "deer in the garden" challenges. Then, a tour of CNC's new and established native landscape will show some of these plants in the ground. Go home with a list of drought-tolerant plants that are attractive to humans, butterflies and birds. Cibolo Nature Center <http://www.cibolo.org/directions> Cost: Members \$20 per person; non-members \$25 per person. Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616. **3CE**

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 COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 3 at 9 am, one hour earlier than usual.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The Landscape Committee will meet on March 2 and March 16 at 10 am. We will weed, plant cacti and continue work on the dry creek bed. Bring a ladder, loppers, kneepads and your favorite garden tools. Look for an email before we go for glass, in case you want some, too. Contact Linda Valdez at ldvaldez@satx.rr.com or co-chair, Sally Ann Hnatiuk at mustang_sally6@msn.com if you have any questions.

NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION PLAZA GARDENS

Our workdays this month are March 10 and 24 at 10 am. We will fertilize and mulch the roses, if we can find any mulch. 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

Two workdays per month are scheduled for the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library Butterfly Garden for the next few months. The second Saturday, March 13 at 10:30 am and the third Tuesday, March 16 at 3 pm are the March workdays. Contact Peggy Hamm at khamma@gvtc.com or Lee Franzel at lee Franzel@gvtc.com for more information.

NEW LIFE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Butterfly Garden workday is Monday, March 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

The Fairgrounds Committee will be meeting Thursday, March 18 at 9 am. Contact Aleta Meyer if you have any questions, at aleta_meyer@hotmail.com or 830-629-2929.

LINDHEIMER GARDENS

Lindheimer workday will be on Tuesday, March 9 at 9 am. If the weather is bad, you will receive an e-mail about time or date change. The weather certainly has not cooperated the last two months. We will put out fertilizer and mulch if the ground is warm enough. Contact Germaine Tuff at 830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com if you have questions.

NEWSLETTER

The planning meeting for the April issue will be Friday, March 11, at 11 am. 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@gvtc.com or 830-885-2665.

HOSPICE NEW BRAUNFELS

The Hospice Gardens will have workdays Tuesday, March 2 at 10 am and Saturday, March 20 at 10 am. The Hospice workdays will be on the first Tuesday and third Saturday of each month, unless there are conflicts.

WEBSITE

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

Following the calendar is a WANTED: DEAD poster!

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

Comal Gardener

Published by Comal Master Gardeners Disclaimer – The information herein is for educational purposes only. Any expressed opinions are solely the individual writer’s or those of the referenced source.

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)

March 2010

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Note: Phone Bank is also available every Wednesday at 9 am</p> | 1 | 2 9 am – Phone Bank 10 am - Extension Gardens 10 am - Hospice Gardens | 3 9 am – Exec Bd Mtg 1:30 pm Class 6 – Native Plants, Perennials and Bulbs | 4 1:30 – Phone Bank | 5 11 am Newsletter Mtg at the A Tan | 6 10 am Class 7 – Compost and organic fertilizers (ARE) |
| 7 | 8 10 Herb SIG | 9 9 am – Phone Bank 9 am Lindheimer Gardens | 10 10 am Conservation Plaza 1:30 pm Class 8 – Pest Mgmt. and Pesticides | 11 1:30 – Phone Bank | 12 | 13 10:30 am Bulverde/Spring Branch Library Garden |
| 14 | 15 9 am New Life Garden | 16 9 am – Phone Bank 10 am – Extension 3 pm - Bulverde/Spring Branch Library | 17 1:30 pm Class 9a – Planning Home Landscape Class 9b – Home Landscape Drawing | 18 9 am Fair Garden 10:30 – Arbor Day 1:30 – Phone Bank | 19 | 20 10 am – 3 pm Gartenfest 10 am – Hospice Gardens |
| 21 | 22 | 23 9 am – Phone Bank | 24 10 am Conservation Plaza & Phone Bank 1:30 Class 10 Fruits / Nuts | 25 1:30 – Phone Bank | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 1:30 Class 11 – Propagation Lab | | | |

Wanted: DEAD!!



Johnsongrass



Chickweed



Henbit



Grass burrs



Nutsedge



Dichondra



Greenbrier



Dandelions