



May 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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Number 11

Be a Part of the Herb Affair

The ninth annual Herb Affair takes place Saturday, May 7 from 9:30 am until 3 pm at the Antique Rose Emporium. Themed "Herbs for all Seasons," the Herb Affair is presented by the ARE and the Comal Master Gardeners. The Herb Affair will demonstrate the use of herbs throughout the home and garden, especially, using herbs in the kitchen. Horseradish, the 2011 Herb of the Year will be featured.

This year CMGs and their displays include the following: Sally Ann Hnatiuk and Evelyn Penrod (Horseradish), Marty Hopmann and Barb Briney (Natural Beauty with Herbs), Mary Salmon and Cindy Burch (Growing Herbs in South Texas), Sharon Deeney and Beverly and Larry Williamson (The Pesto Place), Linda Ray and Jean Peterson (Preserving and Drying Herbs), Germaine and Don Tuff (Herbs and Hummingbirds), Meredith Nyman and Karen Glisky (Herbal Cleansers), Linda Sickles and Rosalie Meier (Basil, A Culinary Star) and Mary Moses and Kathy Nelson (Nature Printing with Herbs).

Catherine Hall is in charge of the event's ambiance. Patty Malek and Sonja Howard are working with CMG class members on refreshments. Sergina Flaherty, Ilia Lomba, Lu Allen and Nancy Horne will be welcoming guests at the Emporium. Donna Welch is in charge of publicity.

Robbi Will from the Antique Rose Emporium has provided guidance to CMGs throughout the planning for the event. Karen Scherrer and Marilyn Godwin are co-chairs. Both leaders are indebted to all of the Comal Master Gardeners and members of the Class of 2011 who have helped with the affair.

Come, smell the roses and take in the beauty of the Antique Rose Emporium gardens. Join your CMG friends and learn some new information about herbs. Make this an affair to remember. The Antique Rose Emporium is located at 7561 E. Evans Rd. north of San Antonio.

CMG General Membership Meeting

6 pm Monday, May 23rd

Topic: *Cibolo Nature Center*

Speaker: *Ben Eldredge*

Place: *GVTC*

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•••Garden Posts•••

- On Monday, May 9 at 10 am the Herb SIG will be meeting to learn how to make herb-infused wines and vodkas. This will be a hands-on demonstration. Please bring your lunch and stay after the meeting to share in fun and conversation. You don't have to be a Master Gardener to attend so bring friends. Contact Sally Ann Hnatiuk at mustang_sally6@msn.com for more information
- Treasurer Marlene Ballard's report for April: Income, \$177 and expenses, \$483.47. Balance as of April 24 was \$12,745.02.
- Be sure to attend the CMG's May membership meeting to learn of new projects and initiatives at the Cibolo Nature Center from Ben Eldredge, Cibolo Nature Center's Director of Adult Education and the Citizen Science program. The refreshments for the meeting will be provided by Linda Dufour, Sonja Howard, Carol McWilliams and Nancy Wackerbarth.
- 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.
- There is a password-protected "members only" section in the newly-improved CMG website that includes private information like member status and our directory. For the password, contact Ron Williford at (r033@gvvc.com). This password also works on the state website.
- Members, don't forget to check your hours. The deadline is just around the corner!
- Save the date! The 9th Annual Herb Affair will be held on Saturday, May 7 from 9:30 am – 3 pm at the Antique Rose Emporium. See the article on page one for more information.
- Committee chairs, it is budget time again. Please get your budgets for 2011-2012 to Treasurer Marlene Ballard (marleneballard@gvvc.com) as soon as possible.
- Sally Ann Hnatiuk, chair of the Herb SIG and co-chair of the Extension Office Gardens, is moving to the state of Washington. Rich Bradley, Class of 2010, has volunteered to be the co-chair of the EOG. Best of luck to Sally Ann. She will be greatly missed by all her friends in the organization.

2011-2012 CMG Elections Scheduled

Comal Master Gardeners will vote for next year's officers during the June 27 membership meeting. The nominating committee, comprised of chair Donna Lehr, Peggy Hamm and Sonja Howard, nominates the following slate of officers:

- **President Elect**: Carol McWilliams
- **Vice President**: Lee Franzel
- **Secretary**: Lucy Guerra
- **Treasurer**: Rosalie Meier

A reminder: any Comal Master Gardener may nominate any other member, with permission, during the May or the June meeting before the voting.

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.

A Resort to Remember

Newsletter Committee Field Trip to JW Marriott Resort

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

The JW Marriott was the site of the CMG newsletter's staff first field trip this year. The resort, originally the source of some controversy, is surrounded by natural areas carved out of the landscape. The building design uses the Hill Country tradition of limestone, gorgeous oaks and beautiful views. As we wandered around the grounds, we were surrounded by beautiful plants. A chef's garden, as well as the sparkling wild flower lights that greet visitors in the conference center, held many surprises. All the conference rooms are named for indigenous flowers. Creative plant designs hung from a wall in the main lobby. Gardening was a major motif of the resort, as the following articles will explain in detail.



A Mixed Bag

It might seem a little strange that the newsletter staff of an organization that prides itself on being as ecological as possible would choose to visit and report on the largest JW Marriott resort in the world. In addition, JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort and Spa has 1,002 rooms, 85 of which are suites, two 40,000-square-foot ballrooms, twenty meeting or conference rooms, three event venues, a 26,000-square-foot spa, a waterpark, three restaurants, multiple shops and two 18-hole golf courses. The resort is located north of San Antonio and, in part, over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone.

We went to see the various uses of decorative and landscape plants and the kitchen garden. In the process we learned that the resort replants its bedding flowers every two weeks and resods its extensive lawns on a seasonal basis. That does not, however, mean that JW Marriott is completely wasteful. The complex has several strikingly ecological features.

The first is, ironically, the 36-hole golf course, which is what the resort is really all about. The resort installed a clay shield that covers the entire course and acts as a natural filter in a way in which ordinary Hill Country soil does not. The facility also boasts closed-loop irrigation and a monitoring system to conserve water and, as much as possible, to prevent pollution. Its owner, Austin-based Lumbermen's Investment Corporation, ensured that the entire 2,847-acre Cibolo Canyons Development, which includes the resort and golf courses as well as residential properties, will not exceed 15% impervious cover. Additionally, 758 acres adjoining the golf course, including a 100-acre bird sanctuary, will remain untouched. That area has walking trails closed March through October to protect the endangered golden-cheeked warbler.

Second, the resort is the largest single user in South Texas's CPS Energy Windtricity program. In the program residences and businesses pay a premium to help fund the capture and transmission of energy from wind farms in west and northwest Texas to the state's electric grid. The Marriot's annual premium pays for 70% of the power it uses, which means theoretically the resort gets 70% of its electricity from a renewable source.

Third, the resort has established smaller green initiatives that include the following: the use of recycled steel studs and low-VOC (volatile organic compound) glues and paints in the resort's construction, rooms that feature "smart" heating and cooling systems that shut off when exterior doors are opened, low-flow plumbing in guest bathrooms, the standard "linen reuse" program, the restaurants' menu ingredients that come from within a 150-mile radius and an on-site greenhouse that provides fresh produce for the restaurants.

Finally, the resort is probably better than the alternative: acres of the kind of tract housing that is pervasive in north San Antonio. In those totally-unmonitored neighborhoods, streets, roofs and driveways collect and channel motor oil, paint and other everyday toxins into the recharge zone.

The resort is stunning and super-sized in every way. Overall, the newsletter staff felt that it was an experience for gardeners well worth the trip. BL

Container Gardening at the JW Marriott Hotel

Upon entering the road that travels to the various Marriott buildings, one is cheerfully greeted by a myriad of plants. Like most commercial venues in our area, the Marriott relies heavily on the brightly colored annuals. But what really grabs the eye is the array of huge stone dishes sitting on columns holding an abundance of fuchsia petunias and geraniums. The mass of color is spectacular. I think that it made many of the newsletter staff wonder how many plants were in those mammoth dishes and how they got there.

Everywhere we looked, both inside the buildings and on the grounds, masses of colorful containers greeted us. The newsletter staff couldn't help notice that gardeners were discretely working in many locations and pervasive the Milberger's Nursery logo. I left several messages at a number that I was given because I wanted to ask questions about how often the displays were changed and whether Milberger's was also in charge of the indoor plants. I found the claim that the outdoor displays are "changed about every two weeks" incredible, but my attempts to verify or modify it were unsuccessful.

Many of the plants both inside and out are tropical. Large stone planters massed with various sedums, sempervivums and echeverias are stationed by the front doors. The unique shapes and subtle color variations make these plants seem exotic, but they are really easy to grow. Close to the kitchen garden, also in pots, were a very healthy Duncan grapefruit and a peach tree with several fruits. Various containers with yuccas and a unique tri-colored pencil cactus (*Euphorborbia tirucallii*) are strategically placed for visual impact around the patios areas to catch the visitor's eye.

Not to be outdone, the inside of the hotel boasted a *Dracaena marginata* that loomed over ten feet tall and an enormous urn that was filled with crotons, another kind of dracaena and bromeliads. I wonder if these plants are rented and changed often; some of the plants are not ordinarily potted together, but they do make a stunning exhibit.

All in all, the container plantings were very beautiful, but, to my taste, a bit "staged." It could be that was the look that the resort wanted. MS

Firestick Pencil Cactus



On our tour of the Marriot, the first thing we saw as we walked into the lobby was this beautiful and unusually colored pencil cactus. The difference between the one we saw at the resort and others we had seen before was that it was not only green, but had several variations of green, chartreuse, yellow and red. Examples of the cactus were displayed throughout the lobby in large planters. We also saw additional variations of the plant in planters on the back of the building under the verandas.

Euphorbia Tirucalli, also known as firestick pencil cactus, is a shrub that grows in semi-arid regions. It is also known as milk bush, because it is not a true cactus, but a *Euphorbia*. It is hardy from zones 9a to 11 and grows

best in full sun. In fact, the more sun it gets, the redder it gets, so it is great for xeriscaping. The plant can be propagated from stem cuttings, as long as the cut area dries before planting. Handling the plant might cause irritation or an allergic reaction, and it is best to keep pets away from it because it is considered poisonous. It grows from two to six feet in height. Firesticks are just about the best drought- and fire-resistant ornamentals you can plant. The Marriott's certainly looked different from any pencil cactus any of us had ever seen. VE

Flowers, flowers everywhere; even on the ceilings!

The flowers are bright and picture perfect all around the JW Marriot Resort, but no where are they more intriguingly aglow than on the high ceilings of the entry areas to the Conference Center. The Texas wildflower theme extended with huge blown-glass bluebonnets, poppies, black-eyed Susans, and a multitude of other flowers. A walk down the series of stairs feels like a long stroll through an *Alice-in-Wonderland* meadow with

flowers hanging upside down and high overhead instead of upright at ankle level. The brilliant hues of the multicolored glass flowers shine in the reflections of light from the large windows during the day and from artificial lighting at night.



The creator of this wonderful artwork is Gini Garcia of Garcia Art Glass (www.garciaartglass.com). Gini is the designer, and her sister Dora translates the designs into the glass works. We talked with Dora on a recent visit to their glass factory and showroom. She leads the team of glass blowers and explains the process to visitors who come to watch as globs of molten glass are transformed into beautiful bowls, plates, huge wall platters, light fixtures, vases, paperweights, jewelry and flowers. The two sisters started working together several years ago when Gini became too involved with design work to supervise production. Their work is installed not only in multiple San Antonio sites, but in various sites around the world.

The beautiful gardens around the resort are tended daily by a large team of gardeners, but the wildflowers on the ceiling only require an occasional cleaning to keep them fresh year round. At the Marriott, we found flowers for all types of admirers. PH



Groundcover Gregg Dalea (Dalea greggii)

It is hard to believe the Texas Hill Country could use another golf course, but the Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort and Spa is proof positive. This once controversial environmental project has shown that elegant luxury can peacefully coincide with nature without leaving a green giant of a footprint. A press release from the resort states that the executives are dedicated to "treading lightly" on the natural environment.

This expansive resort has acres of beautiful gardens. The array of colors provides eye candy for the nature lover. For the Texas nature lover, native plants are the draw. One of the gardens has a large expanse of silvery-colored ground cover. It looked very familiar to me. As I got closer, I realized it was Gregg Dalea, a ground cover I have had for over fourteen years.

Also known as Gregg's prairie clover, trailing indigo bush, Indigo bush and trailing dalea, this ground cover is easy to love. It grows only six-to-twelve inches high and is good for dry areas. The slightly silver blue-green leaves are very attractive in moonlight gardens and look lovely at the base of trees. The plant roots at the nodes of long, trailing stems. This makes it especially useful for stabilizing slopes and rocky areas with poor soil. Gregg dalea has a tendency to get leggy, so cutting it back every year is recommended.

Like most daleas, the groundcover does not like fertilizer and overwatering, especially in winter, although in the hottest weather, supplemental water will help keep the foliage full. Although it grows mainly in limestone in the Southern Trans-Pecos and into Mexico, it is adaptable to other soils, as long as they are well drained. In the late winter or early spring, cut off the stems of last season's growth; it will produce new growth in spring. It also has purple pea-like flowers on short spikes, which are not noticeable from a distance but are attractive when close.

If planted on a mound, the Gregg dalea looks more like a shrub. Although authorities recommend full sun, it has grown fine for me in dappled shade. I never shear it close in winter. The purple flowers continue to bloom up to late fall. For outstanding, dense coverage, use a flat of plants. They claim that one plant should spread to four feet, but that has not been my experience.

This heat-tolerant plant, recommended for Zone 8, requires water once in a while, especially when first established. As suggested earlier, the Gregg dalea is not that picky about soil, but the gardener should remove enough rocks to give it good rooting and use existing soil amended slightly with compost.

For such a fantastic native plant, I was surprised at my difficulty in finding it locally. I hope it will be more readily available in the coming months. You will not be disappointed in this Texas native ground cover. Go to <http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/daleagregg.htm> for more information. MTS

The Chef's Gardens

The Chef's Gardens at the JW Marriott are located around the front and sides of the Sunday House, a spacious replica of an actual Hill Country Sunday house in Fredericksburg. Because the resort has six restaurants, bars and lounges, Executive Chef Ryan Littman said it is impossible to grow enough herbs on site to handle the volume of business the restaurants serve on a daily basis.

Chef Littman has worked at the resort from the beginning, and he and Bethany Wiltse, the keeper of the gardens, designed the raised herb beds. They decided which herbs and fruit trees to plant in and around the beds. In January 2010, they started with one raised bed. They quickly realized that they would need more beds because they had such a variety of plants. They added an additional five beds and raised them using a double layer of bricks as edging. Ryan said that so far deer have not been a factor, but they do have some pesky possums and an occasional squirrel. They opted not to put a fence around the gardens, but they do set a live trap and try to relocate the critters. Each raised bed is watered regularly with an irrigation system, and only organic products like Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) are used.



Chef Littman said all of the herbs and fruits they have planted are used in the menus of the various restaurants; however, the 18 Oaks Restaurant, which serves steaks and seafood, uses the majority of them. The resort restaurants supplement their supplies by shopping at local farmer's markets, and the resort uses locally grown beef and seafood. He said the beds are changed seasonally. When we visited, the winter root vegetables, lettuces and cabbages were being changed to accommodate melons, herbs, perennials and annuals.

The resort has a green house in which the staff starts new plants and stores established ones in cold weather. When the temperature dips below freezing, they cover the citrus trees and use light bulbs, hay and compost to protect them. Ryan said that so far their gardening has been trial and error, and they go by "old wives tales." Ryan is very proud of the Green Globe artichoke plants that are already producing artichokes. Other plants that are doing well are chili peppers and heirloom tomatoes. The gardeners have had to make ongoing changes like relocating the lavender in order to make more space. He said one of their failures has been their avocado trees that didn't make it through this past winter's low temperatures. So they are using the bare avocado trees as trellises to support the pole beans, which are doing great.

In various beds, herbs were mixed with a combination of flowers, fruits and vegetables. There were petunias, dahlias, dianthus, marigolds, broccoli, French thyme and strawberries. Gallon cans, sunk in the ground, protected tomatoes that were surrounded by lemon verbena, pink bluebonnets, oregano and rosemary. Next to the beds were a large Mission fig tree already loaded with big green figs, a persimmon tree, a bay leaf tree and a peach tree that had small green peaches on it. Some of the citrus trees included a dwarf key lime, a Miho citrus tree and a grapefruit tree, all planted in large pots. One of the raised beds had basil, green onions, horehound, pineapple sage, tomatillo plants and larkspur. There was also cilantro, pineapple sage and several varieties of mint.

The variety and health of the garden were a tribute to the resort gardeners' care and thoughtfulness. LA.

It's Daylily Time

The San Antonio Daylily Society will be hosting its annual daylily show and sale on Saturday, May 14 at the Antique Rose Emporium. The sale will begin at 10:30 am and end at 4:30 pm, or until the daylilies are sold out. The bloom exhibit will begin at 1 pm after judging. JoNelle Zager will present a talk on growing daylilies at 2:30 pm. Come and see award-winning daylilies and daylily design creations.

Join CMGs Don and Germaine Tuff, Nancy Horne and Ray Elizondo, who are active in the Daylily Club, and learn more about these blooms as you enjoy their beauty in the garden atmosphere of the Antique Rose Emporium.

Celebrate the Graduates

Graduation will be held May 11 at noon at the Grist Mill in Gruene. All Comal Master Gardeners and spouses or guests are welcome to join the students and their mentors as they celebrate this occasion. Attendees will order off the menu. If you plan to attend, please contact Cathy Wonish (830-964-2581 or cwonish@hotmail.com) so she can give the Grist Mill a count of those planning to attend.

CMG's and Friends at Bamberger Ranch

On Wednesday, April 20th, thirty-one Comal Master Gardeners and friends enjoyed an extensive tour of David Bamberger's ranch, Selah. The weather was perfect, cloudy, breezy and not too hot. During the tour CMGs were treated to information about the ranch and its history and funny tidbits about Mr. Bamberger and his trials and tribulations in getting Selah up and running. During the ride, the group enjoyed a short walking tour on one of the many trails, crossing Miller Creek two times and viewing many of the trees planted by Bamberger and his wife. If there is enough interest, it might be possible to schedule another trip to Selah in the fall, once the weather is cooler.



May Gardening To-Do List

by Juleen Randall

I have a mantra, it began about three weeks ago: MULCH, SEA TEA, MULCH, SEA TEA, MULCH, SEA TEA (now repeat). This came to me when I realized I was already watering my vegetable garden every other day, in April! My raised beds were drying out so quickly, I couldn't get my second planting of corn to germinate. After mulching about three inches thick and spraying weekly with sea tea, I have some really lush vegetables. Sea Tea is a combination of seaweed and compost tea that makes a "mega" fertilizer. In past months I've touted this mixture's ability to help with drought tolerance, but while doing research for this month's newsletter, I've found two new reasons to love this stuff: aphids don't like it, and it helps with blossom set. Yesterday I foliar fed everything in my yard with Sea Tea; herbs, fruit trees, roses, everything. Yes, it smelled like we lived beachfront for about an hour, but I think the results will be worth it. So feel free to plant the following and repeat after me MULCH, SEA TEA, MULCH, SEA TEA, MULCH, SEA TEA, ...

May vegetable seeds: lima beans, snap beans, black-eyed peas and beets.

May vegetable plants: cantaloupe, cucumber, peppers and summer squash.

Early May: eggplant and sweet potato slips.

Late May: watermelon.

Both seeds and plants of New Zealand spinach, Malabar spinach, tomatillo, okra and chard can be planted this month. This is perfect for rotational planting.

Plant herbs: the deer-resistant artemesias and lamb's ear; the repellents lemon balm, lemon verbena, scented geraniums and tansy; the cut, scrape and bruise healers yarrow and comfrey; and the flavorful basil, bay, chives, epazote, lavender, Mexican mint marigold, mints, oregano, pennyroyal, rosemary, sage, winter savory and thymes.

Plant annual/perennial seeds and plants: amaranthus, balsam, beebalm, butterfly weed, castor bean, begonia, all daisies including shasta, copper canyon, ox-eye and blackfoot, echinacea, eupatoriums, blue daze, coleus, celosia, coreopsis, cosmos, dusty miller, impatiens, four o'clock, gourds, marigold, moonflower, morning glory (especially the perennial "Grandpa Ott"), pentas, periwinkle, portulaca, purslane, fan flower, ruellias, salvias, sedums, sunflowers, zinnias and many more. Keep in mind when reading the tags at garden centers, some of these plants will say they require full sun. In Texas, four to six hours of sun is considered "full sun," and annuals will last a lot longer if they are moved into partially shaded areas during July and August.

Watch out for these common hot weather problems:

BLOSSOM-END ROT: Uneven watering or a lack of calcium is usually the cause. Be sure to water less often and deeper. Another cause is lack of calcium uptake by the plant (our soil actually has a lot of calcium it just not readily available to the plant). This can be improved with Soil Sulfur, which unlocks the calcium by lowering the pH of your soil. Gypsum may also be added to provide the plant with calcium. Some people are spraying the plant with milk to provide the plant with more calcium.

Poor Fruit Set: Tomato and peppers are pollinated by wind. During humid days, the pollen gets so heavy that it drops to the ground instead of floating to another flower. This can be improved by occasionally shaking the plant on a drier day to get the pollen moving or spraying with seaweed, which helps the plant hold its fruit.

Squash Flower Drop: A squash flower will produce both male and female flowers. It is normal for the male flower to fall off, but if you see many female flowers dropping, you have poor pollination. Hand pollinate by taking one of the male flowers and brushing it on the female. Then use the flower in soups, or batter and deep-fry!

Once again, my thanks to the *Natural Gardener* for some of this wonderful information, and Happy Mother's Day, Memorial Day and Armed Forces Day this month!

May 2011 Gardening Opportunities

Sunday, May 1 - Tuesday, May 31, 9 am – 5:30 pm. “Wildflower Days Begin.” Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin. For information, see www.wildflower.org

Monday, May 2 - Sunday, May 8, 9 am – 5 pm. “National Wildflower Week.” Enjoy a week-long exhibit of professional wildflower photos from *Texas Highways* magazine, and on Friday, guided hikes and a slide show of Wildflower Center photo contest submissions. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. Austin. See www.wildflower.org for information.

Friday, May 6, 11 am – 5 pm. “National Public Gardens Day.” Annual national day of celebration to raise awareness of America's public gardens and their important role in promoting environmental stewardship and awareness, plant and water conservation and education in communities nationwide. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. Austin. See www.wildflower.org for information.

Saturday, May 7, 9 am – 5 pm. “Gardens on Tour.” Join us Mother's Day weekend for a chance to view some of Austin's most beautiful private native plant gardens. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. Austin. See www.wildflower.org for information.

Wednesday, May 25, 10 am. “Plants and Animals Creatures of the Night.” Do bats really drink blood? Are there flowers that only bloom at night? Is that a monster peering at me with glowing eyes? Ever wondered about the plants and animals that rule the Texas night? Then join RavenStar as we learn more about the adaptable and often misunderstood species that live under the stars deep in the heart of Texas. Meeting Location TBD. Fee: \$5.00 for ages 4 and up. If you have any questions about these programs, contact Kelley at education@ravenstaroutdoors.org or 830-626-1776.

Saturday, May 7, 9:30 am – 3 pm. “An Herb Affair,” by Comal Master Gardeners. Taste, touch, smell and see the spectacular displays featuring the many uses of herbs in the home and garden. You are sure to go home inspired by the recipes and demonstrations. San Antonio Display Gardens at the Antique Rose Emporium, 7561 Evans. Contact 979-836-5548 for more information.

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, 9:00 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.

May 2011 CE Opportunities

Wednesday, May 4, 1:30 – 5 pm. Class 16: “Student Landscape Plans.” Class Location: Ron and Pat Williford’s home. **CE based on length of presentation.**

Friday, May 6 & Saturday, May 21, 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, May 14, 9 am - Noon. “Rain Barrel Workshop.” Innovative approach to capturing free water. Lou Kellog, Mary Fernandez & Co. Ext Agent Bryan Davis. S.A. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Fee: \$55. RSVP by May 11 to Sasha Kodet: 207-3270, or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov **3 CE**

Saturday, May 14 - Saturday, May 28, 9 am – 4 pm. “Native Plant Gardening” (NPG) Certificate. This package is composed of the six Native Plant Gardening courses. Courses included in this package: NPG: Landscape Design (May 14th), NPG: Plants I (May 14th), NPG: Plants II (May 21st), NPG: Installation (May 21st), NPG: Maintenance (May 28th) and NPG: Pests (May 28th). Price: \$243.00. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin. See website, www.wildflower.org for information. **CE based on completion of course.**

Monday, May 16, Noon – 3 pm. GVST Essentials of Gardening: “15 Bugs Gardeners Should Know” and “Toxic Landscape Plants,” by Molly Keck, Entomologist, and Paul Cox, Botanist. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels. \$5 donation. Call 210-251-8101 or email (info@gardeningvolunteers.com) 0. **3 CE**

Saturday, May 21, 9 am – 12:30 pm. “Ethnobotany Plant Walk,” by Patty Leslie Pasztor. Learn fascinating history and uses of many of unique plants. Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 10750 Pleasanton Road, San Antonio. \$5 Fee for non-members. RSVP to mail to: mlac@audubon.org **3.5 CE**

Saturday, May 21, 9 am - Noon. “Rainwater Harvesting Workshop,” by John Kight, Engineer and 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, May 21, 11 am – 1 pm. “All About Citrus” Seminar,” by David Rodriguez, AgriLife Ext Svc. Selection, pruning, feeding and general care discussed. Fanick’s Garden Center, 1025 Holmgreen Rd. Austin. Free, but monetary donation for Children’s Vegetable Garden appreciated. Info: <http://www.fanicknursery.com/Seminars.htm> or 512-648-1303. **2 CE**

Saturday, May 21, 10 – 11 am: “Maintaining Your Native Landscape,” by Colleen Dieter. Whether you already have a native landscape, or you are thinking about planting one this fall, Colleen can help. Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road Austin. For information, call 512-288-6113. **1 CE**

Saturday, May 21, 1 – 3 pm. “How to Read a Plant,” by the Travis County Master Gardeners. Discover the needs of your vegetables by observing the physical condition of the plant. Learn many practical tips to improve plant health and vegetable production. Reagan Community Garden, Reagan High School, 7104 Berkman Dr., Austin. **2 CE**

Wednesday, May 25, 3 – 4:30 pm. “Plants and Plans for a Fabulous Fall Garden,” by Patty Glenn Leander, Travis County Master Gardener, Frequent contributor to *Texas Gardener* tells how to continue successful a summer harvest into the fall. Monthly Gardening Series at New Braunfels Public Library, 700 E. Common. Free. No preregistration. For information, call 830-964-4494. **1.5 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 base on credit earned.

Cornell University, Department of Horticulture, offers Organic Gardening, an on-line 8-week course. The course covers one topic during each of the 8 weeks. With a strong foundation in soil health and its impact on plant health, students then explore tried-and-true and cutting-edge techniques for all different kinds of garden plants – annuals and perennials, food plants and ornamentals. Be prepared to spend 2-4 hours a week completing the course. Being an active participant in the discussion boards brings the subject to life, and enriches the learning for all. This course is aimed at those with some basic gardening experience. It includes a number of hands-on activities as well as a group discussion board, quizzes, and readings. Through on-line discussion students share their experiences and contribute to everyone’s learning experience. Cost: \$300. The course is non-credit. Certificate of completion to all who participate and finish the course. <http://hort.cals.cornell.edu/cals/hort/teaching/distance-learning/organic-gardening.cfm> **CE based on completion of course.**

TAMU AgriLife Extension’s Earth Kind program has on-line curriculum presenting core information on environmental stewardship with 12 on-line training modules. Progress is tracked automatically, and results are forwarded to the MG Coordinator. Go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/> **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.**

CMG Committee Reports

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 4, at 10 am.

EXTENSION OFFICE GARDENS

The Comal County AgriLife Extension Gardens will meet on Tuesdays, May 3 and 17, 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.

NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION PLAZA GARDENS

The Conservation Plaza Rose Garden workdays will be on Wednesday, May 11 and 25, at 8:30 am. 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, May 26, at 9 am. Contact Peggy Hamm (khamma@gvvc.com) or Lee Franzel (leefranzel@gvvc.com) for more information.

NEW LIFE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Butterfly Garden workday is the third Monday, May 16, at 9 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, May 18, at 8:30 am. For information, contact Harlan Kraft (210-846-5643 or harlankraft@gmail.com).

KIDS IN BLOOM

The committee is finalizing dates and times for the Annual School Gardens Tour. You will receive an email with details. If you would like to participate in the training class or become active in the school gardens program contact Nancy Pappas (azop@gvvc.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 the third Thursday, May 19 at 9 am at the Grant Street Gardens. 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).

WEBSITE

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

LINDHEIMER GARDENS

The Lindheimer Garden workday will be the second Tuesday, May 10 at 8:30 am. Workers will be working on general maintenance. Contact Germaine Tuff (830-629-1127 or germainetuff@hotmail.com) if you have questions.

NEWSLETTER

The planning meeting for the June issue will be Wednesday, May 6 at 11 am at Zoët, Sweet Art & Creperie, 1528 E Common St New Braunfels, TX 78130. Go to <http://zoetcreperie.com> for more details, or call (830) 643-1416 or (830) 643-1416. 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 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)

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

MAY 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 8 am Ext Office Gardens	4 10 am Exec Board Mtg	5	6 11 am Newsletter Committee at Zoët, Sweet Art & Creperie	7 10 am – 3 pm Herb Affair San Antonio Rose Emporium
8	9 10 am Herb SIG Mtg * (See Below)	10 8:30 am Lindheimer Gardens	11 8:30 am Conservation Plaza Noon CMG 2011 Class Graduation at Grist Mill	12	13	14
15	16 9 am New Life Garden	17 8 am Ext Office Gardens 9 am New Life Garden	18 9:45 am Hope Hospice	19 9 am County Fairground Gardens Grant St	20	21
22	23 6 pm CMG General Mtg GVTC	24	25 8:30 am Conservation Plaza	26 9 am Bulverde SB Library	27	28
29	30	31	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RSVP to Sally Ann Hnatiuk at mustang_sally6@msn.com for Herb SIG Meeting by April 29th</i> </div>			