



# The Guadalupe Gardener

June 2014



A monthly publication of the Guadalupe County Master Gardeners in cooperation with the Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension, Guadalupe County

## President's Corner

### Meetings and Management

May was a very "active" month for Guadalupe County Master Gardeners and I would like to thank all those who participated in our "Standing" projects, Water Fairs and the wildly successful Rain Barrel/Drip Irrigation class. Articles on these projects will be found in this newsletter. I hope your experiences were rewarding and informative.

Thank you for making a difference!

We conducted a "trial format" with our April and May Membership Meetings. We will have our Social on June 20<sup>th</sup> and our July meeting will be the "old" format of speaker first. During the July Business Meeting we should discuss the results of our two-month trial and determine where we want to go from here. Just a reminder, you will want to attend the July meeting to contribute to the discussion and vote!

After reviewing the positive experiences of other MG programs, your Board has voted to implement the Texas Master Gardener "Volunteer Management System" (VMS). This is an on-line system for reporting volunteer hours but also includes an e-mail distribution system and membership roster. There are few downsides to the VMS system and many benefits for members. Our plan includes pairing members who don't have internet access with members who will enter their hours. Security issues have been addressed. Dave Elder and Cindy Waechter are "populating" the database so we can get started with training in July. We would like members to start reporting their hours on VMS in August. Embrace CHANGE, it will be all right!

Bob Teweles

## SUMMER SOCIAL

**June 20th**

**6:30 PM - 9 PM**

**Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
Marion, Tx**

**RSVP by June 6th**

See page 4

## In This Issue

- Page 2 - May Meeting Program, Future Programs
- Page 3 - New MG, Speakers Bureau, May Meeting
- Page 4 - Summer Social
- Page 5 - Class 26, Shovel in Hand, KWED Radio
- Page 6-7 - Barrels and Drips
- Page 8 - Big Red Barn News
- Page 9 - May Water Fairs
- Page 10-11 - Down the Garden Path (Orchids)
- Page 12-13 - Community Garden
- Page 14 - Ag Festival, May Volunteer Recognition, Ammermann Fund Books
- Page 15 - Volunteer Opportunities
- Page 16 - Gardening Events
- Page 17 - The Wandering Gardener
- Page 18-20 - Education-Classes-Seminars
- Page 21 - June GCMG Calendar

# Association News

## May Meeting Program Guadalupe County Heritage Pecans



John Pape, manager, and Kevin McCormick, assistant manager, of the Pape Pecan Company in Seguin, spoke to the Guadalupe County Master Gardeners at their May meeting. John and Kevin traded off in answering questions regarding their experience in growing, caring for and selling pecans in the Seguin area. John has been with the company for 40 years and Kevin joined several years ago.

John reminded the group that the pecan tree is the state tree of Texas and the pecan pie has become the state pie. The pecan has been noted historically for the past 5000 years and was used as a food and medicinally by the Indians in North America.

America. Texas is the second largest producer of pecans in the US growing from 1-3 million pounds of pecans a year depending on the season. China has become a big buyer of pecans which has influenced the market. Texas has the perfect climate for pecans which require 205-230 frost free days. The drought has, however, impacted the crop and the trees.

There are many varieties of pecans, Guadalupe has 55 improved varieties alone. They recommend the Indian varieties, such as Cheyenne, Choctaw and Pawnee. John also likes the Desirable.

The Pape Company carries all products needed to care for and harvest your pecans. Zinc and nitrogen are essential for maintenance of the trees. He recommended an insecticide spray such as Talstar or Bifen. Prune during the dormant time with first spraying in April at bud break. Foliar spraying of zinc is needed at full growth. He cautioned against using any insecticides later during the pecan production which would taint the nuts. They recommend 2 inches of water per week. Harvesting runs from late September to the end of the year.

Nuts should be kept in cold storage after a brief drying period of about 10 days. You can tell the nuts are ready for harvest when the husk is black and falling off.

He reported the nutritional value of the pecan is high in antioxidants and protein. They encouraged the use of pecan oil which they are selling at their stores.

Two recommended websites are: [Pecan.ipmpipe.org](http://Pecan.ipmpipe.org) and [www.tpga.org](http://www.tpga.org)

Report submitted by Sandy Foss. Photo by Marvin "T" Taylor.,

## FUTURE PROGRAMS

July 17th - Rain Gardens and Storm Water Treatments by Matt Welch, Madrone Landscape Architects,  
Austin

August 21st - Master Gardener Specialists Roundtable Session.



## New Certified Master Gardener

New Guadalupe County Master Gardener  
**MARVIN BORTH**  
receives his certificate from President  
Bob Teweles.

Photo by Marvin "T" Taylor

## Speakers Bureau

May 3, 2014 Peggy Jones gave a seminar to the San Antonio Rose Society titled "Let's Talk Roses".  
Treva Hicks Speakers Bureau Volunteer Coordinator

The May meeting refreshments were provided by: Cindy Martin, Betty Hughes, Welta Burris, Bob Davis, Marvin Borth, and Toni Guiles. Thanks for providing the great refreshments.



Please contact Treva  
Hicks Refreshment Volun-  
teer Coordinator to sign  
up for July



Photos by  
Marvin "T" Taylor

## May Meeting

Maria Borth won \$22.50 in the raffle. Pam Turner won the door prize of a \$10 nursery gift certificate.



# Summer Social



Guadalupe County Master Gardener  
Summer Social 2014

**Barbecue Potluck Dinner & More!**

Chicken and brisket, sausage, rolls and peppers are provided  
Potluck Dishes, Sides and desserts are needed!

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Friday, June 20, 2014 6:30 pm to 9:00pm**

At the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
Marion TX

***RSVP by June 6<sup>th</sup>***

Laurie Brunell, Chairperson

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or Cynthia Lyssy C 210-275-3970



## **Class 26 – Calling all Master Gardener Wannabes**

As Bob Teweles said so appropriately last year, it is time for us to start propagating a new group of Guadalupe County Master Gardeners. You, our membership, are one of our best sources of advertisement. GCMG is requesting your assistance in getting the word out and helping us sign up Class 26 students. We encourage you to tell your friends, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances and distribute class flyers to churches, organizations, and places where potential Master Gardeners might hang out. You can refer wannabes to our website or invite them to one of our upcoming monthly membership meetings. Flyers can be obtained via email from Cindy Waechter or hardcopy from Carol Calentine in the Master Gardener office.

Classes will be held from 13 August through 10 December at the First Presbyterian Church in Seguin, Texas on Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM. The cost is \$190, which includes the Texas Master Gardener Handbook. The registration deadline is 31 July 2014. Students submitting completed applications by 15 July will receive a 10% discount.

Students will receive superior gardening instruction when they sign up for the Fall 2014 course. They will learn practical gardening techniques and values from faculty and staff of Texas A&M University and Texas AgriLife Extension, as well as from Certified Master Gardener Specialists.

For more information, contact Cindy Waechter, Assistant Class Coordinator, at 830-624-1114 or email [cindy.waechter@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.waechter@gmail.com).

## **With Shovel in Hand**

Recently I have been receiving compliments on this newsletter, The Guadalupe Gardener. Thank you. Praise is always heartwarming, but it has occurred to me that the real deservers of these compliments are you, the members of this great volunteer organization. Gardeners are used to facing challenges. We come to grips with drought, devastating pests, diseases, searing heat, unexpected freezes, ad infinitum. A volunteer organization also faces challenges. The Board has had to face background checks, Betty had to figure out how to pack everything for the move and still have supplies available for the Fair, Liz had to discover how to salvage as many plants as possible during the renovation of the Ag building, Dale faces innumerable difficulties hourly during the construction phase of the Rodeo each year, the Community Garden crew has had to deal with "The Rabbit", broken water pipes, and bermuda grass as well as other normal garden problems. And these are only a very few of the recent challenges.

I am reminded of a very old TV series, The Honeymooners. Jackie Gleason's pal, Art Carney worked in the City Sewers. His tagline song ended, "Together we stand, with shovel in hand, to keep things moving along." As we, the members of that great volunteer organization, The Guadalupe County Master Gardeners, face and overcome our major and minor challenges, we stand together with shovel in hand to keep things moving along.

The newsletter is merely a chronicle of the results of the overcoming of challenges by a dedicated, inventive group of volunteers. It is such an honor to be part of this wonderful volunteer group. Thank you for your input to the Newsletter. You make it what it is. Let's all continue to keep our shovels in hand.      Elaine McIntyre, Editor

## **KWED Radio 1580**

Bob Gafe had the show by himself on May 3rd. Liz Romero and Jim Johnson were the guests on May 10th and talked about water conservation and rainwater harvesting. Ryla Cottingham had Peggy Jones and Gene Griffin on for May 17th talking about roses and vegetable gardening. Jim White talked about the Pecan Museum on May 24th. Larry Taylor wrapped things up on May 31st with his June Gardening Checklist. **Janet Gafe needs speakers for KWED for June**. If you can help, please contact Janet at [janetgrafe@hotmail.com](mailto:janetgrafe@hotmail.com) .

## Barrels and Drips Educational Event and Thoughts on Collecting Rainwater

On May 17<sup>th</sup> we provided an educational program at the Guadalupe County Tax Office and GCMG Community Garden in Schertz. Thanks to Dale Odvody and Commissioner Jim Wolverton, we were able to use the courtroom for our rain barrel talk and hands-on barrel construction demonstration. After a short break, we re-convened in the garden for a drip irrigation talk with a components and design demonstration. Dave Elder and I shared the barrel portion of the event and Jim Johnson shared his drip irrigation expertise. Dale Odvody was available all morning for informal garden tours as well as questions about the drip irrigation and rain barrels used in the community garden. Bob Teweles was everywhere doing everything, while Penny Wallace and Kathy Pape organized registration, setup and refreshments (with the enthusiastic assistance of several volunteers!). Rain barrels had been prepared for sale by Dave, Jim and Bob. All our barrels were sold and two more "custom" barrels were ordered.

Attendance was outstanding. To quote Bob Teweles: "The sign-in roster had 46 names. 33 people paid \$10.... The 46 included the reporter and at least two MG volunteers who helped set up but did not attend. I think the rest of the volunteers attended ... the presentation." Yes, our audience included a member of the press! The attendance and attention from the press were due to publicity arranged by Peggy Jones and Dave Elder. Our purpose was to provide education about how to use stored rainwater and drip irrigation to conserve water in the home landscape. I believe all in attendance walked away with some very useful and practical information; most will apply some of what they learned.

As preparation for my talk and my recent time on the KWED Garden Show, I looked at some statistics from the 2010 Census. I also contacted our local NOAA office for Seguin's 2013 precipitation records. Questions like "How much rain can I really collect?" and "How can one rain barrel make a difference?" kept running through my head. Most people are too polite to say it, but I often get the feeling that some folks think rainwater harvesting is a waste of time. I want to be able to convey that **EVERY GALLON COLLECTED IS A GALLON SAVED**. How can I express that in a meaningful way? How can I present information that will support my opinion that rainwater collection can make a real contribution to our water supply? My answer is to use real life scenarios and examples based on our city.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were approximately 7,000 (rounded) single family dwellings in Seguin in 2010, with 5.3 (median) rooms and a median value of \$128,000. Based on current real estate listings, homes in this price range are about 1,200 square feet. In 2013 more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> inch of precipitation fell on 44 separate days for a yearly total of 26.1 inches. If all 7,000 families had just one 55 gallon rain barrel, each family could have collected a minimum of 2,420 gallons for the year. All 7,000 families combined would have collected a minum of **16,940,000 gallons** for 2013. How is this possible? Because a 1/10th inch rain event will deposit 72 gallons on the roof of a 1,200 square foot home; 55 gallons will be collected in the barrel and the rest will overflow onto the ground. If the water in the barrel is used before the next rain, it will fill again. This example is simplified, but the rainfall data for 2013 and the rate of collection per square foot can be verified. The most important factor in this example is the number of families participating. That is the power of numbers: my barrel alone does not make much of a difference, but....what if 6,999 of my neighbors start using a rain barrel? Now you see the possibility of a significant impact. The more barrels and cisterns, the greater the impact. I am not a scientist or a statistician, but I feel that I have drawn some reasonable, common sense conclusions.

To take the example one step further, if these families take advantage of drip irrigation techniques they can apply all the collected rainwater to their trees, vegetable gardens, and ornamental plants. Without their barrels, they would be using city water for their yards. City water is treated (potable) water safe for drinking and cooking. If that potable water is partly replaced by rainwater, these families can reduce their water bills. They can reduce the supply and demand pressures on our public utilities and possibly reduce the need for water restrictions!

Have I stirred your curiosuty? Want to know more?

<http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<http://www.twdb.texas.gov/innovativewater/rainwater/docs.asp>

Liz Romero, Rainwater Harvesting and Irrigation Specialist - Photos on following page

## Rainbarrels And Drips



Photos by "T"

**MG Christmas/Holiday Social - Big Red Barn  
Thursday December 18, 2014  
Save the Date.**

## Big Red Barn News

School tours started early this year when volunteers were still cleaning up from the fall garden in preparation for spring planting. Several layers of clothing and hoodies were needed for the first round of tours. Betty Hughes shared asparagus bits with one group as they approached the asparagus bed.

Later in the spring as it warmed up, short sleeves was the dress of the day as Pam Turner shared potato and onion harvest with another group.

Appearance work on the gardens is always labor intensive. Volunteers laid rolls of black plastic along the walkways and covered it with new mulch. This helps with weed control and makes for an attractive edge. Lots still to be done. Another project has been to replace the labor intensive wooden signage with new signs that show plant names as well as planting dates and can be useful to Master Gardener tour guides, other volunteers and drop-in visitors.

Help wanted. The Red Barn Gardens have one plum, one fig and two peach trees. The plums and peaches produce every year - are very tasty - but are quite small. Looking for someone who loves fruit trees to take on the care, feeding and pruning of these for an improved harvest. This would be a great way to get in your volunteer hours with limited work. Come out to the garden any Friday morning - volunteers are working then.



Photos and article from  
Gretchen Ricker

## TEXAS GARDENER FUNDRAISER

Our Treasury keeps 25% of your subscription when it is sent through GCMG



## May Water Fairs

Six Water Fairs were conducted during May at Guadalupe County elementary schools. Fifteen Guadalupe County Master Gardeners contributed as presenters at one or more of the fairs, providing much needed support to our Extension Office personnel. Our participation started on May 2<sup>nd</sup> with Matt Miranda conducting training about the seven different classes to be presented including Water, the Beverage of Life; The Water Cycle Game; Xeriscaping; Indoor & Outdoor Conservation; The Enviroscope; Rainfall Simulator; and The Edible Aquifer! The various "scripts" emphasized the importance of water to students,

where our water comes from and water conservation – all important topics (although it seemed to rain on most of our Water Fair days)!

Conducting Water Fairs is an ongoing program for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to teach 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders about water conservation. With the experience they have gained this year, Master Gardeners are better prepared to lead presentations in the coming years.

Photos and article by Bob Teweles



Debbie Real conducts the "Water, Beverage of Life" quiz.



Gladys Haecker uses the Rainfall Simulator to explain water runoff and ground water.



Joyce Friesenhahn helps prepare "Edible Aquifer" cups for each student.



Mary Real uses the aquifer quilt she made to help explain how water drains into the aquifer and is then pumped out.

## **DOWN THE GARDEN PATH - Orchids**

BY THE TEXAS MASTER GARDENER - Gwen Dewitt

On behalf of the Garden Club, I want to thank the patrons of our annual Botanical Sale. It was an enjoyable day filled with pastries and plants. Overcast weather and mild temperatures made for a great morning and happy gardeners.

Orchids were a special addition to the Botanical Sale this year. Those purchasing orchids asked if I would cover some basic information on orchids.

In nature, orchids grow primarily in trees as epiphytes (air plants) or in the ground as terrestrials (earth plants). Epiphytes tend to make the best houseplants. Their needs for light, water, humidity, growing medium, and fertilizer are different from most houseplants but this doesn't make them difficult.

The canopy of trees is where you will find most of the epiphytic orchids, up where moist breezes blow and there is abundant sunlight. Orchids grow almost all over the world. Wild orchids are found all over Texas. Their range extends from East Texas piney woods to the drier, more sparsely vegetated areas of the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park. If you adore vanilla ice cream, consider this: each of those dark dots in the ice cream are actually an orchid seed, one of hundreds of thousands housed in the fruit, or "bean," of *Vanilla panifolia*, a native of the West Indies. Depending on the type of orchid, there are more than 25,000 known species and more than 100,000 cultivars developed since 1856 when the first orchid hybrid rocked the plant world.

A south-facing window is ideal in the winter because it receives bright light for most of the day and will usually capture enough light to carry the plants through the winter but you will need to be careful in the summer as a south-facing window can burn even the most light demanding species. Many orchids can thrive in east or west-facing windows, but it is important to keep in mind that the duration of light is as important as brightness. Two hours of searing afternoon sunlight are no substitute for six hours of diffuse radiance. Plants can only use so much light energy - extra light energy stresses them. Direct sun can burn orchids during the brightest hours year-round in our area of Texas.

Temperature is another important consideration in the culture of orchids. In nature, the temperature begins to drop when the sun sets and is at its lowest before dawn. Orchids are accustomed to this temperature variation and most depend on it. Without a day-night fluctuation of 10 to 15 degrees F, the plant will grow plenty of healthy foliage but refuse to flower. Cool nighttime temperatures allow them to store rather than expend the carbohydrates they manufacture during the day, which they need to produce the beautiful blooms we crave.

Most orchids, like most people, prefer temperatures of 70° to 80° F day and 55° to 65° F at night. Given adequate humidity and ventilation, many orchids will tolerate higher daytime temperatures than those shown above - as long as they cool off at night. Nighttime temperature is the most important temperature factor to consider when selecting orchids.

Most orchids grow best in a relative daytime humidity of about 40 to 70 percent. Humidity is moisture in the air, not water on the plants or in the growing medium. Airborne moisture keeps the plant from drying out in bright light and warm air, without encouraging fungi and bacteria that can infect wet plants.

Never leave an orchid standing in water. Untreated rain or well water, at room temperature, is preferable for watering. Mist your plants only if they will have plenty of time to dry off before nightfall. Never use water that has been chemically softened - sodium in this water will quickly kill plants.

Gentle air movement will help your orchids in many ways. Ceiling fans mimic the gentle breezes in the leafy canopy of a tropical cloud forest.

(Continued on following page)

(GARDEN PATH - Continued from prior page)

In areas with warm, humid summers, most orchids will benefit from being placed outdoors, provided they are carefully positioned for healthful amounts of light and given adequate protection against opportunistic insects and other pests, such as slugs and snails. Outdoor locations suited to nurturing orchids in warm weather include hanging from a tree, along a wall or fence, on a porch, in a breezeway, or in a slat or lath house.

Success with orchids is simple: select orchids that nature has outfitted to like living in conditions existing in your home or garden. Two easy orchids that do well in our area are *Phalaenopsis* and *Cattleya*.

*Phalaenopsis*, commonly known as the moth orchid is one of the best choices for the novice. It is easy to tend, grows rapidly and produces lavish sprays of pink, white, yellow, red spotted and striped flowers; some have marbled leaves. Because it is a great bloomer, beginners will get the most bang for the buck. It typically flowers from winter or late fall to spring, and blooms can remain fresh for three to six weeks. It is rarely fragrant and likes a bit more humidity. No western exposure or direct sunlight. Daytime temperatures range from 65° to 90° F, while nighttime temperatures should be 60° to 70° F. Very cold sensitive and cannot take a chill. If outside temperature is due to drop, move from the window to avoid any drafts. Likes fir bark for a growing medium, which should be watered regularly to maintain a moist growing medium. To prevent rot, avoid watering near the stem. A balanced fertilizer applied in spring and summer along with bloom booster in autumn will increase the number of blooms.

*Cattleya* is the classic corsage orchid. The fragrant purple, pink, or white bloom is considered the classic orchid. A native of Central and South America, it is among the showiest and most easily hybridized species. The blooms may be ruffled or frilled and usually have a rich, heady, almost vanilla scent. The gorgeous blossoms contain sparkling or luminous cells that radiate color. They need more light than most orchids and must have cool nights. Varieties may bloom in spring, fall, or both. Bright and filtered light for 5 to 6 hours per day is a must with daytime temperature of 75° to 85° F and nighttime temperatures ranging from 55° to 65° F. Use a growing medium of medium-grade fir bark and water every 5 to 6 days, until the water runs out of drainage holes of the pot and allow to dry out between times. Feed them with a nitrogen-rich soluble fertilizer, diluted by half, every 2 weeks. Loves sunning in dappled shade out of doors.

This is just a tiny bit of information on growing orchids. My next column will have more information on problems when growing orchids.

Orchids are the royalty of the plant world, with their sculptural elegance and color. They can be fun to grow - if not purchase the occasional plant in bloom to enjoy and then call me to take it off your hands!

Happy Gardening.

Gwen DeWitt - 358-9473 or 813-9936 (cell)



### Green Milkweed

Ron and I saw this Green Milkweed on our walk this morning, May 11th, in Austin. Clara Mae Marcotte