

Williamson County Master Gardener Journal

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In the News



As a group, the Williamson County Master Gardeners have been busy. Considering the group has been formed less than a year we are certainly getting known in the community—in a good way!

As usual members have been performing their usual volunteer tasks but March presented us with new opportunities and even some challenges.

The greenhouse was opened to members and the teachers and staff at the High School for our first sale of plants. What a success. Everyone was thrilled by what we had to offer.

The next day we had great success at the ninth annual Georgetown Home and Garden Show at the Barn in San Gabriel Park. It was reported that an estimated 1,300 people attended so we were at least seen by most of them! The seminars that we conducted were very well received. A whole range of topics were covered including, native and drought tolerant plants,

growing herbs in Williamson county (see Teresa Robinson above), plant propagation, and butterfly gardening.

On Saturday 8th March we were out again selling plants at the Georgetown First Saturday Market Days on the Square. Again another successful outing.

On a different form of outreach, Christine Powell gave a successful presentation to the Sun City Gardening Club about what is entailed in becoming a Master Gardener. Using personal experiences and a very professional PowerPoint presentation supplied by the Chapter President, Wayne Rhoden, she kept the Gardening Club members interested and informed. Hopefully we will see some of these avid gardeners at our next training session.

CAP

March Meeting Report

At our Monthly March Meeting Mike Quinn with the Texas Parks and Wildlife

Dept spoke on Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening.

Like so many people who head north out of Austin at 5:00 PM Mike got caught in traffic but we were all happy to wait for him to arrive. And he was certainly worth waiting for.

Mike grew up chasing snakes around New Orleans and after that, chasing birds across Texas for a number of years. He started chasing butterflies and other insects in 1989.

Mike has a bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences and a master's in Entomology, both from Texas A&M.

He is a Texas Parks and Wildlife state-wide Invertebrate Biologist where his duties are divided between conservation and outreach. A large component of his conservation-oriented duties involve the karst invertebrates (a.k.a. "cave bugs") that occur along the Balcones Fault Zone.

He coordinates TPW's Texas Monarch Watch program and co-authored *Milkweed, Monarchs and More: A field Guide to the Invertebrate Community in the Milkweed Patch*. This is a fabulous little book, and it is little, only 4 x 6 inches, but jam-packed with information and shows you that every milkweed is a village and every grouping a city. I never realized so much could go on around just one plant!

Mike also maintains a personal Texas Entomology website that averages thousand hits per day and is co-owner of the TX-Butterfly and TX-Ento listservers hosted by the University of Houston. You can visit his website at <http://TexasEnto.net/> He and his wife live on two and a half acres in South Austin.

Mike decided to tackle the daunting subjects of butterflies by concentrating on one type, the Monarchs and for a little contrast and expansion the Monarch look-alikes, the Queens and the Viceroy's. After taking us through a very basic but interesting lifecycle he then showed us

what we needed to attract this amazing creatures to our garden. I think the main thing he wanted to stress was that if you wanted to have butterflies then you had to put up with the caterpillars. A very small price to pay for such beauty and grace. CAP

Did you know about...

The weekly garden call in shows on KLBJ-590 AM.? Sat and Sun. mornings 8-11 a.m. This is a great way to learn additional information (lots of organic gardening answers). It can help you answer all those questions your asked now that all your neighbors and friends know you're in the Master Gardener Program and you need not sit in front of the TV for three hours.

If you do need a break and can sit in front of the TV for one half hour on Sat. at Noon with a repeat at 4 P.M. Central Texas Gardener on KLRU-18 is another opportunity to increase your knowledge. An upcoming show will feature the gardens on the Spring Travis County Master Gardener Tour with our own Walt Krueger's Garden as the feature. Check your local listings because the show is repeated several times during the week All the shows are on PBS. JP

Help needed

Everyone is welcomed to volunteer @ the next Market Days event is Saturday, April 12, on the square in Georgetown (volunteer hours from 7am-6pm). If anyone is interested in volunteering please call Clare at 869-0483 to sign up. CAP

Monthly Meetings—New Night

Remember our new night for meeting is on the second Monday of the month at 6:00 pm. Tell your friends and bring them along as we have some great programs planned for upcoming months. In April we have Troy Kimmel, a very well-known local celebrity. He will be talking a about the subject we all love to

discuss—the weather. In May we be visited by Sue Wiseman, a long time Williamson county resident who will be discussing SINS. Come along and find out just what those may be! CAP

Wildflower Viewing

Tx DOT has a website (<http://www.dot.state.tx.us/travel/flora/conditions.htm>) that you can look up just what seasonal blooms or foliage in appearing and where. Whether it is wildflowers blooming in spring or fall leaves changing, the flora of Texas produce many spectacular displays of seasonal color.

View our [Wildflower Guide](#) for photos, fun facts and other information about the 5,000 species of wildflowers found around the state.

To help you find the most picturesque locations, we provide seasonal information about wildflower and fall foliage viewing on Texas roads.

You can view the location of wildflower and fall foliage sightings by any of the three categories. For specific results, use more than one list. Example: Select Bluebonnet (Flora Type), Travis (county) and I-35 (roadway) to see all Bluebonnet sightings on I-35 in Travis County. You can also call us toll-free at (800) 452-9292 for wildflower and fall foliage sightings across the state or view sightings by using our [map search](#). TxDOT

Help Needed

I desperately need your help! If the *Williamson County Master Gardener Journal* is to continue I must have more help from you all. Send me your ideas and suggestions on what you want to see included and what you want left out. Adopt a column! As you can see I have put forward a few new ideas in this issue. Why not have a go at one of these or something else that you think others would like to read, share or just get off your chest. CAP

Congratulations to the new fully certified Master Gardeners!

Duffy Banfield
Annette Banks
Jeanne Barker
John Bell
Patsy Bredahl
Tricia Clay
Bob Hazelwood
Juanita James
Gaye Kriegel
Nancy Moore
Christine Powell
Teresa Robinson
Winola Van Artsdalen

**Well done and welcome. We know you are going to enjoy
 your time as certified Master gardeners. This is truly a
 wonderful organization to be part of.**

Beauty to Behold



Ramona Urbanek sent this fabulous image to share. The Indian paintbrushes really are beautiful this year. Thanks Ramona for sharing.

From the Greenhouse

The greenhouse crew has been diligently working at the High School greenhouse on Wednesday's and Saturday mornings.

We have had 3 Plant Sales, where we have made over \$2,000 in Sales. Our next Plant Sale will be on Saturday, April 12, in Georgetown for the Market Days. We had a total success with the Plant Sale at the greenhouse for the teachers and fellow Master Gardeners. The Home and Garden Show brought in an overwhelming number of people in attendance and our classes were well attended.

The Plant Sale at Georgetown Market Days on March 8th, turned out to be a chilly and windy day, not very inviting for customers who may want to work in their gardens.

For anyone that was not at the March's meeting there is still time to sign up for the Plant Sale. It is a FUN opportunity to greet the public, explain about our plants and share our enthusiasm for the Master Gardening Program and a way to invite others to join our organization.

At this point the greenhouse looks wonderful, with many plants in full bloom, like different colors of geraniums, salvias, and even some buds on Brugmansias!

We still meet twice a week where we are watering, pinching, and cleaning up plants for the upcoming sale. It is a perfect opportunity to gain volunteer hours, as well as to spend time with fellow MG's and share the knowledge and love that we all have for plants.

Teresa Robinson

A Master Gardener Visits

A Walk Through Time

Christine Powell

A couple of years ago I was lucky enough to be in the position to visit a wonderful old “house” while I was in England. My primary reason for visiting was because I had read that several of the embroideries Mary Queen of Scots had completed during her imprisonment in the house were still there. I had been amazed to discover that it was only twenty-five miles from where I was staying. I set out on a spring morning to have a quick look at the tapestries but ended up spending a wonderful day exploring a magnificent garden established in the middle ages, expanded in the Tudor period, and with regular changes throughout the centuries. Oh, and I saw the needlework!

Oxburgh House is a moated fifteenth-century manor house that was a complete surprise to me. I hadn't known it existed and I had been brought up in the area. It is easily one of England's least known treasures. The house is magnificent but it was the gardens that brought me the most joy. Just as I arrived I was told I could join the garden tour that had just started. I wasn't really interested, after all, it was the tapestries I wanted to see. However, as I reached the group clustered round a rather robust, earthy character with a wonderful Fen accent I couldn't resist tagging along, just for a little while at least.

It turned out the gentleman in question was Graham Donachie, the Head Gardener, and his enchanting patter kept us enthralled for over an hour. Before I take you around the garden I want to just give you a few facts about the house which was such a surprise. So few people know of this wonderful house that has been the home of the Bedingfeld family for over five hundred years. This is no mean feat if you consider the turmoil the house and family has seen and not to mention the death duties that have to be paid by each generation. In 1951 the house was sold and purchasers were going to demolish it. It is a miracle that a plan was worked out allowing Lady Bedingfeld to re-purchase it and hand it over to the National Trust. The family still lives there and it is like visiting a home and not a historical relic.

The hall was originally built for Sir Edmund Bedingfeld as a fortified house around 1482 and is a fine example of a late medieval, inward-facing great house. A square moat, seventy-five meters on each side is spanned by a three arched bridge on the north side. One of my favorite features are the. The whole hall is filled with design details and structure to imply strength and fortification. Each age has added its own features, from ornate terracotta chimneys, to the Flemish-style stepped gables, the massive southeast tower, and the oriel windows overhanging the moat. Even four towers were added to the walled kitchen garden.

One of the most popular features at the Hall is the priest hole. Although not necessarily unique it is unusual in as much as you are allowed to explore it! Often these are mentioned but not seen. Since the Bedingfeld family was



Catholic, a visiting priest may have found it necessary on occasion to hide in the event of a raid. The room is reached by a tile trapdoor which when closed blends perfectly with the rest of the floor. There is also a private chapel on the grounds.

I did get to see the needlework hangings completed by the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots and I could spend hours telling you about them. However, I will share just one, The Catte. This shows a large ginger cat (a reference to Elizabeth I?) toying with the life of a defenseless mouse (Mary Queen of Scots?).

Visitors to historic gardens rarely get to see the workings behind those gardens but I was so lucky to join up with the one of the three tours that year. Many of the techniques they use we can copy in our homes. I think I was most impressed by the use of the walls. The vegetable garden is surrounded on all four sides by old brick wall with towers at each corner. My father's vegetable garden at the Bishop's Palace was just the same. This was done for a reason. It would keep out larger vermin and create micro-climates within the garden. The south facing walls would allow more exotic fruit and vegetable to over-winter which they might not manage without that extra warmth. In fact, a fig tree was doing very well on one such wall. Large containerized trees are moved in and out of the huge greenhouse as the weather dictates. Different areas are neatly cordoned off by dwarf hedges. This gives what could be an ungainly area a beautiful finish. There were even large beds for cut flowers for the "big house." I had never realized just how traditional and steeped in history my father's vegetable garden was until I visited Oxburgh.

