

# The Blooming Bell

**April 2016**



**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**



Photo of Crossvine in  
Melinda Woods yard.

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# April 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 <b>Plant Sale</b>
3	4	5	6 Work Day 8 am*  <b>Hamburger Wednesday 10:30 am</b>	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Work Day 8 am* <b>Plant Swap drop off 9:00-9:20 Plant Swap start 9:30</b>  <b>General Meeting 10:30 Square Foot Gardening, Social Time at 10 am in Education Building</b>	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Work Day 8 am*  <b>Grounds Committee Meeting 9 am</b>	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 <b>BOD Meeting 9 am</b>	28	29	30

\* in the event of rain or 40 degree temperature or below, there will be NO Workday.

Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

Photo by Daisy Klassy



## The President's Corner

We just got a coat of primer on the walls of the education building in time for the plant sale. Thanks to Wayne Schirner, Wayne Backer, Ray Machovsky and Art Carr. If all goes well, we should have the final coats on very soon. There has been some mention of a mural painted on the wall somewhere. I would like some feed-back from all master gardeners on whether that would be a good idea or not. Crystal Fisher has volunteered to do one, if anyone else would like to submit an entry for a mural, please let me know.

The greenhouse committee has decided on a small greenhouse for our use. It appears to be a convenient little building and should come in useful for our propagation class and for other plant propagation efforts. We will need some help in constructing the greenhouse as "some assembly required".

Kathy Love and her committee has the plant sale well in hand. By the time you read this the plant sale will be over but I know that there has been a lot of response for volunteers to work that day and I want to thank you all for your hard work and efforts.

A big thanks to Wayne Schirner for his contribution to the Belton Journal article on "First time gardeners measure up", which appeared in the Spring edition of the Belton Home and Garden magazine. Also a great article about Frances Idoux and Carol Runyan and the McLane Children's Hospital garden. Thanks to them and all other master gardeners who helped with that project. We are getting some great publicity.

Gary

Save the Date




# EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

APRIL 23, 2016

Saturday, April 23  
10 to 4  
Pace Park, Salado TX

**Interactive Informational Booths**

- Goat cheese, goat milk, & baby goats!
- Texas native plants
- Solar panels
- Hand-made jewelry

**Expert Speakers**

- How to install a rainwater collection system
- Easy backyard composting
- Bring back the bee population
- How to create a bluebird trail

**Plant Exchange** (bring one, take one)

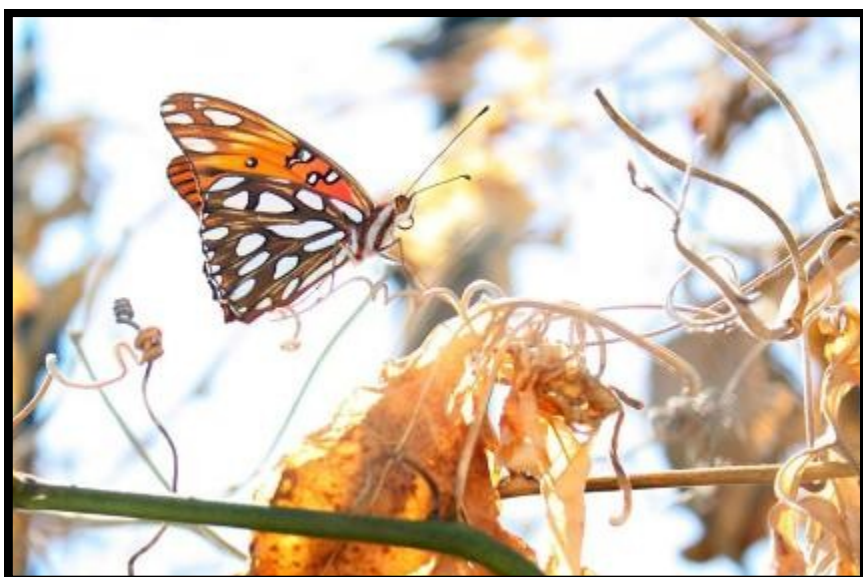
**Seed Swap** (bring some, take some)

**Hands on activities for children of all ages:**

- Learn to cast a line
- Tag a butterfly
- Build a birdhouse
- Paint a gourd

**Food, live music, and a petting zoo**

For additional activities, speaker schedules list of vendors, and updated information visit: [keepsaladobeautiful.com](http://keepsaladobeautiful.com)



.Photo by Daisy Klassy

# BEND O' THE RIVER BOTANIC GARDEN

- Diane Calderwood

Something exciting is in the air... In 2011, the 30 acres known as "Bend of the River" was donated to the City of Temple by Bernice Talasek and her family in memory of Reuben Talasek. Some forward thinking citizens joined with Temple Parks and Recreation and began dreaming. With the donation of an adjacent 58 acres in 2015, their dream may become a reality. The 88 acre tract located on the Leon River with partial frontage on I35, has the potential to become the largest botanic garden in central Texas.

The initial meeting of the steering committee for the Bend O' the River Botanic Garden was held Thursday, March 24, 2016. The steering committee is made up of representatives from various city groups along with members of the Talasek family. The City of Temple has hired the landscape architecture firm, SWA Group in Houston, Texas to develop a master plan for the garden. You can go to their website to get more information about the company and see some of their projects.

Possible areas in the garden will include an Event Space "Front Yard" Area; Education/Demonstration Area; Collections Area; Preserved Habitat Area; and a Riparian Zone. Along with the steering committee meetings, there are FOUR public meetings/



workshops planned before the end of August. The dates of these public meetings/workshops will be set as soon as possible. The presentation of the final Master Plan for adoption will be presented to the Temple City Council in September, 2016.



I want to thank the Board for approving me to be the Master Gardener representative on the steering committee. I anticipate that we will have a major role in the development of this project. If you have any ideas, suggestions, concerns, etc. NOW is the time for me to hear your voice! I request that you please send all correspondence to me in writing. My e-mail address is dcalder@hot.rr.com; my home address is 2908 Sleepy Hollow, Temple 76502.



# Eggshell Gardening

- Marjorie Gillmeister

Growing seedlings in eggshell pods are a natural, biodegradable, and environmentally earth friendly way to recycle. They can be planted directly into the soil after being cracked a little with care and will supply nourishment to the plant and soil by slowly releasing calcium.

You'll Need:

Eggs

Egg carton

Seeds

Seed Starter Planting Mix

Small spoon

Spray bottle

Awl, ice pick or wide sharp needle

1. When cracking the eggshells, gently crack the top part of the egg (narrower point end) with a sharp knife and gently pour the egg from the opening for use.

2. Save eggshells, gently rinse well inside and out with warm water. For extra sanitation, boil the shells for a few minutes to make sure all traces of egg residue are cleaned out. If the shells foam up a bit, you will know that you've brought the leftover residue to the surface.



3. Rinse eggshells again, and gently place them back in their egg carton to dry. Once dry, gently chip any rough edges of the eggs to desired opening size.

4. Use awl, ice pick, or wide sharp needle to gently puncture a single hole in the middle base of the eggshell. You have then created a drainage hole for your egg planter. I punctured the eggshells from the inside while eggshells are resting in egg carton to provide a buffer for it. You may have to remove parts of the thin membrane alongside the eggshell by spraying water gently inside eggshell.

5. With a small spoon, gently scoop some seed starter planting mix into eggshell to fill. You may want to gently shake egg to even out soil.

7. Plant seeds according to seed packet directions to determine depth and any other special care.

8. Gently spritz water with spray bottle to moisten soil not soggy and place eggshell container in a well lit

Continued on next page...

# Eggshell Gardening...continued

area with sun indoors by a kitchen window or wherever you have most light.

9. Water plants with gentle spritz with spray bottle each morning to moisten not too soggy. Watch and wait for your seedlings to sprout usually in a few days depending on seedling emerging time.

10. Once sprouts have grown large enough to transfer (usually 4-6 weeks) thin them out and plant directly into the ground or larger planter after gently cracking the eggshell around them. The roots will grow beyond the eggshell into the soil, the shell will continue to provide nourishment to the plant and surrounding soil, and will eventually biodegrade.

My three year old son sowed the seeds and helped me with this project. Great activity to do with children and to help them learn how to grow their own food. It took our seeds just a few days (3-5 days depending on seed variety) to sprout up in their eggshell planters. To find out what seed varieties are ready for indoor planting in your area, check with your local county agent.

I'll be doing a demonstration of this at the Salado Earth Day on April 23rd at Pace Park.



Photos by Marjorie Gillmeister



# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Squash Vine Borer

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Are you planning on planting squash this year? Or perhaps, you've already planted your squash. BEWARE the squash vine borer! Squash vine borers attack summer squash, winter squash, pumpkins and to a lesser degree cucumbers and melons.

The squash vine borer is a moth that resembles a wasp. Adults are about ½ an inch long with an orange abdomen marked with black. The front wings are a metallic green and the hind wings are clear, but the hind wings are folded under the front wings while the moth is at rest.



Larvae are creamy white with brown heads and can be almost an inch in length when fully grown. Eggs are round, flat and brown.

Eggs are laid singly at the base of desired plants. After about a week, eggs hatch and larvae bore into the

center of the plant stem. Larvae continue boring and feeding through the center of the stem which causes the plant to wilt and eventually die. Larvae remain within the plant for about 4-6 weeks. When they emerge, they burrow in the soil to pupate.



If you have previously had squash vine borers, try to avoid them attacking your plants the following year. You can try planting more resistant varieties such as butternut squash varieties, acorn squash or 'Tatume' squash. Monitor squash plants every couple of days and squish any circular

brown, flat eggs that you encounter. Utilize row cover to protect the squash. Row cover should be anchored so that insects cannot crawl underneath it. Also, make sure to remove row cover while the squash is blooming so squash will get pollinated and be able to set fruit (or you can hand pollinate). Get row cover on early in the season so you do not inadvertently trap the moth in with your squash.



Left: Squash Vine Borer Adult;  
Below: Borer Egg; Above:  
Squash Vine Borer Frass  
(Excrement).

If you notice your plant wilting and it's not from lack of water, you can attempt surgery on the vine to remove the borer(s). Use a sharp knife to slice open the stem lengthwise and locate the borer(s), remove and then bury the vine under moist soil and hope that it takes root.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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# My Little Wildflower Patch

- Diane Calderwood

A few years ago, I started a wildflower patch in a little area in my backyard. It is the perfect spot...full sun,



non-amended soil and the occasional rain from my over-head irrigation system. I purchased a wildflower seed mix on-line from the Wild-seed Farm in Fredericksburg, the "Texas/

Oklahoma Wildflower Mix". This mix was reported to include the following wildflower seeds in varying percentages: Bluebonnet, Indian Blanket, Scarlet Flax, Tickseed, Lemon Mint, Purple Coneflower, Drummond Phlox, Cornflower, Rocket Larkspur, Baby Blue Eyes, Ox-eye Daisy, California Poppy, Tall Poppy Mallow, Golden Wave Coreopsis, Plains Coreopsis, Claspig Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Tuber Vervain, Corn Poppy, Spurred Snapdragon, Dwarf Red Coreopsis, Standing Cypress, Showy Primrose, Mexican Hat, and TX Paintbrush. Whew, that's a lot of action from a 1 lb bag of seeds! Each year I let the flowers that appeared go to seed so each subsequent year the show was a little different. Some wildflower were successful in their survival, some didn't fare so well and were overtaken with the stronger varieties.

It seemed my patch was getting a little tired, so last Fall I cleaned it up, added some compost and re-seeded with the

same TX/OK Wildflower Mix. The first to arrive this Spring were the Spurred Snapdragons...tiny little orchid-like flowers on delicate stems. I thought they were very successful considering their percentage in the mix was only 1.21%.

Next to appear were the Scarlet Flax...they sorta look like a tall red primrose with 5 petals and a dark center. These babies were VERY successful considering they only got 6.6% of the bag. Right now they are the predominant wildflower!

There are a few Bluebonnets (18.9%) and I see that the Showy Primrose are starting to make an appearance (.77%) in the patch. I will continue to watch the emergence of the flowers in My Little Wildflower Patch and keep you posted on the progress. Of course, the best place to watch the show is on the back porch with a nice glass of wine or a beer. I LOVE the nature channel!





# Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

- James Cowan, Photos by Cynthia Cowan

If you are done with your Spring planting and looking for a change of pace, we suggest you make a day trip to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center ([www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)). An hour and a half drive to Southwest Austin will take you to the North American leader in native plant conservation and landscape restoration at University of Texas at Austin.

The Center was founded on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1982 by Lady Bird Johnson with Helen Hayes on the grounds of the former Austin municipal airport as the

National Wildflower Research Center. In 1995 it relocated to its current location on 43 acres of Blackland prairie over the Trinity aquifer. In 1997 it was renamed the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. In 1999 it added 136 more acres

and in 2002 another 100 were added. In 2006 the Wildflower Center became an Organized Research Unit of UT Austin.

Its 284 acres of gardens, woodlands and savannas have 100 species of native Texas trees in the 16 acre Mollie Steves Zachry Texas Arboretum and 650 species of native plants growing in the gardens. Upon entering the Visitors Gallery, you will see examples of all the wildflowers currently in bloom. The 68,500-gallon rainwater capture system was the largest of its



kind when it was built. Green roofs, solar panels and air conditioning condensation capture add to its sustainable features. The 55 staff members and 850 volunteers welcome over 128,000 visitors and produce 100,000 plants annually. The International Millennium Seed Bank stores over six million seeds from Texas native plants for future generations and restoration activities.

In the Central Garden area there are 24 themed garden patches, including: cactus, edible, West Texas desert, grass family, deer resistant, fiber and dye, and hummingbird attractors. Next to the Ann and O.J. Weber Butterfly Garden the Insectory has 1,800 insect species, including 93 types of butterflies. The 4.5 acre Luci and Ian Family Garden offers a play lawn, pavilion, dinosaur creek, giant birds' nest and playground



Continued on next page...

# Wildflower Center...continued

equipment for active youngsters. There are four miles along five nature trails, with four being wheelchair accessible. The Center architecture flows from the Spanish mission-style with sandstone, through the German style of cut limestone in the Visitors Gallery to the modern metal structures.

As a part of its prodigious outreach program the center offers Seed Grants to schools and has trained over 2,900 Citizen Scientists. The Center projects have impacted 90,000 acres of landscapes including nine landscape restorations for national parks in five states.

Amenities include a cafe, store, rest rooms and picnic area. Parking is free and open to the public every day 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., March 14-May 31st. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for Seniors and college students, and \$4 for ages 5-17.

The Center calendar (<http://www.wildflower.org/events/>) includes:

## **March 26 – May 31, Shou Ping's "Color of Spring" paper sculptures**

On display in the McDermott Learning Center

## **April 2-3, The Colors of Spring @ the Store**

The Colors of Spring often appear in our foods! On Saturday, Nicole Telkes signs Medicinal Plants of Texas, 1 to 4 pm. She'll lead a walk beforehand, at noon. And Tiffany Harelik is here on Sunday, signing The Trailer Food Diaries Cookbook: Austin, as well as the Big Bend Cookbook from 1 to 4 pm.



## **April 6, Increasing Native Abundance through Permaculture**

Would you like to save water but keep a beautiful lawn or garden space? Discover how native plants can be used with permaculture. Wednesday, 6 – 9 p.m.



## **April 8-10, Spring Native Plant Sale**

Join us for our popular spring plant sale to find rare native plants for your home garden and see the Center in all its spring glory. The most comprehensive native plant sale in Austin has been helping Texans create beautiful, wildlife-friendly gardens for more than 10 years. Join us to buy plants, take garden tours and learn from experts. More at [wildflower.org/plantsale](http://wildflower.org/plantsale)  
Members Only Sale: Friday, April 8, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Public Sale: Saturday and Sunday, April 9-10, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

## **April 23, Native Plants of Central Texas**

Dive deep into the world of Texas native plants. Learn the basics of plant identification including how to use a plant key. Take your newly obtained skills outdoors to identify plants in the gardens. Saturday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

## **April 30 – May 30, "Texas Highways Photography" Annual Show**

Explore phenomenal images from across Texas during Texas Highways magazine annual photo exhibit. A perennial favorite.

Continued on next page...



# Wildflower Center...continued

Spring educational programs include: Friend or Foe Insect Walk, Moonlight Hike, Girl Scouts: Plant a Wildflower, and Wild Families: Bloom. Upcoming classes are offered in; Wildflower Keepsakes Flower Pressing, Landscape Design Studio, Floral Design with Natives, Nature/Wildlife Photography, Wildflower Watercolors, Floral Silk Painting and Color Pencil Nature Drawing.

On our visit we spent over three hours and barely scratched the surface. Next time we go we will do an in depth at the Hero Oaks in the Arboretum and explore the rich role of oaks in Texas history. If you should visit soon, be sure to check out the nesting Owl on the arch before you enter the Courtyard. Dress for the weather and on trails be alert for wildlife, snakes, and prickly plants.



## EDITOR'S NOTE:

The arrow points to where the great horned owl is nesting in the corner. If you enlarge the page on your computer, you can barely see it. It hadn't had it's baby yet when Cynthia Cowan snapped the photo. The photo below was taken by volunteer Bill Boyd and posted on the Wildflower Center's Facebook page.

"At the Wildflower Center this week, there is a newborn baby owlet! Volunteer Bill Boyd spotted this owlet March 23 — and grabbed this amazing photo for us! The baby bird appeared alongside its mother, our some-time-resident great horned owl, Athena, who began nesting in the entryway's sotol (Dasylirion wheeleri) planter Feb. 4."



# New Class Notes

## Second Propagation Class

Top 3 photos in right column by Gail Christian. The rest of the photos on this page by Daisy Klassy.





# This and That

## Gardening with Kindergarteners at Nolanville Elementary

- Gail Koontz

Marjorie Gillmeister and I journeyed to Nolanville on Friday, March 4, to talk gardening with 88 kindergarten students. We observed some of their gardening projects in their "greenhouse" and had interesting visits with many of the teachers. In presentations to the students we showed them how to start their seedlings in newspaper containers. Marjorie is pictured showing them how to make the container. I am pictured explaining how to check for moisture in their container soil. The lady next to me was interpreting for some

deaf students. Another great day in Nolanville!



Photos by Marjorie Gillmeister and Gail Koontz.



## Nature Class at Scott Elementary

- Sylvia Maedgen

Several of us helped with a nature class at Scott Elementary for several 1st grade classes. Pam Dragoo organized this event. Claudette Hawkins and I gave the presentation to Ms. Ball's class. The students planted squash, beans and carrot seeds in their newspaper boxes on March 10.



Photo by Sylvia Maedgen.

## Making Foldable Tomato Cages!

- Gail Christian

Art Carr with his home made tomato cage. It will fold flat for storage. I am sure he will share how to build one with anyone who asks.

Photo by Gail Christen.



# This and That

## The Plant Swap Rules!

- Jane Van Praag

The Plant Swap is a great low-to-no cost opportunity for gardeners to try growing something new or to acquire more of some specimens. Each gardener gets to exchange plants they no longer desire or already have too many of to the advantage of other gardeners.

Pot the plants you're saying bye-bye to in the cheapie plastic containers that you've been saving from previous nursery transplant purchases. Using either a strip of masking tape adhered to the pot (or a contrasting-colored grease pencil so your marks can be easily read), write only the name of the plant and the date it was potted...it's also helpful, if there's enough existing root structure to be put in the ground once taken home, to state, "Ready". In addition to this label--though it's not necessary--providing your own growing tips separately (but accompanying the plant) are truly welcomed; in the past, I personally received print-outs from Wikipedia or other online sources covering specifics and really appreciated all this extra beneficial information.

Do the same for any seeds you might want to share; if not already packaged, they can be zipped up in little plastic baggies.

Bring as many starts (water them no later than the day before, please) and seeds as you want; transport them in a cardboard or plastic box (marked as yours) large enough to hold everything stable from home to the swap site. This will be on those long tables outside, north of the Education Building at the Extension Office unless weather is inclement, in which case we'll have tables set up inside at the back/western end. Plan on arriving at 9:00am or as close to that time as you can make it. Check in with one of the Plant Swap Committee members (we'll be wearing our blue BCMGA aprons) who will help you unload and best arrange what's available while you register the number of plants you brought.

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions! You'll all have an

hour to make your selections--the same number as you'd brought, though size or shape will not matter--from when the actual swap begins at 9:30 until the Monthly General Meeting convenes at 10:30. The Plant Swap Committee will provide several rolls of masking tape and ample black Sharpies for you to put your name on the containers you'll take back home afterward and we'll also do our best to place them in your emptied box. (We'll also have a few extra cardboard boxes on hand in case you wind up with larger containers than you brought in.)

After the General Meeting, should there be any plants left over--and there often are!--you're welcome and indeed encouraged (by forming a line on a first-come basis) to take one of these extras home, in as many rounds as necessary until they're all gone.

Then the Plant Swap Committee will tidy up and leave the building exactly as we found it; those serving on it who are interns will have ample time to take their seats before the New Class session starts. For them--or the New Class mentors--if it's very warm that day, here are three options to prevent their 'new' plants from wilting:

1. If placing the plants you're taking home in your vehicle, lower all its windows enough to provide cross-ventilation. (This is what I've done, and felt my property safe in doing so.)
2. Or, you can place them out of your vehicle but close to it in the shade it provides. (This too is a typically safe option but remember the paving may already be quite hot!)
3. Or, and only if your boxful is manageable for this situation, bring it into the classroom and place at your feet beneath the table where you sit or some other out-of-the-way spot.



# This and That

## KMCCG News

- Randy Brown

Tomato, pepper, squash areas mulched and tilled. Right: Farm over-view.



Photos by Randy Brown.



## March General Meeting

- Terrie Hahn

Amazon Roberts spoke under adverse conditions when the computer stopped working, so her power point on Water Conservation wasn't accessible. At least the microphone was working. During the announcements part of the meeting, the mike went out and the rain beat down noisily on our metal roof. Amazon talked about our role in being stewards of our water. She told us that the things in our houses wasting the most water are too long of showers, letting water run while we wash dishes and toilets.

Collect rain water to save a lot of water and watch out for runoff of fertilizers and pesticides. In other words, protect our earth/water.

Photo by Daisy Klassy.



# This and That

## Potting Party

### - Daisy Klassy

BCMG's got together to pot up plants in donated pots to sell at the plant sale.





# Announcements

## Grounds Workdays

- **Walter Ponder**

Here is the Workday schedule for April:

8:00 a.m. April 6, 2016 Workday

10:30 a.m. April 6, 2016 Hamburger Wednesday

8:00 a.m. April 13, 2016 Workday

8:00 a.m. April 20, 2016 Workday

9:00 a.m. April 20, Grounds Committee Meeting

There will be no work days if it is raining or the temperature is 40 degrees or below.

## April Meeting

- **Mary Ann Everett**

The Speaker for the April 13th General Meeting will be Wayne Schirner on Square Foot Gardening. He'll be speaking at 10:30.

## Plant Swap

- **Jane Van Praag**

The Plant Swap will be held at 9:30 a.m., April 13, right before the General Meeting. See page 14 for more details.

**CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK  
PAGE! GO TO**

<https://www.facebook.com/BCMGA>

# Home and Garden Show

- **Louann Hight**





# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

## **Blooming!!!**

**- Ilene and  
Michael Miller**

Our Mountain Laurel in full bloom.



## **Gotta Love Texas!**

**- Jann Dworsky**

You know you live in Texas when you have bluebonnets, cactus, and the Bottle Tree! Below: OK pulled these few just now. These are the Nantes scarlet and you can see the scarlet top on one. The bottom 1 split because we got a lot of rain and it grew too fast. I probably should already have pulled all of them. Maybe lots more are split, but you can't tell from the top.





# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

## **Award Winner**

### **- Vivian Rush**

It's still early but my spirea appears to be in full bloom. Also, our home owner's association in Mill Creek in Salado chooses a yard once a month as the yard of the month when they think there has been good improvement. This month they have chosen my yard and I've got the sign to prove it!





# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

## **Lots Going On This Spring!**

**- Kim Pringle**

We had trouble growing Lovage (which is an herb that tastes like celery) here. A friend told me she planted the bottom part of her celery. I tried it and this is the result. More edibles for my garden! The purple flowers are ground orchids. They like shade and bloom in the spring. The bottom two photos show what looks like ugly bird poop, but is a Giant Swallowtail caterpillar that likes rue and citrus.



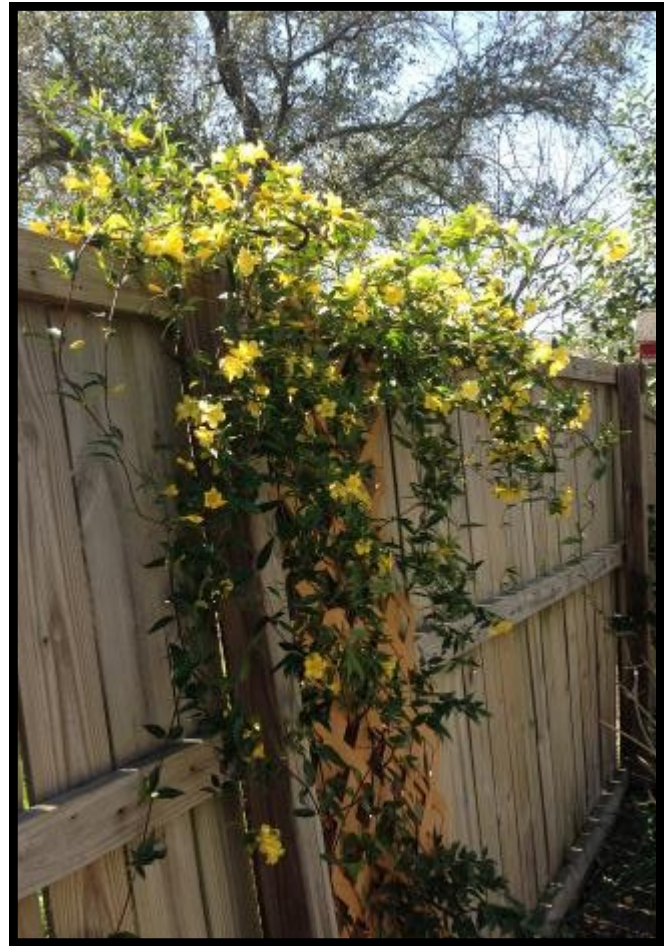


# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

## **Blooming!**

**- Gail Garner**

I planted Sweet Broom and Geraniums around our flag poles. There is also oregano, sage, thyme and lavender in with it but the camera doesn't capture it all. And my Carolina Jessamine in full bloom!



## **A Mass of Purple!**

**- Betty Nejtek**

My Wisteria is in full bloom!





# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

## **Winter Crops**

**- Wayne Schirner**

This is me in front of my winter crops in my Square Foot Garden. Harvesting is ongoing for multiple varieties of greens, and my onions are growing nicely. Peas are climbing the trellis and should start producing soon. Should also be able to harvest broccoli and cauliflower in the next month. Hoops were used to support plastic during the cold nights of January and February, helping keep my soil warm for better germination and growing conditions. I left the hoops in place to support shade cloth later in the hot summer.



## **My Prize Orchid!**

**- Gail Christian**

I am proud of my orchid this year. I have never had so many blooms. I'm not sure what I did different this year.





# *Time for Wildflowers*

- Terrie Hahn

I couldn't resist putting in some photos of the Bluebonnets in our yard. The white spots on the florets change to red as they are pollinated. According to beekeeper, Rusty Burlew of [www.honeybeesuite.com](http://www.honeybeesuite.com), "Bees are extremely attracted to the bright white spots on the florets and can collect a large quantity of high-quality pollen. As the florets age, however, the white spots turn a purplish-red and the bees are much less attracted to them as a result. At the same time that the spot changes color, the pollen becomes less abundant, less fertile, and less sticky. This confluence of events just happens to be good for the bees and good for the plant. It is good for the bees because they can efficiently collect lots of nutritious pollen without having to expend energy checking the purple-spotted florets. In addition, the pollen is so sticky the bees can carry large loads of it back to their hives or nests."





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*Please submit articles for the Blooming Bell as Word  
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