



The Blooming Bell

April, 2012

BCMGA Newsletter

Inside this edition:

President's Corner, April Calendar

BCMG Plant Sale, They're BaaAAACK

Going Green

Speakers' Bureau Update, Adopt a Sign

Herbal Forum, Propagating Roses

News From Class of 2012

Announcements, What's Happening in Your Yard



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Hamburger Wednesday 11 am	5	6	7
8 Easter	9	10	11 General Meeting 11 am, Cacti and Succulents with Ursula Nanna	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Field Trip for New Class	19 Greenhouse Committee Meeting 9 am	20	21
22	23 Board of Directors Meeting 9 am	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Upcoming dates to remember: Class of 2012 graduates, May 16th at 1:00 at Extension Center

Board of Directors Meeting, May 23rd, 9 am with installation of officers

The President's Corner

While we are having a beautiful spring due to well timed rains, summer heat and drought are not too far in the future. Our April general meeting is timely. Ursula Nanna will present a program on cacti. These plants take little water and still provide beautiful blooms. If you have plans for a new or reworked flower bed in your landscape, the April meeting might provide you with ideas and information to get you started before the summer heat.

The spring plant sale was a big success. Thanks to Carla Harmon, her committee and all of you volunteers our profits hit a new high. We had very few plants left at the end of the sale. Those plants, plus a few more will be sold at the new Killeen Farmer's Market on Saturday, March 31st. The fall plant sale will be in September. Planning will soon begin, if you would like to be a part of the plant sale committee contact Carla.

A few weeks after the fall plant sale will be the fall garden tour. The tour is scheduled for October 13th. Beth Buhl is tour chairman. She would be pleased to hear your suggestions for gardens to be on the tour. You will hear more about this event in June.

There has been a lot of interest in becoming a Master Gardener the last few weeks. Two people have already signed up for the 2013 class; one has paid the class fee. If you have friends or acquaintances that are interested in our next class, encourage them to add their name to the list. With so many people showing interest this early, the class for '13 may fill up fast.

April 18th is the class field trip. Though the trip is filled, there is a waiting list if you wish to add your name. Mark your calendar, the class of 2012 will graduate on May 16th. This year the class graduation will be held at 1:00 pm in the Belton class room. Another date on your calendar should be the May monthly meeting on the 23rd. After a brief business meeting, we will install the new Master Gardener board officers and have brunch.

For quite a few months, our volunteer and educational hours have not been recorded. This is about to change. Please submit your hours as you did in the

past. Place the forms in the basket in the office. One of our new class members, Stacye Parry, has taken on the task of bringing us up to date with our hours and has agreed to be our time keeper. Thank you Stacye.

Spring in Central Texas is beautiful. There are many outdoor events and the weather is mild. The wildflowers are plentiful this spring and providing fields of color on many country roads. Even the evening breezes smell of spring with the abundant wildflower blooms. I hope you take time to smell the flowers. Enjoy the Easter holiday with your family and friends.....Laura



Wildflower ID

- Terrie Hahn

So, have we identified these properly? We found these in our yard. Starting at the top, Baby Blue Eyes, Poppies and Toadflax (not the Texas Toadflax).

Plant Sale Preps

- Gail Christian

Handicapped beds get a makeover getting ready for the Plant Sale.



While waiting for plants, we did what we do best - eat!

Continued on next page...

Plant Sale Preps...continued

We had quite an assembly line going when the truck delivered the vegetables and herbs.



Some of us unloaded the shrink wrapped roses while others set up tents.



And It All Comes Together at The Plant Sale!



Continued on next page...

Plant Sale...continued



Continued on next page...

Plant Sale...continued



Kids Camp!



THEY'RE BaaAAACK !!

- Ursula Nanna

Editor's Note: This is a follow up to March's Blooming Bell story, "What Was I Thinking?"

It feels like forever between the time the Purple martins leave to migrate and the time they return. But those gurgling, clackling, chirping, happy creatures have once again taken up residence in the back yard. The quickly fill up the Martin houses, but reluctantly occupy the gourd houses. This year it looks like some of the gourds will be called Martin Houses!!! Mornings and evenings are very active times around here. As the number of Martins increases so does the level of activity noises. These are a real source of joy to me.



The House sparrows are relentlessly occupying every space they can. I have been on a vendetta to rid the yard of these birds and your suggestions are welcomed. Last year's cleaning of nests revealed that the sparrows nested right over a total of 6 Martin nests killing 12 Martin hatchlings. So, this year, I am actively engaged in monitoring and cleaning the houses of sparrow nests every several weeks. The sparrows really get flustered after a nest cleaning, but the Martins love it.

Martin House photo by Ursula Nanna, All Plant Sale photos by Gail Christian.

GOING GREEN JUST GOT A LITTLE EASIER

- Pam Oakes, WCID

Hardly a week goes by without you seeing a newspaper article or a television program about the benefits of growing green. As gardeners, we already know about green benefits. The problem is sometimes it is difficult to find green products or their cost is prohibitive. I am happy to report these issues have been resolved in our area with the recent opening of the Bell County WCID No. 1 Regional Compost Facility.



The Regional Compost Facility offers BioLoam, BioMulch, Top Dressing and Wood Chips in bulk. They will load up your truck or trailer or you can bring your own bags and containers for self-service.

BioLoam is their top of the line product. It is a mixture of bio-solids and woody waste that has been mixed together and formed into windrows allowing biological decomposition to turn the mixture into compost. After the curing process is complete, the compost is screened to produce a fine, rich humus called BioLoam. The product is tested to ensure it meets the Texas Department of Transportation's specifications as a Class A compost. This product can be used on lawns and gardens alike, producing extraordinary results from the first application.

BioMulch is a by-product of the screening process. It has the same nutrient make-up as the BioLoam but it is coarser. This product is great to use as mulch in flower beds or other ornamental uses. The Regional Compost Facility also sells Top Dressing, which is mostly fine top soil that is separated from wood waste as it is ground up. It can be used alone or mixed with the BioLoam in a garden or lawn application. Woods chips, which are the result of grinding the woody waste, can also be purchased. Current pricing is as follows:

	Pricing		
Product	Small Pickup	Full Size Pick Up	By Cubic Yd.**
BioLoam *	\$18	\$26	\$13
BioMulch	\$15	\$20	\$10
Top Dressing	\$15	\$20	\$10
Wood Chips	\$12	\$16	\$8
Self-Serve	\$13 per visit (bring your own bags or containers)		
* Suitable for vegetable garden use			
** For purchases by the trailer or dump truck load			

The Regional Compost Facility is located at 12302 State Highway 195 adjacent to the Killeen Transfer Station in Killeen. Business hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm and 8:00 am to Noon on Saturdays. The facility is closed on Wednesdays. Give them a call at 254-501-3206 if you have any questions.

Speakers Bureau Update

- Gary Slanga

The somewhat formal Speakers Bureau is one year old and during that year we made 37 presentations with an average attendance of 18 per event. Through the expertise of our 19 volunteers were able to offer 41 different topics. Some of the events we speak at include local Libraries, City Parks and Recreation organizations, church groups, Earth Day events and many others.

As word of our ability to provide speakers spreads, I anticipate an increase in the number of requests for speakers. We are already committed for several more events in April. In order to stay up to date and provide the widest variety of topics I would like all who volunteered to do presentations for the bureau to please contact me and let me know if you would like to add or drop some of the topics.

On a sad note we have lost some of our premier speakers do to other commitments or factors beyond their control. As a result 41 topics have been reduced to 37, still an awesome number. I would also like to invite anyone who is interested in participating in the speakers bureau to contact me and I will gladly help you get started.

I want to thank all of you for your commitment to the Speakers Bureau and for all the work that you have done on behalf of the Master Gardeners. We have received several compliments from the organizations we serve which is a testament to the great job all of our speakers are doing.

Keep up the good work and a great big "THANK YOU" to all.

Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry

Adopt a Sign

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Louise Crowell, Kathy White, Gail Christian, and Ursula Nanna stand with the recently installed "Adopt-A-Park" sign at Whistlestop Park. Master gardeners,

led by Kathy White, inspect, and maintain the park four times a years.

Kathy is the liasion between

our master gardener association and the City of Temple. Mel Myers and Bernard McDivitt were part of the work day.



Burger Wednesday

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Louise Crowell, Ray Machovsky, Sophia Gomez, Gail Christian, Carla Harmon, Johnny Herring, Brenda Albro, Ursula Nanna, members of the ground crew, distributed 6 yards of mulch to the front landscape. Many thanks to Wayne Baker for picking up the mulch. After mulching, the grounds crew and propagation class enjoyed a pasta covered-dish lunch complete with salads, and many desserts.



Many BCMG's Attend 2012 Herbal Forum

- Terrie Hahn

A group of Bell County Master Gardeners ventured to Round Top to attend the 2012 Herbal Forum put on by the Pioneer Unit of the Herb Society of America in conjunction with the International Festival-Institute of Round Top on March 16th and 17th.

On Friday, Henry Flowers, Horticulturist for the Grounds at Festival Hill gave a very informative talk on his favorite plants that were available to purchase at the ongoing Plant Sale. The plants in the sale are from Professional growers and from plants propagated by Mr. Flowers onsite. There were hundreds of varieties of herbs and perennials for sale. Individual 8 to 10 foot tables were dedicated to each herb filled with at least a dozen varieties. I've never seen even the big nurseries in Austin with so many varieties of Herbs. People come to this sale from all over Central Texas just to buy hard to find herbs and perennials.

Friday afternoon is dedicated to individual seminars that you had to sign up for ahead of time dealing with the 2012 Herb of the Year, the Rose.

Saturday, Seminars on Roses were presented including one by Mike Shoup of the Antique Rose Emporium.

Everyone left the Forum with purchased plants, smiles, information about Roses and a Martha Gonzales Rose that Henry had propagated to give to everyone attending. BCMG's attending included Dee Coffeen, Carol Runyan, Frances Idoux, Mary Ann Hill, Crystal Fisher, Nancy Kozusko, Brenda Smith, Terrie Hahn, Diane Calderwood, Kim Pringle, former BCMG's Susan Firth and Jeannie Richard.

Pictured above is Nancy Kozusko, Dee Coffeen and Frances Idoux packing up the car; Plant Sale at the Herb Forum.



Propagating Roses

- Frances Idoux

Mike Shoup, owner of the Antique Rose Emporium, demonstrated his method for rose propagation at the 17th annual Herbal Forum in Round Top. The topic of this year's forum was "Roses are Herbs Too!"

Continued on next page..

Herbal Forum ...Continued

The supplies needed for this method of propagation are rose cuttings from self-rooted cultivars, potting soil, perlite, rooting hormone, and zipper closing plastic bags in quart or gallon sizes. The rooting mixture should be one half perlite and one half potting soil. Combine perlite and potting soil and put enough of the mixture to fill about a third of a plastic bag. The **rose** cutting should be taken from a bud stem just after the bud has bloomed, but before rose hips begin to form. The cutting should be about one and a half inches and include leaves on both sides. Moisten the soil in bag. Planting medium should be damp, but not wet. If there is too much water in the bag, make small cuts on the bottom corners of the bag and squeeze gently to remove excess. Dip the cutting in rooting hormone and place in bag. Each bag can hold up to three cuttings. Place the bag by an eastern window and watch for condensation. If there is no condensation, add a small amount of water to the bag. Wait for new roots to form (four to six weeks) before transplanting.



Pictured from top: Terrie Hahn and Diane Calderwood at Plant Sale; Dee Coffeen, Brenda Smith, (Kim's mother-in-law) Dot Pringle, Kim Pringle and Crystal Fisher; Harpist playing during the Blessing of the Garden.

Photos by Carol Runyan and Susan Firth.

News from the Master Gardener Class of 2012

- Pat Smith

Everyone who is in the class has the same thing to say—we are really enjoying our class and learning so very much. Those who are able to participate in the Propagation Class say that the “hands –on” is the best part of learning in this class.

Several of our members volunteered to help prepare for and work the day of the famous Master Gardener spring Plant Sale. Comments overheard at the Plant Sale range from how exhausted we were after putting in so many hours of work to how much fun we had working at the sale and how we learned so much from the experienced Master Gardeners who worked the sale.

Raye Virginia Allen shared her opinion of the class. “For most of my adult life, I have aspired to complete the Texas Master Gardeners’ program. And now, at 82 years of age, I look forward to each class and learn from the remarkable lectures, images, demonstrations, and educational materials. As a lifelong conservationist—indeed, with my parents nature-loving DNA—and as a tree hugger and creek-freak, I hope to welcome you and fellow advocates in Fall 2013 to my historic hillside and my beloved Friars Creek Preserve.”

Maritza Kincaid says “I have really enjoyed learning about all the different subjects presented in the Master Gardener class, but my favorites so far have been Reid Lewis discussing Texas native plants and Kelly Bender of the Wildscape Gardening class. Square foot gardening was very informative as well and I have already used some of those techniques in my own garden. Every meeting has been great fun chatting with fellow gardeners, and of course, the food has been a delightful treat. It took me 20 years to be able to take the Master Gardener class and I’m so glad to finally be here.”

A couple of our class members are so enthusiastic that they would like to continue meeting even after our class has ended. Could they be enjoying the food served for snacks, or should I say feast, at each of our class meetings? Here are a couple of recipes

from the wonderful array of culinary delights we have experienced.

Healthy Humus Dip

1 can (15 to 16 oz) drained garbanzo beans

¼ cup canola oil

1 clove of garlic (cut in half)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

¼ teaspoon curry

Place ingredients in a blender or food processor. Cover and blend on high speed, stopping the blender occasionally to scrape sides if necessary, until uniform consistency. Great with pita chips or crackers or veggies.

More recipes on the next page.

Fun Stuff to Learn

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Carol Runyon, Edie Campbell, Kathy White, Diane Calderwood were presenters at a recent class. Diane explained square foot gardening. Carol, Edie, and Kathy introduced Junior Master Gardener projects; nature masks, nature hats and seed heads.



Fun Stuff ...continued



Above: Jan George and Gail Pierce show their seed heads; right, Randy Brown with his nature mask; Betty Burkett, Stacy Parry and Pamela Dragoo model their nature hats.



Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry

More recipes from New Class

Chewy Cookies

1 cup white corn syrup

1 cup sugar

1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup peanut butter

5 cups puffed rice cereal (like Rice Krispies)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut (optional)

Combine sugar and syrup in a 2 quart sauce pan. Bring to a full boil. Add peanut butter and stir well. Add cereal and coconut, stir to coat cereal well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto wax paper. Let cool.

Mini Cheesecakes

2 Eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$ C of Sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract (I prefer Mexican vanilla)

2 8oz package of Cream Cheese

Vanilla Wafers

Put wafers in paper cupcake liners in muffin tins. Mix all ingredients together. Evenly fill 24 prepared "cupcake liners." Bake at 375 degrees until light golden brown on top. Let Cool in fridge for 1 hour. Top with cherry, pecans, or pie filling of choice.

To make miniature cheesecakes, crumble the cookies and sprinkle crumbs in the bottom of paper muffin cup liners in a miniature muffin tin. Fill each prepared liner about $\frac{2}{3}$ with cream cheese mixture. This version makes great bite-sized cheesecakes for a buffet or dessert snack.

Announcements

General Meeting Information

- **Bernie Hurta**

The monthly meeting is on **April 11th**. The topic is **Cacti and Succulents** given by Ursula Nanna.

Native Plant Society Meeting

- **Rick Shroeder**

The Native Plant Society will have its April Meeting at the home of Ed and Laverne Wood on Saturday April 7 starting at 11 AM. The topic of the meeting is "What Survived the Drought?" The meeting will include a tour and examination of the plants that survived on the Wood's homestead. Please bring a sack lunch for yourself, drinks will be provided.

For those not familiar with the NPSOT (Native Plant Society of Texas) we specialize in native plants and usually meet the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7 PM to discuss plants that are native to our region and know how to survive the Central Texas environment.

The directions to the Woods are: From the West get on FM 439 and proceed East and go past Highway 93 for about 1 mile and turn left on Jamie Drive. From the East get on FM 439 and proceed past Sparta Road for about a mile and turn right on Jamie Drive. Once on Jamie Drive keep to the right and pass three houses on the right. After the three houses on the right you will see two mail boxes on the right. Turn right immediately past the two mail boxes and proceed down a drive way through a gate and see our house at the bottom of a hill.

For questions on directions call Ed Wood, 1665 Jamie Drive, Belton, TX, 254-939-0559. For questions about the Native Plant Society of Texas call Rick Schroeder at 254-986-2655.

Herb Society of America Conference

- **Kim Pringle**

The Herb Society of America's 2012 "Go Native" Educational Conference and Annual Meeting of Members is May 3 - 5, 2012. If interested, go to

<http://www.herbsociety.org/events/documents/2.10.12.RegBrochure.pdf>

All BCMG Are Invited

to attend the

New Class Graduation and
Ice Cream Social

16 May 2012

One O'Clock

Bell County Extension Office

RSVP by 4 May

Bernie Hurta at bhurta@gmail.com

What's Happening in Your Yard?

The Duchesse!

- Frances Idoux

These are pictures of my Duchesse de Brabant rose bush -- in very full bloom. The amazing thing about it is that this is Deer Country, and they haven't touched it this spring (no fence, no sprays, unfortunately no dog). Could it be that deer leave rose bushes alone when they are larger than they are? Deer definitely visit this garden -- overturned flower pots are evidence -- but they haven't touched the roses. Perhaps I should add "yet." One can always hope.



Expect the Unexpected in the Garden

- Beverly Wickersham

Gardeners generally seek to control what grows in their vegetable and flower gardens. But Mother Nature (and squirrels) can sometimes plant surprises. The rose bush has been in place for several years, enjoying the full sun and adding color to a corner of the vegetable garden. The squirrel who planted the pecan beside the rose bush must have forgotten his treat. When I realized the plant growing up through the rose was actually a pecan tree in progress, I decided to leave it and see how the two developed. The end of

the story is still unwritten. The lush growth of cilantro beyond the rose/pecan was unexpected. We had planted a row of onions in January, forgetting the several last-season cilantro plants that had grown in the area and evidently thrown many seeds. Beneath the cilantro are around 30 onion plants that are questioning our gardening skills. One of the Prairie-Clovers, perhaps Purple Dalea, is also growing in the onion row, a gift from Mother Nature. And that too stays where it is. The onions can survive the visit, and we have identified another member of Mother's family.



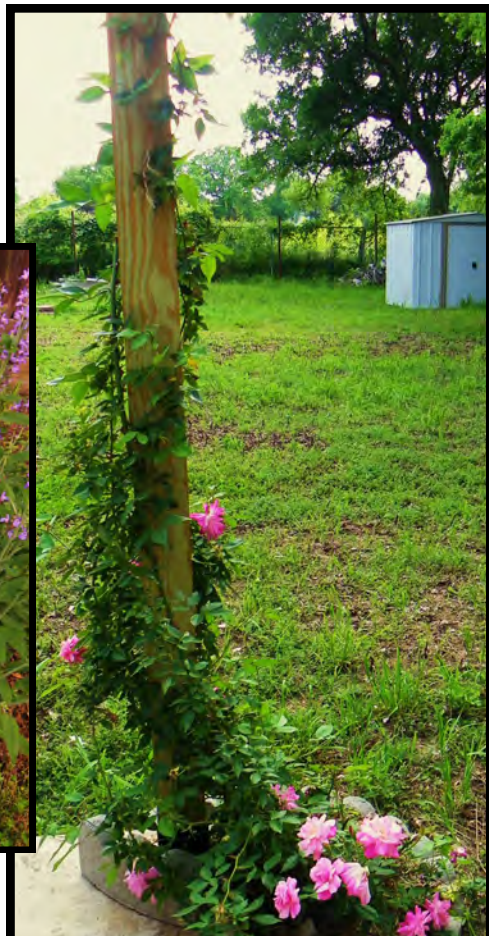
The photo on the right is a huge Poppy growing next to a Larkspur in Werner and Terrie Hahn's yard.

What's Happening in Your Yard...continued

Spring has Sprung!

- Maritza Kincaid

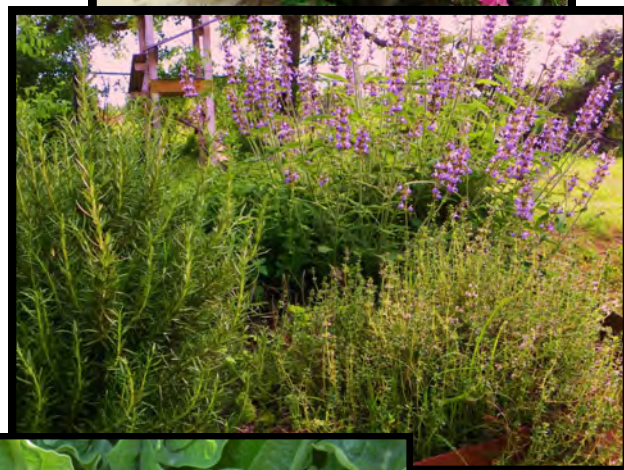
Below is a Double Pink Knockout; my herb garden on steroids after the rains! and Old Blush growing up a tree.



Artichokes!

- Gail Christian

Below are photos of an Artichoke plant in James Anderson's garden spot. It is very impressive. This winter was so mild that it did not freeze and now it has an artichoke growing deep in the center.

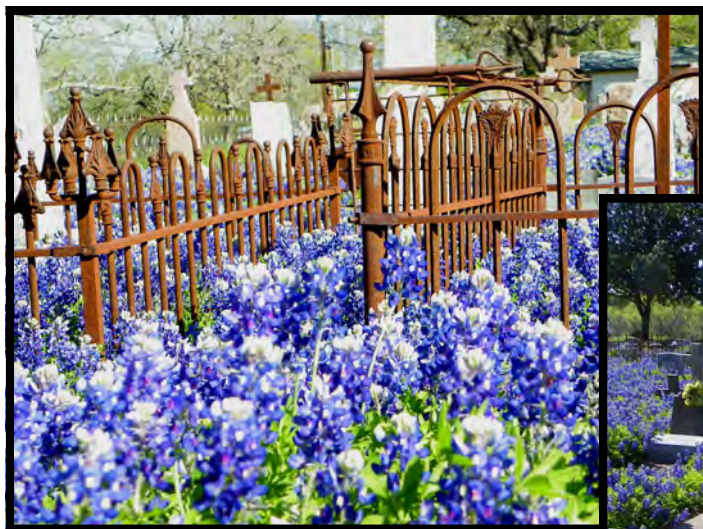


Continued
on next
page...

What's Happening in Your Yard...continued

- Maritza Kincaid

I wasn't exactly on "vacation" but I was in Fredericksburg last weekend and came upon the most beautiful site. This graveyard was covered knee-deep in bluebonnets between the headstones; the sunlight made the whole lot seem to glow blue. It was a breathtaking site for sure and I felt blessed to have experienced it.



Officers and Directors 2011- 2012

President	Laura Murphy
First Vice President	Bernie Hurta
Second Vice President	Jerry Lewis
Recording Secretary	Jeanette Karr
Corresponding Secretary	Ellen Majestic
Treasurer	Don Wyatt

Directors

Garden Tour	Beth Buhl
JMG	Pearl Fellingham
New Class	Fran Sheppard
Outreach	Don Gold
Grounds & Maintenance	Pat Maskunas
Greenhouse	Mel Myers
AgriLife Agent	Randall Rakowitz

A publication of the Bell County Master Gardener
Association sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension of
Texas A & M University

1605 N. Main St.
Belton, Texas 76513
(254) 933-5305



Contributing Writers:

Laura Murphy
Mary Lew Quesinberry
Ursula Nanna
Gary Slanga
Pam Oakes, WCID
Maritza Kincaid
Rick Schroeder
Kim Pringle
Gail Christian
Frances Idoux
Beverly Wickersham
Pat Smith
Bernie Hurta
Terrie Hahn

Contributing Photographers:

Gail Christian
Mary Lew Quesinberry
Maritza Kincaid
Ursula Nanna
Carol Runyan
Susan Firth
Frances Idoux
Beverly Wickersham
Terrie Hahn

Editor:

Terrie Hahn

Proofreader:

Werner Hahn

Front Cover: Fredericksburg cemetery by Maritza Kincaid

Banner: Wild Verbena in Terrie and Werner Hahn's yard.

Above is the Sombreuile Rose in the Hahn's yard.



Please submit articles and photos for the Blooming Bell to Terrie Hahn at:

moompie45@hotmail.com

**321 Logan Ranch Rd.
Georgetown, TX 78628**