

The Blooming Bell

August 2007, Newsletter

Bell County Master Gardener Association

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, August 8th, 2007 11:00 a.m.,

Bell County Extension Office

This month's Speaker is

Ken Schoer

On

Native Grasses

&

Salvias

BCMGA Events Schedule

- Belton Greenhouse Workdays,
Wed. & Thurs., 7 am, Belton
- Burger Wednesday, 1st Wednesday
- August 25th – Fall Veggie Sale
- October 20th – Fall Garden Tour
- October 27th – Fall Plant Sale

President's Corner

I don't know about you, but the BCMGA has been very busy this summer. Last June, I wrote extensively about the "Summer Doldrums". Although the problem has not entirely disappeared, the extra exhaust fans and frequent rains have held down temperatures in the greenhouse, making the working environment much more pleasant. Also, the double service hours have attracted more workers, and a couple of new education projects have kept a lot of us very busy.

Doing what we do best - educating.

One of the education projects came in an invitation from Whit Weems, the Hamilton County Extension Agent. He asked us to help with the programs that will educate their new class of Master Gardener Interns during July and August of this year. Our MG Association has been instrumental in giving birth to at least three new Associations in adjacent counties - Hamilton, Lampasas, and Williams. Each of these new MG Associations must develop education programs to educate their new members. We have been honored to be able to help them in these endeavors.

Violet and I presented a program on rainwater harvesting and water conservation, Betty Nejtek and Janice Canard taught a herb class, Johnny Buck presented Hardscaping, while Neil Cochran and Deb Martin taught a class in basic propagation. My hat is off to all of these Master Gardeners for doing a great job conducting these classes.

While we are busy helping these new MG Associations get started, their existence will also change the makeup of our own association. In the past we had become accustomed to educating individuals from outside Bell County, and we then customarily invited them to join the Bell County Association. I understand that this policy will change. In the future, individuals from these other counties who want to become Master Gardeners will have to be educated by their respective county MG organization. Upon graduation, they would join that association upon completion of their class work. This has already affected us. Two filled positions in our 2008 class recently became available once again because those individuals had to return to their counties of residence for their instruction. I also anticipate that some of our members residing outside Bell County will transfer their memberships to their respective county associations. However, if you reside outside Bell County and have previously been a member of the Bell County Association, you may continue your membership with our association, if you so desire.

The other big project that reached culmination the last complete week of July was the Junior Master Gardening Teacher Training Sessions held daily from July 24 through July 27. It has been a number of years since Bell County has sponsored a JMG program. This summer, we are reinstituting JMG in Bell County. The program will be somewhat different than it has been in the past. Teachers, representing various schools in Bell County, will come to the Extension Office in Belton for an intensive course that will not only provide them with the tools they need to institute the JMG program in their respective schools, the course will be sufficiently intense to make them eligible to become Bell County Master Gardener Interns. The time that they spend developing and instituting the programs they learn about will be used to give them "service hours" just like you and I had to have to obtain the title of Master Gardeners.

The important point here is that these teachers will be responsible for developing, instituting, and insuring the continuation of JMG in their schools. To help them in their tasks, BCMGA volunteers will act as mentors for each of the teacher-schools. The purpose of these mentors will be to interact with the teacher, providing a link with the Association. It will allow us to help these teachers when and if needed, to provide a wellspring of information for them, and to help insure the success of their programs. The role of the mentor is not - and I repeat NOT - to conduct the JMG programs or to provide the labor required to build and manage their projects.

To insure the success of the programs, the mentors will need to periodically communicate with their assigned teacher throughout the school year. Remember - as Master Gardeners, our role is that of educator, director, and consultant.

By the time you read this, the teachers will have already received their training. They will have attained the status of Master Gardener Interns, and will be actively beginning to set up the JMG programs in their schools. If you learn of a school in Bell County that has no plans for a JMG program this school year, and who did not send a teacher for training, do not be alarmed. While all schools in the County were invited, not all chose to send a teacher for training. We hope that the success of our first class will stimulate other schools in Bell County to partake of this wonderful program the next time it is offered - which should be next summer.

A new and better Handbook for 2007-2008.

Most of you already know about the change in the Handbook for 2007-2008. The Board has approved the change in format starting with this issue. The Handbook will be printed on letter-size pages that will be inserted into a 3-ring loose-leaf binder. Annual changes in the Handbook will consist of removing only the sections that have changed and replacing them with the new information. This will greatly simplify the publishing of the Handbook, since most of the year-to-year changes can be done in the Extension Office. In addition, it will result in

a monetary savings to our Association. Jane Capen and Jan Anderson are already hard at work on the project and hope to have the new Handbook ready by the end of summer.

Greenhouse Security finally done.

The greenhouse security fence is now complete. Each of the four doors will be locked starting the first of August. Each is a combination lock and all will be set to the same combination. One combination opens all. Because the locks were never meant to exclude our Association Members from the greenhouse area, the combination number that will be used is the same as the current year and will be changed on January 1 of each year. The only other persons, other than our Master Gardeners, who will be privy to this combination will be the secretaries in the Extension Office. Please do not share this information with your neighbors.

A new time to socialize:

In an effort to make gardening more fun, I am going to suggest to the board that we precede the BCMGA monthly meetings with a social time. The meetings would continue to be held on the second Wednesdays of each month at 11:00 a.m. The time from 10:30 to 11:00 would be a social time to have a cup of coffee and a snack with the other gardeners, so that we could get to know each other better and work on becoming friends rather than just colleagues. I mention this now because I hope we can institute this in September - which will not be long after you read this. If the board agrees, I will have an email notice will be sent out to the membership confirming this practice.

A fundraiser is coming:

Watch for the announcements of our fall vegetable sale. The crops are currently growing from seed, and should be ready for sale my August 25th. The Association will also present three seminar topics at the sale: composting, good and bad insect bingo, and fall vegetables. See you there with your friend's and neighbors.

Gy Okeson
President BCMGA

BCMGA OFFICERS ANNOUNCED

President, Gy Okeson; First Vice President, Frances Idoux; Second Vice President, Rutha Leffel; Recording Secretary, Laverne Adams; Corresponding Secretary, Mary Lew Quesinberry; Treasurer, Judy Herrmann; Directors, Jeanette Karr, Deanna Rankin, Emilie Butts, Rae Schmuck, Johnny Buck, and DJ Campbell.

2007 NEW CLASS GRADUATES

Joelle Bedwell, Suzanne Boyer, Dru Buuck, Jean Coufal, Louise Crowell, Nita Culp, Maretta Deiterman, Dee Earls, Kristy Easley, Annette Ensing, Rowena Fengel, David Fitc, Martha Francis, Louann Hight, Cathy Hoefert, Bernadette Hurta, Mel Myers, Tricia Newton, Sara Lee Perryman, Sandi Revelle, Ken Richey, Fran Sheppard, Gary Slanga, Karren Tedrow, Beverly Wickersham, and Don Wyatt.



This beautiful Texas Star Hibiscus belonging to Illene Miller was purchased by Illene at Martha's Bloomers and had a white bloom. After a freeze last winter it has reverted to a fiery red. It can be visited at the greenhouse.

MG Class of 2008

Time to Apply



Time and space are running out for being part of the new Master Gardener Class of 2008. There are quite a few applications already in the office, and the class size will be limited to 25. So, if you know someone who is interested in being in the class of 2008, let him or her know that it is time to send in that application. Forms are available through the extension office.



Christmas Planning Cmte Meeting

Are you interested in serving on the BCMGA Christmas party planning committee? If so plan on attending a lunch/meeting at Ilene Miller's home on Thursday, August 16th, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. at her home in Temple (2914 Olympia Drive). Please call Ilene at (254) 778-4369 for directions and for lunch planning purposes.



Weed Warrior, Bob Gordon, attacks weeds outside the greenhouse



ANNUAL FALL VEGGIE SALE

The annual Fall Veggie Sale will be held Saturday, August 25, 8 am to 1 pm. Seven varieties of tomatoes, three varieties of peppers, cold crops- broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and also cucumbers, zucchini, and eggplant will be available.

Seminars start at 9 am with Fall Vegetable Gardening, followed by Worm Composting presented by President Gy Okeson at 10 am. Learn about bugs- the good, the bad, the ugly at the Bug Bingo game presented by Rowena Fengel at 11 am.

Volunteers can sign up by contacting Carla Tomaka (254-698-3367).



GREENHOUSE SECURITY

On Wednesday August 1st, new greenhouse security measures went into effect. All four access points are now locked. They are locked with combination locks that are all set to the same combination. The combination is 2007 (easy to remember!) Line up the numbers to 2007, push down on the hasp and it will spring up to unlock. To lock up, scramble the numbers and push the hasp in. The hasp will not close when the numbers are set to 2007. I have placed a note in the box by the pedestrian gate with my home phone and cell phone numbers and Annette Ensing's home phone number in case you are locked out and can't remember the combination. I hope this change does not cause anyone difficulty - it is meant to keep the fruit of all our volunteer's hard and faithful labor secure! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at kstomaka@aol.com

Handicap Demonstration Garden



Charles Spencer works on the handicap demonstration garden project. This project will have adult and child size accessible planting beds. It is located at the south end of the demonstration vegetable gardens.



Monarch Way-Station Certification



Harker Heights' Master Gardener, Dr. Ursula Nanna, recently received Monarch Way-station Certification. Certain criteria must be met to fill the requirements for this certification: 6 hours of sunshine, minimum space of 135 feet of planting area, 4 of the 6 recommended varieties of Milkweed (butterfly weed). Healthy gardening practices, such as organic fertilizer, mulching of plants and no pesticide use are important. Dr. Nanna learned of this butterfly program through Birds and Blooms magazine and by searching the Monarch Butterfly web site (www.monarchwatch.org)

Nanna's beautiful butterfly garden is a Best of Texas for Wildlife Habitation certified by Texas Parks and Wildlife, and a featured garden on the Bell County Master Gardener Association. annual garden tours.



**BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ARE SPONSORED
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