

Blooming Bell

BCMGA

December 2009

December

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2 Burger Cookie & Sweets Wed 8:45AM Herb Study Group 9:00AM Greenhouse Com. Mtg. 1-4:00PM New Class Orientation	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 WORKDAY Plant New Front Bed	10 6:00PM BCMGA Christmas Dinner & Silent Auction	11	12
13	14	15	16 9:00AM Board of Directors	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25  Merry Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31		

THE SEASON IS UPON US

Submitted by Mel Myers, President

It seems like yesterday and the temperature was one hundred degrees and hadn't rained in ages!! Now we are having new class orientation and Christmas party. Time surely does march on.

December brings a lot of activity for the Bell County Master Gardeners. We start the month with burger Wednesday and the following week is a workday for planting the newly developed area in front of the extension office. Your participation in this effort is needed to move this project to the next step. I am sure you will hear more about this from Ursula with details.

December also brings orientation for the new class. We look forward to meeting our new interns and sharing our experiences and interest with them.

During the last board meeting we spent a lot of time discussing one of the problems we experience in BCMGA. That is, how do we get people involved and stay involved in the organization after graduation. I realize that upon graduation we naturally want to "take a break" and rest for a while. How can we motivate new members to participate in the various activities? Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Let me hear from you. Just e-mail me at melvin.myers@yahoo.com.

Along this line, we need to look for ways to improve our association. If everyone would come up with one idea that would make our chapter a better organization, we could make the step to a more interesting and enjoyable experience. Let me hear from you what should be done to improve BCMGA.

I mentioned last month that I would include a bit about the community gardens and lessons learned in the new experience. When I first started gardening with this group, they were all so willing to share their crops with me. It was kind of like moving into a new area and meeting new neighbors. Not only did we enjoy the vegetables, but we soon found out what varieties of onions, beans, peas and tomatoes we liked best. Sharing our crops and experiences with others is a great way to make new friends.

I hope all of you have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and will see you at the party!!!

GREENHOUSE COMMITTEE MEETING

Submitted by Karla Tomaka & the Greenhouse Crew

Due to all the conflicting activities in November, the greenhouse committee meeting, which would normally be held on November 18th, is rescheduled for Wednesday, December 2nd at 9:00AM in the classroom. This meeting will take the place of our December Burger Wednesday project. We will be discussing plans for the spring plant sale. Instead of burgers and potluck, we would like to have a pre-holiday cookie and sweets day. Bake or make up your favorite holiday treats to bring in and share! Hope to see you there,

PUT ON YOUR CHRISTMAS BOOTS!!

Submitted by Diane Calderwood

The 1st Annual Cowboy Christmas Ball to benefit the Bell County Youth Fair Livestock Show and Rodeo Scholarship Fund is coming up on Saturday, December 12th. We would love to see 2 tables of Bell County Master Gardeners at the event! Please contact MaryAnn Everett pma4514@sbcglobal.net if you and your honey are interested in joining the fun. Or, contact Diane Calderwood dcalder@hot.rr.com if you would like to join the "Cowgirls" table. Both tables are \$50/seat for reserved seating. More information about the event is available at the Extension office. Hope to see y'all there.

NEW CLASS MENTORS NEEDED

Submitted by Suzanne Boyer

Would you be willing to help **PROVIDE REFRESHMENTS FOR THE NEW CLASS** and get hours for doing it? We also have a few traditional mentor spots open. Please contact Suzanne Boyer if you are willing to help. Call 780-2463 or email suzboyer@sbcglobal.net.

UPDATED MASTER GARDENER HANDBOOK

Submitted by The New Class Committee

The Master Gardener Handbook has been revised and updated for our 2010 class. Several chapters have expanded text and all chapters have new print and graphics. If you are interested in ordering the insert text ONLY for the new books, please contact Diane Calderwood, dcalder@hot.rr.com. The cost is \$28 and your check should be made payable to BCMGA and sent to Jan Anderson or given to Diane.

HERB STUDY GROUP

Submitted by Terrie Hahn

November's Herb Group meeting dealt with herbs in soup! We had six soups to taste-yummy! Kim made Ribollita ("boiled leftovers") which was made with malabar spinach, other veggies, and sage. Frances made Creamy Tomato Basil made with fat-free cream. Mary Lou made Potato soup which had chives and parsley. Nancy brought in a recipe for Salmon Soup (which she'll have to send separately as we didn't have time to talk about it). Terrie made chicken and spatzle soup which had parsley, rosemary, a kaffir lime leaf and lemon thyme; and Roasted Tomato Basil Soup and a Cold and Allergy Remedy which was more of a remedy than a soup, but worth trying because of the number of herbs in it and the reaction our sinuses had when we drank it. The recipe is at the end of this report for those of you who may suffer from colds or allergies this winter.

The question as to when to put herbs into soup was brought up and the consensus was that it depended on the herb. Bay, rosemary and many of the tough herbs should generally be put in at the beginning of soup making; whereas, the more tender leafed herbs would be better put in during the last 10 - 20 minutes of cooking. Although the Roasted Tomato soup from Ina Gartner's Barefoot Contessa book has the basil in at the beginning which is unusual.

Terrie and Nancy brought in dried arrangements. Terrie bought a bouquet with bay, garlic, red peppers, lavender, yarrow and some sort of flower we couldn't identify. Nancy had made a beautiful wreath with bay leaves, heather, and citrus and explained the procedure for creating it. The citrus can be dried in the oven at a low temperature or outside in the sun on a screen. Kim brought a sprig of Papilion (we weren't sure of the spelling) which tasted like a cross between cilantro and parsley, but grows well during the summer.

The December 2nd meeting will be run by Pat Maskunas' daughter, Gina, a massage therapist. She will be giving an informative talk on massage oils. Gina is also an equine masseuse and uses herb-infused oils on horses for various conditions and ailments. It sounds extremely interesting - not a meeting you want to miss! We will also be bringing Christmas goodies to share and to share for the first wednesday potluck Christmas goodie lunch.

OLD FASHIONED COLD & ALLERGY REMEDY

Provided By LuAnn Porter

1 Can chicken broth
2 Jalapeños
15 Cloves garlic
5 Parsley sprigs
1 tsp Cilantro
Lemon pepper
Mint
1/2 tsp Curry
Sweet Basil
1/4 tsp Creole
Simmer 30 minutes. Blend. Drink 4 oz every 2 hours.

(Lu Ann Porter brought this to November Herb meeting. This was one of several demo soups. It is really good!

BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Are sponsored by the

TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION of TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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

Contributors: Suzanne Boyer, Diane Calderwood, Terrie Hahn, Mel Myers, Karla Tomaka, New Class Committee, Christmas Party Committee, Greenhouse Crew

Editor: Joan Hinshaw

Please submit articles for the ***Blooming Bell*** to Joan at irene_joan@hotmail.com.



