

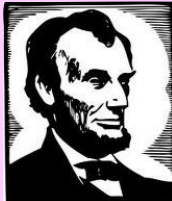







## FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2  Groundhog Day	3 WORKDAY  Burger Wed. 8:45 Herb Study Group 1-5:00 2010 Class	4 WORKDAY	5	6
7	8	9 	10 WORKDAY  10:30 Monthly MG Meeting 1-5:00 2010 Class	11	12  Lincoln's Birthday	13
14  Valentine's Day	15  President's Day	16	17 WORKDAY  9:00 Greenhouse Com. Mtg. 1-5:00 2010 Class	18	19	20
21	22  Washington's Birthday	23	24 WORKDAY  9:30 Board of Directors 1-5:00 2010 Class	25	26	27
28						

## **FEBRUARY IS HERE!!!**

Submitted by Mel Myers, President

Where did January go? What a way to start the year. Only a few days into 2010 and the weather treats us to a cold snap, the likes of which we haven't seen in a long time. I don't know about you, but my plants suffered some serious damage. My Sago Palms, which have flourished for eleven years, are turning up their leaves. Hopefully, they will revive themselves as spring approaches. The vegetable gardens likewise suffered as the broccoli and romaine lettuce bit the dust.

January also brought us a new class which is up and going. David Fitch and I had the privilege of teaching a session on vegetable gardening and enjoyed it very much. They started off with a lot of enthusiasm in helping with the progress of the Earthkind demonstration area in front of the extension office. We appreciate their participation and look forward to their continued involvement. As usual, the New Class Committee has done a tremendous job.

Several important dates have been established. September 18 will be our fall gardening tour. If you would like to participate in this, please contact Sidney Vanloh. March 27 and September 25 will be our plant sales. We will have a seminar on February 18 on vegetable gardening which is open to the public. Master Gardeners are welcome to attend but should register with Pat in the extension office. There is no fee for this seminar. February also brings the Home and Garden show. Be sure to come and support BCMGA in our efforts to get the word out to our communities regarding our activities. The beginning of a new year brings many activities for us in the garden. In just a few days it will be time to trim the roses and plant potatoes, beets, lettuce and other crops.

With regard to our lessons from the community garden, we are saddened that one of our long time members has passed away. Doyle Taylor was 93 years old and has been an inspiration to many of us. To just think that he would be working in his garden at 93 is an inspiration to me. I approached him a couple of months ago about being on a panel for our class presentation of vegetable gardening. His answer was that he would rather come to the class to learn more about gardening. He has probably forgotten more about vegetable gardening than many of us will ever know. **HAPPY GARDENING!!!**

## **MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM**

Submitted by Mary Pearl Murphy

There will be a Master Naturalist program starting up here in Bell County this spring - spearheaded by one of your own - Mary Ann Everett. We are holding a Public Information meeting about the classes next week on Tuesday, February 2nd from 9am to 10:30pm. If any of y'all are interested in this new program, please attend to learn more. The following is the News Release we ran in the Temple Telegram last week announcing this meeting. Please come!

Attention all Bell County Environmental Enthusiasts:

Are you interested in learning more about the natural environment here in Bell County? There is a new series of classes that are being held for the first time this spring! The Central Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program is having its first year of classes starting this April. We are holding an informational meeting on February 2nd, 2010 for all those interested. The class will cover topics such as the ecoregions of Texas, bird study & watching, archaeology, aquatic systems, the study of wetlands, and more. Professional experts on these fields will be teaching the courses at natural habitat locations here in Bell County, including Mother Neff State Park and the Gault Site. The classes will run from April 6th to May 11th, being held every Tuesday from 9:00am to 4:00pm in various locations throughout Bell County. The classes are mandatory and there will be a \$100.00 class registration fee. If you are interested in joining or learning more about this program, please join us on February 2nd, 2010 from 9:00am to 10:30am for an informational meeting held at the Bell County Extension Office (1605 N Main, Rm 102, Belton, TX 76513). If you have any questions, please call our office at (254) 933-5305.

## **NORTH FORT HOOD FIELD TRIP**

Submitted by Mary Ann Everett

Mark your calendars! On Thursday, April 29, we will take a field trip to North Fort Hood, meeting with Gil Eckrich and Rich Kosteke, who will take us to areas most folks don't get to see. There will be some walking and hiking. More information coming later.

## **NEW CLASS FIELD TRIP**

Submitted by Suzi Judd & the New Class Committee

Mark your calendars and plan to go with the new class on our upcoming spring field trip! This year's trip is scheduled for Wednesday, April 21, 2010 and tickets for a seat on the bus will be \$20.00. In the morning, we will be traveling to The Natural Gardener, Austin's premiere organic garden center to tour their fabulous demonstration gardens. John Dromgoole, owner of The Natural Gardener will be speaking to our group about organic gardening practices and answering our questions. In the afternoon, we will be visiting Zilker Botanical Garden. There we can visit the Cactus and Succulent Garden, Herb and Fragrance Garden, Japanese Garden, Butterfly Garden and more wonderful gardens. More information on the field trip will be coming in the next few weeks. It should be a fun and informative day. Hope you can join us.



**Come & Get Your Barbecued Ribs!**

## **WORKDAY & ~~BURGER~~ BBQ RIBS WEDNESDAY**

Submitted by Ursula Nanna & the Grounds Committee

February already! There are so many activities taking place that we ask you to join in on the gardening tasks, having fun together, and enjoying Burger Wednesday, February 3rd. We will start at 9 a.m. and the areas being prepared or refreshed are: the setback in the entrance gardens-weed barrier and crushed granite: the side raised beds gardens; and the total refurbishing of the vegetable beds. There is an activity for every level of gardening.

We are happy to announce that the ~~BURGER~~ part will be ribs prepared by our own Pat Maskunas and Family. Please bring a side to pass.

Thursday, Feb. 4th will be a workday to complete some of these gardens and beds. Please bring shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes, a hoe, and some forks, and a few watering cans to wet the newspaper. See you there.

## **BELL COUNTY MG BOARD MEMBERS**

Submitted by Mary Lew Quesinberry

Terms are expiring for five board members.

Recording Secretary held by Beverly Wickersham

Director/Greenhouse Liaison held by Don Wyatt

Corresponding Secretary/Education Director held by Annette Ensing

Director/Grounds & Maintenance Liaison held by Ursula Nanna

Director/Garden Tour Liaison held by Sidney Vanloh

If you would like to be considered for one of these positions or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact us by mail, e-mail, phone listed below or at the monthly meeting February 10th.

**As a courtesy, please ask your nominee and get their permission before presenting their name as a nominee for the board.**

The names of the nominees will be presented to the membership at the March 10th meeting and nominations will be taken from the floor. The nominees will be voted on April 14th and the new board members will be installed at May graduation in the EXPO. Their service will begin June 2010. Your nominating committee is Jane Capen, Jann Dworsky and Mary Lew Quesinberry.

Mary Lew Quesinberry  
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## **ANOTHER WAY TO EARN SERVICE HOURS**

Submitted by Diane Calderwood

If anyone is interested and needs service hours, we need 24 small plants to be given as part of the graduation gift at the 2010 Intern graduation on May 19th. You can provide all or just a part of the plants we need and they don't all have to be the same plant! We would also love to have any extra plants you might have sitting around that could be given as door prizes during our weekly classes!

If you can help, please contact Diane Calderwood, dcalder@hot.rr.com.

## BWI ORDERS

Submitted by Judy Herrmann

Effectively immediately, I will be handling the BWI orders. We plan to place an order next week for Thursday February 4<sup>th</sup> delivery. If you have any items that you want to order, please let me know immediately at [dr\\_herrmann@hotmail.com](mailto:dr_herrmann@hotmail.com).

## HERB STUDY GROUP

Submitted by Kim Pringle

We had a comprehensive discussion about dill (2010 Herb of the Year) including how to grow, history, medicinal uses, culinary uses and the attraction of swallowtail butterflies/caterpillars. See the following article for further information. One additional note is that according to Madelene Hill, dill can successfully be dried in the microwave and frozen fresh in oil or water for later use.

Varieties of dill include: Dukat, Bouquet and Bouquet (organic), Vierling (best for ornamental and cut-flower use), Hercules (extremely tall), Superdukat (improved variety - high essential oil content), Fernleaf (dwarf 18" good for containers), Mammoth (3') and Elephant (new variety - longest late-flowering dill).

We were treated with Ben Wickersham's recipe of prize-winning State Fair Dill Pickles!

The seed company that deals primarily with seed that is successful in Texas is  
Willhite Seed, Inc.  
P. O. Box 23  
Poolville, TX 76487  
Telephone 800-828-1840  
website [www.willhite.com](http://www.willhite.com)

We made 13 reservations for the Festival Hill Herb Forum on March 19-20. There is space for two more, so please contact Kim Pringle if you would like to go.

### Announcements:

1. The 2010 Texas Master Gardener State Conference will be in Dallas April 8 - 10.
2. Central Texas Master Naturalist information meeting is February 2 at 9:00 at the Extension Office.
3. Herb Study has been invited to do two herb presentations: "Growing and Cooking with Herbs" at the Bell County Home and Garden Show on Saturday, February 27 at 1:00 and 3:00.
4. There is a field trip planned to North Fort Hood on April 29.

5. Two schools, Leon Heights Elementary, Belton and West Ward Elementary, Killeen, have contacted me. Leon Heights would like us to do "American Colonial Garden" presentation and West Ward wants assistance with formal herb garden. I am waiting for more information.

6. BCMGA plant sale is March 27 from 8 to 3.

NEXT MEETING: February 3 facilitated by Linda Young. She will talk on herbal oils and vinegars and bring some samples to taste. Also, if you cannot attend the February meeting and want to help with presentations, please let me know. Besides the presentation, we need help passing out information and answering questions.

## DILL (ANETHUM GRAVEOLENS)

Submitted by Beverly Wickersham

*Family: Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) (Carrot or Parsley)*

Dill, an herb that derives its name from the Norse *dilla* meaning *to soothe or to lull*, was used by the ancient Egyptians as an ingredient for a pain-killing mixture. It is a herb with a long history. Its medicinal and culinary uses as well as its associations with both witchcraft and the Bible make its study worthwhile and interesting.

The ancient Romans called it *anethum* which later became known as *anise*. *Gravelolens* means "strong scented". The Greeks believed dill helped with sleep and hiccups. In the Bible there is a reference to dill's value as a tax payment. Throughout the Middle Ages, dill was used as a protection against witches. Magically, dill was used in spells and used to promote romance, when combined with wine. In the Middle Ages, Dill was also one of the herbs used by magicians in their spells and charms against witchcraft. The Pioneer settlers of North America gave their children dill seed to chew throughout long sermons in church, thereby earning dill the nickname of "*meeting seed*."

Dill has long been known as a digestive aid for help with "wind", colic, and indigestion. It is still current in the British Herbal Pharmacopoeia for this use. It was especially known for its use with children and babies: *dilly pillows, made from lavender and dill*, helped to lull European children to sleep with their fragrance. Today, dill is used in "grippe water" for babies.

### Current Uses of Dill:

Culinary: the leaf, seed, and flower are used to flavor soups, meat, and fish dishes, cakes and breads; known for its use in pickles and condiments.



Cosmetic: The seeds of dill are chewed to freshen breath; used as a fragrance component in perfumes, soaps, and detergents.

Aromatic: Dill is used in aromatherapy as an essential oil; useful for help with a number of ailments, especially digestive difficulties, but also used with nursing mothers to promote the flow of milk.

Medicinal: Dill is rich in mineral salts and can help with a salt-free diet. Dill water is a popular pharmaceutical digestive preparation.

Tea from the seed or leaves promotes sleep and reduces nervousness. The seed aids in digestion.

### Planting of Dill

This annual enjoys full sun, protected from wind. Plant seed in the early spring and every two weeks thereafter to have a continuous succession of plants. Seed can also be sown in the fall for an additional crop. Set out transplants in the spring.

Height: 24-36 inches

Spread: 12-24 inches

Final spacing: 12 inches

### Problems???? Not for me!

Caterpillars of the swallowtail butterfly cause damage. However, the Dill plants restore the growth lost to these beneficial, beautiful creatures. I delight in finding them on my plants.

### Harvest/Storage

Dill does not save well. Cut and gather the leaves to use fresh. As the seeds turn brown, cut off the tops of the plant and hang upside down in a paper bag to catch the seed.

Sources: Herbs for Texas, Howard Garrett  
Botanical.com

## **POMEGRANATE--A FRUIT WITH HISTORY**

Submitted by Jane Capen

When was the first time you ever heard of a pomegranate? Was it when you read the myth of Persephone, who caused the world to have winter? Or perhaps more recently, as pomegranate products began appearing in the stores? A Google search of "pomegranate" results in over five million entries.

Here are just a few highlights, history and lore: The name Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) comes from Latin pomum ("apple") and granatus ("seeded"), combining to make "seeded apple". Some speculate that the pomegranate was the original apple in the Garden of Eden.



**A pomegranate sliced open revealing its delicious and juicy red seeds.**

The pomegranate is native to Iran, but has spread widely. It was brought to California by the Spanish in 1769. Pomegranate season runs from about September to February in the northern hemisphere.

The beautiful, ruby red arils (usually simply referred to as the seeds) are the edible part of the pomegranate. They may be eaten as is, or added to other dishes for texture, taste and color. The juice is often used in salad dressing, and grenadine syrup was originally made from pomegranate juice and syrup.

The Spanish city of Granada was named for it during the Moorish period. The pomegranate can be found in many religious cultures, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. They are found in art by da Vinci and Botticelli. Frequently they symbolize hope, prosperity, and fertility. In Greek mythology Persephone is kidnapped by Hades and taken to the underworld. Demeter, goddess of the Harvest and the mother of Persephone, goes into mourning, and all plant growth stops. Not wanting the earth to die, Zeus commands the return of Persephone. However because she had eaten pomegranate seeds while in the underworld, her fate was that she return there every year. During these months, Demeter again grieves, giving us the season of winter.

King Henry VIII's first wife Catherine of Aragon had the pomegranate as an emblem on her coat of arms. Henry eventually replaced her with Anne Boleyn, who chose a new set of arms, one which showed a white falcon pecking at a pomegranate.

This is only a tiny taste of the pomegranate. For more, browse those five million or so Google entries.

## **CENTURY-OLD COTTONWOODS FALL TO PREDICTABLE AILMENT**

Submitted by Don Gold, Class Reporter

Early in the first decade of the last century, Temple, Texas dedicated Jackson Park, a small north-end neighborhood greenway on the banks of a spur off Little Elm creek. They planted Cottonwoods on the treeless plot for their rapid growth, creek-bank vitality, and Texas tolerance.

More than 100 years later, a handful of these originals remain, and having grown to full potential, they are giants. The largest of these towering titans had to be removed last month by the city park maintenance service, having become a safety hazard due to internal moisture rot, an interesting characteristic that plagues the species.

Members of the poplar family, Cottonwood is classified as a hardwood, although its density is relatively soft and fibrous. Their growth rate is unusually rapid, sometimes reaching full potential in as quickly as 10 years. The root system is wide spread and rather shallow, drawing in and storing large amounts of water, contributing to their rapid growth. When Cottonwoods are harvested for commercial use, a drainage wedge is cut into the lower trunk weeks before the tree is felled.

Expanding and dividing even faster in wet years, these trees often outgrow their bark, causing it to split at new growth tree top branch divisions. Rainwater enters the fibrous under wood of the trunk, and since the species tends to store rather than dispel moisture, over time, collected water begins to rot out the tree's core. Many thankful tree animals make welcome homes in these interior caverns.

Over extended time, water rots away most of the internal trunk, rendering the old tree a hazard during wind storms occurring near populated areas. A second giant Cottonwood is scheduled for removal soon for the same reasons. Jackson Park neighbors will miss them.



**Final view of the live Cottonwood.**



**Cross section of trunk's water damage.**

## BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Are sponsored by the

### TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION of TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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