

The background of the entire page is a bright blue sky filled with numerous red hearts of various sizes. Some hearts are solid red, while others have a white outline or a white center. The hearts are scattered across the page, creating a festive and romantic atmosphere.

The Blooming Bell

**February, 2011
BCMGA Newsletter**

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Whoa...Before You Dig, Horseradish

MG's Invade, Announcements, Help Wanted

Scarecrow Contest, FYI,

Woodland/Grassland Training

The MG's 23rd Psalm, MG's Garden Art

New Class Update

February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Garden beds available Contact Don Wyatt	2 Work Day 9 -11 am Herb Study Group 8:30 am Spaghetti Cook Off 11 am Come One, Come All!	3 Grounds Committee Meeting 9 am	4	5
6	7 Deadline Register-Wood/Grassland Training	8	9 Work Day 8-10:30 am MG General Meeting - 11 am Gil Eckrich will speak on Predatory Insects	10 NPSOT/Williamson 7 pm, Georgetown Library, Rare Flora	11	12
13	14 	15	16 Work Day 9 am Grounds Committee Meeting 10 am	17 Work Day 8-10 am Plant Sale Meeting Woodland/Grassland Advanced Training 10 am-noon	18	19
 Home and Garden Show Tear Down - 3 pm					 Home and Garden Show Setup	
20	21	22	23 Work Day 8-11 am Board of Directors Meeting 9 am Plant Sale Training 9-noon	24 Woodland/Grassland Advanced Training 10 am-noon	25	26
27	28					

Important upcoming dates: Scarecrow contest deadline is March 12
Spring Plant Sale is March 26, 7:30 - 3 pm
Garden Tour is May 7, 8 am - 3 pm

The President's Corner

New Beginnings

It seems strange that such a regular occurrence can change our attitude about so many things. I am thinking about warmer weather and sunshine, all good things that happen to all of us at this time of the year. I counted my blessings again this week as I ordered my usual supply of cipollini onion sets. You see the person I was talking to lived in Minnesota and the temperature had gotten above zero for the first time in a week.....**brrrrrrr!**



Anticipation is a wonderful experience!!! During the coldest of winters we get a good dose of sunshine and warmer temperatures and our attitude suddenly changes. It doesn't take much to get a sour face of a gardener to change to a happy face.



Spring is such a great time of year. This is when we change gears and start thinking about our gardens and the things we can do to make life more enjoyable. It is when we plant our onions and other cool weather vegetables and look forward to harvest. Few things arouse our enthusiasm like the first taste of spring.

Things are going along nicely for Bell County Master Gardeners Association. Most of the positions on the board are in place and we are ready to move on with our programs. The new class is settling in and the usual items of business

are falling in place. My thanks to all who serve the BCMGA as an officer, director or work in other capacities to make our association the best it can be.

Happy gardening!!!!

- Mel Meyers



Editor's Note:

[There's a garden somewhere out there!](#)

I couldn't resist getting a couple of photos from my brothers in Minnesota and Wisconsin to show you how lucky we are. Although it looks as if the beginning of February may get pretty chilly (and maybe even white)!!! As Mel says, "Brrrrrrr!"

Top two photos by MG Terrie Hahn's brother, Paul Sulik in West Bend, Wisconsin; bottom photo taken in Shokopee, Minnesota by Mike Sulik.

WHOA.....

BEFORE YOU DIG !!!

- Ursula Nanna

Have you ever said, "I wish I knew then what I know now?" Ya, me too. This time it applies to choosing and preparing a garden site and what to do before you reach for the shovel.

First and foremost, be sure the site is utility free: that is, no underground cable lines, no irrigation pipes out of sight, no electric or gas pipes just beneath the soil surface. Also, be sure to be within your property boundaries. Call for a dig test at 1-800-242-9113 and know where you stand. The utilities will send out crews to mark the utility lines so you won't dig through pipes or wires resulting in injury and high repair costs.

Next, evaluate the site making notes of where the sun travels through the planned site. Where is the morning sun and afternoon sun? Are the trees mature? If not, measure out their limb stretch and where they'll cast shade when mature. It's important to determine their full effect on the garden when they are mature. Where are the shade areas and is it dappled shade or light shade. Are the trees evergreen or deciduous? Here, shade tolerant plants may be needed.

Is the site level or does it have bad drainage? Then



You may want to choose a site that doesn't have so much rock! Werner Hahn creating a new bed along a pathway.

backfill with quality topsoil and compost and level out the site. The topsoil and compost will also amend the garden site tempering this clay soil we battle in gardening. After tilling in the soil, and leveling the site, elevate the site higher in the center and lower at the edges. This will enable good drainage. Rake the area smooth removing the rocks and stones.

Along with our clay soil, we also have high or alkaline pH. Call your local extension office and they'll tell you about pH testing and where to send the samples. The results will tell you how to adjust the pH and then properly amend the soil nutrients. Improper pH helps bind nutrients and/or inhibit the plant's ability to process the nutrients properly. pH 6.8 to 7.1 is ideal for most plants with roses liking pH around 6.5.

Also consider the traffic patterns in this garden site area as well as where the garden paths will go and if you'll use mulch, stone, bricks or pebbles. Is there a nearby source of water and electric if needed? Will a patio be added down the road?

Now that we've considered the lay of the land, we can get to the shape of the garden. Will it be round, square, rectangular, curved, an island or a border garden? Lay out the shape of the garden using a hose so that you can experiment with the perimeters.

Some people like square or rectangle but curved perimeters are attractive and lend themselves well to mowing. Please remember that with each edge you create, you increase the area to weed eat. I place my gardens in proximity and mulch in between them to decrease that area by 2/3's. Also, start small and get the feel for what you've created. Then as the garden prospers, it's easy to increase the size of the garden. Keep the width of the garden to 4' so that weeding and pruning can be easily accomplished from either side of the garden.

If turf grass exists in the site of the garden, I've found it easier to spray a mild glyphosate herbicide. This will take two weeks from spraying to translocate to the roots and kill the existing grass. Then I weed eat the area as low as I can cut and put on a second application of the herbicide. This will get any grass that wasn't killed during the first application.

Next comes the mulching. NEVER use plastic of any kind, no sheets, no bags, no tarps, to mulch around plants and/or trees. This will trap water underneath, sour the soil, rob the plant roots of oxygen, and eventually kill the plants. I use newspaper as a mulch and others use weed cloth. Nothing

Continued on next page...

Whoa...continued

against weed cloth, but when you change plants or add plants as often as I do, the weed cloth becomes like black Swiss cheese and virtually ineffective. Newspaper can always be patched with more newspaper and re-mulched. Let me explain...First, many people mulch and then plant. I like to plant and then mulch because I find it easier than cutting all those holes and then it's neater when I mulch over all that disturbed soil. I purchase the plants remembering to consider mature sizes so I don't overcrowd and create more unnecessary work later. I lay the plants out, still in their containers. I put the tallest mature growth either in the center if planting an island garden, or in the back if it's a border. Re-arrange the plants until it's to your liking and then plant the plants, water, and spread the newspaper. Use only the newsprint, no shiny paper. Use 8-10 pages thick and overlap the edges. The goal is to create a weed barrier. If there's a breeze, wet the paper as you go to keep it in place.



Now, cover the newspaper with the organic mulch of your choice, like

pine bark mulch or cedar or cypress mulch. Water the plants as needed. Since you have chosen Texas native plants they will establish very well within a year and your watering will be minimal. Fertilize after the first bloom and again in August for a fall flush of bloom.

This garden will give you much pleasure as you enjoy a well planned, weed-free oasis because of what you did before you dug.

Horseradish 2011 Herb of the Year

- Beverly Wickersham

Horseradish, (*Armoracia rusticana*) is a perennial herb of many uses. It is a member of the Cruciferae (Mustard) family, and like other family members bears

a flower that has four petals arranged in the shape of a cross. Early spring is the best time to plant the dormant roots which can be ordered from garden suppliers or dug from a friend's "horseradish" garden. Roots may be also purchased from a grocery store that carries fresh horseradish.

Plant the root in a sunny location in soil that drains well. The root top should be at ground level after planting. The roots will form many branches, and these lateral (branch) roots are what should be harvested, leaving the remaining roots to continue growing and multiplying.

(A Caution) Horseradish is an aggressive plant. Once established you will always have Horseradish. It may be preferable to confine this herb to an isolated spot away from other plants.

Horseradish is said to be one of the five bitter herbs the Jews were commanded to eat at the Passover meal. The other four were Coriander, Horehound, Nettle and Lettuce. These herbs are still commonly used in the Passover Seder. This "bitter herb" has medicinal value also. In fact, it was used as a medicine before it was used as a food. Both roots and leaves have been used as a stimulant to the appetite, a diuretic, a treatment to prevent and expel kidney stones, an expectorant, and an antibiotic.

To prepare Horseradish for use in cooking, grate the firm, white root on the fine edge of a grater (or use your blender) to bring about the chemical reaction between constituents that are found in the separate cells of the root. The biting taste and pungent aroma do not exist in the unbroken root. It is developed by the chemical reaction that occurs during the grating process. The addition of white vinegar to the grated horseradish stabilizes the degree of hotness in the product. Add vinegar immediately after grating for a mild horseradish or wait three minutes before adding vinegar for a hotter version. Use 2 to 3 tablespoons of white vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon of salt for each cup of grated horseradish.

Horseradish roots can be stored up to 3 months in a cool place before becoming bitter.

Master Gardeners, Naturalists “Invade” TSTC

- Darla Horner Menking

Several **Bell County and McLennan County Master Gardeners** joined together with **Heart of Texas** and **El Camino Real Master Naturalists** on Saturday morning, Jan. 22nd, to complete the “Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientist” training course, held on the campus of Texas State Technical College. The training was lead by Mike Murphrey of the Texas Forest Service. Developed by the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** in April of 2005, the major program partners of Invaders of Texas include the TX Forest Service, TX Parks & Wildlife Dept., Texas Master Naturalists, and the Houston Advanced Research Center.



The intent of this training program is to “*empower the public to become involved as citizen scientists in order to more effectively slow the spread of harmful invasive species and reduce their environmental and economic damage*”. (**Citizen Scientist Handbook**) That’s a mouthful!

Each attendee received a curriculum handbook, a clip board, data sheets, and numerous pamphlets and materials concerning the increasing environmental and economic problems due to the rapid increase of exotic invasives into Texas native habitats. The magnitude of this issue is so vast, it has become necessary to utilize and train private citizens to help locate and collect data, not only for research but for developing solutions to the problem.

The training went from 9am to about 4:30pm, and it covered not only classroom information, but data collection out in the field and data input into the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center computer

tracking network. Mike Murphrey did an outstanding job disseminating information and getting participants excited about doing their part to combat the most common invasive plant species in the local areas. His quick-witted humor yet serious focus on his topic made the hours invested on a Saturday well worth it!

By the end of the course, attendees had: reported valuable data into computers, taken an oath of commitment to utilize their training and stay involved in the quest to save Texas native resources, were given a comprehensive field guide for indentifying invasives, learned how to use a GPS, how to take quality digital images for verification, and received a certificate of training as Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientists. All left the training as eager Citizen Scientist “apprentices,” the first level of three. As more data is reported and verified in the reporting system, “intermediate” and “expert”, levels may be reached.

There are presently over 300 Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientists. Anyone interested in knowing more may visit the website, www.texasinvasives.org . This is definitely a worthwhile course and the cooperative effort of working together increases the chances of controlling and/or eradicating harmful exotic invasives, thereby saving precious Texas native plant species. There will be additional opportunities to train for this program, coming up in the near future.

Bell County Master Gardeners attending were:



Laura Murphy, Peg Fleet, Gail Christian, Annette Ensing, Sidney Van Loh, Mary Ann Everett, Jerry Lewis, Linda Young, Louann Hight, Dale Hughling, Darla Menking and Terrie Hahn.

Photos by Darla Horner Menking

Announcements

BCMG 2011 Class Field Trip

- Sue Judd

Please mark your calendar for Wednesday, April 20, 2011 and plan to go with the new class on our up-

line for reservations is April 14, 2010.

PECKERWOOD GARDENS

Beautiful gardens that have more than 3,000 rare and unusual plants from the US, Mexico and Asia. Professor John Fairey, who owns the gardens will be our guide. The gardens are closed to the public this day, so we will have this wonderful place to ourselves. See www.peckerwoodgarden.org



THE ANTIQUE ROSE EMPORIUM

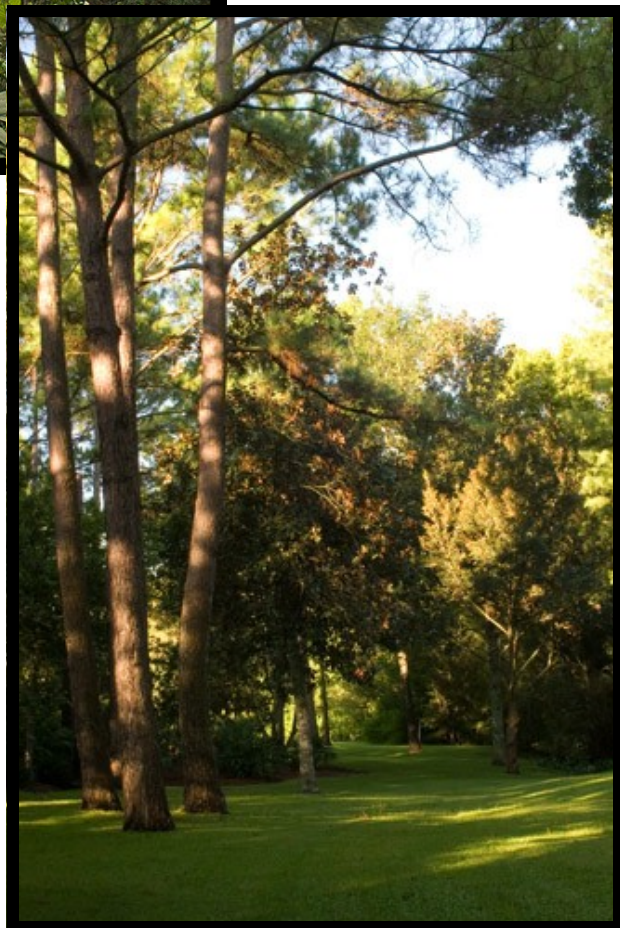
Beautiful nursery which is well known for Earth-kind, Pioneer and old Roses. It's located in Brenham, Texas.

These beautiful photos are of Peckerwood Gardens.

Photos by John McCormick

coming spring field trip. This year we will be traveling to Peckerwood Gardens in Hempstead and The Antique Rose Emporium in Brenham. The bus will depart the Bell County Extension office at 8:00 a.m. and will return at approximately 5:30p.m. You will need to bring a sack lunch and a blanket to sit on.

The cost for the trip is \$35.00 which includes your bus reservation and driver tip. Class members and Master Gardeners may also reserve one seat for a guest. The reservations are on a first come first serve basis and are non-refundable, but are transferable. To make a reservation, or for more information please contact SUE JUDD AT 760-3213 OR SUZ-PRESNC@YAHOO.COM. You can mail your reservation payment, payable to the BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, to Sue Judd at 2312 Stratford Dr., Temple, TX 76502. The dead-



Help Wanted

Dear Gardening Friends

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Just to update you- our "Tip of the Week" column appears in the Friday edition of the Temple Daily Telegram and the Saturday edition of the Killeen Daily Herald. It is available on the Master Gardener web site and at the Killeen Daily Herald web site. We have had a commitment to produce 52 articles a year since the fall of 2007. This commitment is another venue to fulfill our mission statement: "to increase the availability of horticultural information to the community".

It is time to send in articles for 2011. We need articles about xeriscaping, herbs, roses, vegetable gardening, container gardening, plant propagation, houseplants and composting. Write an article about your favorite plant, a gardening subject that interests you or a tip you use. It could be an article on garden art, gardening structures, a special gardening memory or wildlife in the garden (problems with deer, squirrels, and armadillos).

Send your 300-word article written in Arial font (and a photo, if possible) to: (candylane@taptrain.com). If your article needs more than 300 words to be complete, Candy can break it down into several columns to be published on consecutive weeks. If you have questions contact our editor, Candy Mullen, at 254 698-2304.

Plant Sale Training

- Pat Maskunas

We have decided we will hold a training class for all members who want to sell or work the Q & A desk. We also need plastic trays to put plants on in the hardening house. We will have those helpful books Gail Christian has put together the past few years to use during training. Training day will be Feb. 23 from 10 to noon. This allows new class members and mentors to get some lunch before class starts.

Herb Group Update

- Kim Pringle

See article on page 5 on Horseradish. Mary Lou Edmundson made a delicious dip using yogurt, mayo, parsley, onion chives, bacon bits, liquid smoke and grated horseradish. Upcoming events include:

1. The Herbal Forum "Root Herbs" at Festival Hill, Round Top, TX is March 18-19, 2011. Several MG's will be going. If you would like to come and spend the night at Festival Hill, send me a \$65 check for your room reservation as soon as possible. The cost of the forum is \$75 with Friday workshops between \$25.00 - \$35.00. Please go to their website (www.festivalhill.org) if interested. If anyone else would like to go or has questions, please let me know.
2. Next presentation is February 10 for the Killeen Garden Club at noon. We will do a power point - more details to follow. **Please let me know if you are interested in helping.**
3. Two presentations at Sammons Community Center, Temple - April 4 and April 11 from 5:30 to 7:30. **Please let me know if you are interested in helping.**
4. Seventh Rockport Herb Festival is April 9 from 8:30 to 3:30.
5. NEXT MEETING: February 2, 2011. Weather permitting, please bring pruning shears and gloves to tidy up the herb beds for spring from 8:30 to 9:30. We can divide some herbs for your home gardens. The tentative program topic is warm herbal teas and beverages and talk about spring plans for our home herb gardens. Please bring recipes and/or make an herbal tea or beverage to share.

***Help Wanted* ...continued**

Notice from the Nominating Committee

Dear Master Gardeners,

Several terms are expiring on the 2010 Board of Directors:

President Mel Myers, 1st Vice President Mary Ann Everett, 2nd Vice President Rutha Leffel, Treasurer Jan Anderson, and three directors Louann Hight, Kathy White, Janelle Burson.

The nominating committee is working to fill these positions and will present a slate of officers to the membership at the March 9th monthly meeting.

Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the March 9th meeting.

The final slate of officers will be voted on at the April 13th monthly meeting and the new board will be installed during the May graduation ceremonies.

Sincerely,
Mary Lew Quesinberry, 254- 780-3625
Jane Capen and Jann Dworsky

For Your Information

Information on The Landscape Design Study Course on February 21-22 in College Station is at:

www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu

NPSOT/Williamson Seminar February Chapter Meeting: Jason R. Singhurst, co-author of Rare Plants of Texas, speaks about rare flora including Native Orchids-Thursdays, February 10, 2011, 7:00 pm — 9:00 pm at the Georgetown Public Library. More info at:

www.npsot.org/williamsoncounty

Information on The 16th Annual Herb Forum at Round Top on March 19 is at:

www.festivalhill.org and click on Schedule of Events.

If you are interested in going to Dallas Blooms at the Dallas Arboretum March 5 - April 10, look at:

www.dallasarboretum.org/dallasblooms



- Crystal Fisher

This is the "Year of the Vegetable Garden." With that comes a Scarecrow Contest.

Put your best effort into making one and submit your photo for judging by March 12th to Crystal Fisher at crystal.fisher@att.net or Kim Pringle at kimber-pringle@earthlink.net

Then, bring your scarecrow to the Spring Vegetable Sale, March 26th to show off your creation to the public!

Two categories:

Classic and Whimsical

Winners will receive a year's **free** online subscription to the Blooming Bell Newsletter:)

and a plant from the Plant Sale courtesy of the BCMG greenhouse.

Judges are Crystal Fisher and Kim Pringle

Illustration by Crystal Fisher.

Woodland & Grassland Landscape Management

Bell County Master Gardener Advanced Training

Thursday, Feb. 17, 2011

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Class 1: Introduction
Site selection
Tree selection
Planting trees
Tree Biology

Friday, Feb. 25, 2011

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Class 2: Monitoring tree health
Abiotic and Biotic symptoms
Nutrient Management
Maintenance & repair
Preventive maintenance
Tree ID

Thursday, March 10, 2011

9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Temple College

Class 3: Tour of Arboretum at Temple College

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Class 4: Attend Dr. James McAfee's 4 hr intern class on Turf Grass. This will cover Grass biology, selection, monitoring health, grass diseases, maintenance, repair

Thursday, March 31, 2011

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Class 5: Field trip to King Ranch for turf visit

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Class 6: Perennial plant diseases: attend Dr. Kevin Ong, plant pathologist 4 hr intern Class

Thursday, April 14, 2011

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Class 7: EK principles
Using the Internet for Plant I.D.

Thursday, April 21, 2011

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Class 8: Oak wilt with treatment of disease
Oak Diseases
Site visit

Thursday, May 5, 2011

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Class 9: Biotic and abiotic diseases with Dr. David Appel

Thursday, May 12, 2011

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Class 10: Site visits to diagnose biotic and abiotic diseases

Fill out the application form on next page.

- Submitted by Mary Ann Everett



**Bell County Master Gardener Advanced Training
Woodland and Grassland Landscape Management
Registration Form**

Please type or print clearly

Deadline to register is February 7, 2011

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY/ZIP CODE _____

DAYTIME PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

This will be a series of 10 classes and field trips. Most classes will meet on Thursday mornings 10 a.m. to noon beginning February 17. Class agenda may be found on the Bell County Master Gardener web site. Class will be limited to 20 applicants. In the event more than 20 people apply, preference will be given to individuals willing to participate in making homeowner calls for Bell County and in the Speakers Bureau. Confirmation of your application will be by email not later than February 7.

Fifteen hours of appropriate service will be required for certification.

I plan on receiving certification and participating in making homeowner consultation calls and/or Speakers Bureau. ____yes ____no

For those individuals not interested in certification, a materials fee of \$25 should be enclosed with this application. Make checks payable to BCMGA.

I would like a copy of Pests of Landscape Trees and Shrubs, at an additional cost of \$42.00. ____yes ____no. If yes, please include this amount with this application.

The Master Gardener's 23rd Psalm

By Darla Horner Menking

The Lord is my Master Gardener,
I shall not take credit for the beauty of the plants I tend.
He makes me slow down from my hurried schedule,
He leads me to tranquil places in nature,
He restores my peace and contentment
Through the flora He so perfectly designed.
He leads me in the paths of public service and scattering seeds of awareness
For His creation's sake.
Even though I walk through unkempt parks or the classrooms of curious children,
I will fear no commitment of time or request to educate others,
For You are guiding my steps and giving me words;
Your presence and Your call to stewardship,
They compel me.
You prepare my mind and heart with a knowledge and passion
To know the intricacies of nature.
You motivate others through my enthusiasm, training, and activities.
My soul's greenhouse overflows.
Surely wonderment, gratitude, and accountability shall be shared and cultivated
All the opportunities I take to reach out to my community,
And I will serve as a caretaker and volunteer
In the Master's Garden
Forever.

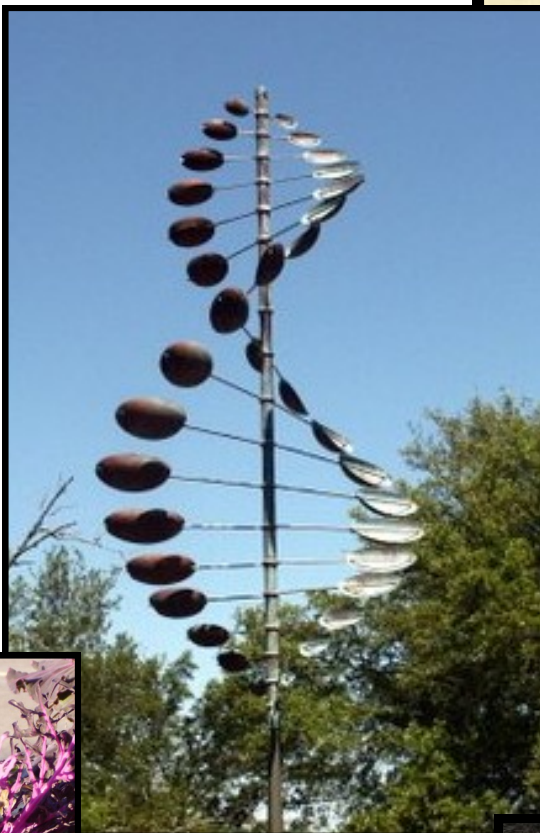
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Darla Menking (class of 2010) wrote these verses and read them at the November General Meeting. Darla writes a column in the Killeen Daily Herald and owns a business called Sue Biz where she makes plant stakes.

MG's Garden Art

Clockwise from right corner are Mary Lew Quesinberry's dragon fly; Eileen Miller's St. Francis; Mary Lew's welcome stone and boot; two of Jane Capen's cats; Darla Menking's Yoga frog; and the Okeson's wind art.

Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry, Darla Menking



Also in the Garden!

Roaming around Mary Ann Everett's garden!



Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry and Gail Christian

Look Grammie!
(Digging in Pat Maskunas' garden.)



Requested Recipe

Several people requested a recipe from the snacks served during the January 12th class time. Werner Hahn made this to bring to class, but it's a recipe from Diane Calderwood. Serve with Fritos.

Corn Dip

- 2 (8 oz.) pkg cream cheese
- 1 T cumin
- 1 t pepper
- 1 t salt
- 1 t cayenne pepper
- 1/4 C fresh lime juice
- 1 8 oz can or 1 C frozen corn
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 1 C walnuts, chopped
- 1 4 oz. can chopped green chilies

Whip the cream cheese until fluffy. Beat in seasonings and lime juice until smooth. Stir in corn, walnuts, chilies and onions. Refrigerate at least 8 hours.

New Class Update

We did not have pictures of two of the new class members for the January issue of The Blooming Bell. Their Bio's are in the January Issue of The Blooming Bell (all Bio's were written by Werner Hahn)

Please meet:

Angie Tjaden

and



John Conner



Photos by Gail Christian
and Werner Hahn

Tell Me What's New?

If anyone has an article they'd like to write pertaining to gardening, etc., or information to pass along, please send it to me at the address below. Do you have any pictures of your **winter veggies**? Send me your pictures! Thank you.

- Terrie Hahn

Officers and Directors 2010- 2011

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Second Vice President	Rutha Leffel
Recording Secretary	Jeanette Karr
Corresponding Secretary	Ellen Majestic
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David Fitch	Louann Hight
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Kathy White	Janelle Burson
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Dirk Aaron	

Contributing Writers:

Mel Meyers
Ursula Nanna
Beverly Wickersham
Darla Horner Menking
Mary Lew Quesinberry
Sue Judd
Mary Ann Everett
Pat Maskunas
Kim Pringle
Crystal Fisher

Contributing Photographers:

John McCormick
Mary Lew Quesinberry
Gail Christian
Darla Horner Menking
Paul Sulik
Mike Sulik
Crystal Fisher (Illustration)
Werner Hahn
Terrie Hahn

Banner Photo on page 2 by Mike Sulik

Editor:

Terrie Hahn

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

moompie45@hotmail.com

Or send to:

321 Logan Ranch Rd.
Georgetown, TX 78628



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