




## JANUARY 2009

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1  NEW YEARS DAY	2	3
4	5	6	7 <b>WORKDAY</b> Burger Day 9AM Greenhouse Com. Mtg. 1PM 2009 Class Starts	8 <b>WORKDAY</b>	9	10
11	<div data-bbox="280 926 599 1220" style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 5px; background-color: #ffcc99;">                     Our Speaker, Clay Roming, will address "Water Issues in Texas"                 </div>		14 <b>WORKDAY</b> 8:25AM Herb Study Group 10:30AM Monthly MG Meeting 1PM 2009 Class	15 <b>WORKDAY</b>	16	17
18			21 <b>WORKDAY</b> 9AM Board of Directors Meeting 1PM 2009 Class	22 <b>WORKDAY</b>	23	24
25	26 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	27	28 <b>WORKDAY</b> 1PM 2009 Class	29 <b>WORKDAY</b>	30	31

## President's Corner

Bell County Master Gardeners, I hope your Christmas was as enjoyable as mine. We had the pleasure of having two of our grandchildren here with us. Little folks sure provide a different dimension to the Holidays.

The Holidays also signal the end of another calendar year, and what a year it was. I always like to take a moment to reflect on the events of the passing year. I think the BCMGA made several significant steps forward during 2008. Just to mention a few, we were able to complete another successful New Class program. We developed improved bookkeeping systems and procedures to better account for and thus protect our financial footing. We added organization strength to our Board of Directors, the Greenhouse Committee and the Out Reach Committee. We had another successful year administering the Junior Master Gardener program. We made significant improvements in member communications through massive enhancements to the web site. And we finalized a new Strategic Plan to guide us in to the next few years. As soon as I can get a clean copy of the approved plan to Deborah Martin, it will be posted on the web site. There are more successes than I've listed. I plan to use the January Board meeting to summarize all of the accomplishments for 2008. If you are available, please plan to attend and add your thoughts to those of your Directors.

The next big project as I see it for 2009 will be the official kick-off of the Landscape Committee. Actually I hope one of the first tasks of the new Committee will be to come up with a more creative name. For a long time now we have talked about reshaping the landscape around the property. This includes the frontage along Main Street as well as the area around the greenhouse. I've asked Mel Myers to chair the committee. The charge to the committee is to:

- Develop detailed landscape plan with primary emphasis on;
  1. Using generally accepted Earthkind concepts to promote a low maintenance, water efficient and attractive design,
  2. Introducing herbs into the landscape design to demonstrate their ability to add beauty and functionality,
  3. Create an educational experience for members of the BCMGA and for the general public.
- Resolve the question regarding the use and impact

- of the hardening house structure,
- Develop implementation costs,
- Devise an implementation plan taking into account;
  1. Available human resources,
  2. Available financial resources,
  3. Planting seasons.
- The committee is encouraged to find ways to engage the general membership of the BCMGA in the planning process to spawn broad based support,
- Promote the use of sub-committees where Specialist training is beneficial such as with Rainwater, Composting, Earth-Kind and so on.

I encourage all members to contact Mel or me with information relating to your level of interest in participating in areas of interest to you. We have a lot of talent in this organization and we want to take every advantage of that to assure the best possible outcome for this very important project. In line with the direction provided in the new Strategic Plan, I hope to have a professional evaluation done of the operation and physical plant of our greenhouse. Dirk has agreed to work with me on that. I want to establish a formal Education Committee. This committee will have oversight for all education projects to assure the continued development and success of our education goals. I want to see us take steps to begin local Specialist courses for BCMGA members. We can develop and implement classes for the general public using the newly created county specialists as instructors and facilitators. The plan also addresses the concept of creating a TMGA recognized Specialist course conducted here at our facility.

There is a lot on our plate for the coming year and I hope to involve and engage the entire membership in completing the tasks. Please come forward with your thoughts and suggestions along with your time and energy commitments. I think we have a great year ahead. One that has the potential to position the BCMGA as the leading horticultural information center in Bell County, Texas.

Happy New Year  
David Fitch

### **New Year Prayer for the Elderly**

**God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones that I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.**

## Herb Study Group

Submitted by Kim Pringle & Beverly Wickersham

The Herb Study Group gathered at the home of Suzanne Boyer December 10<sup>th</sup> for their Herb Holiday Social. The group enjoyed a variety of fabulous dishes prepared by the members and featuring the use of herbs. The Herb Study Group is compiling a list of their successes for the year 2008 as well as opportunities for 2009. The next meeting is scheduled for 8:25AM Wednesday January 14<sup>th</sup>. Herbs discussed were mullein, Jamaica, and ramie.

**MULLEIN LEAF** (*Verbascum thapsus*) Family: Scrophulariaceae (Figwort Family) (Biennial)  
The plant's genus name, *Verbascum*, is said to be a corruption of the Latin word, *barbascum*, meaning "with beard." (Biennial)

The word "Mullein" is derived from a Middle English word, *moleyne*, meaning "soft." Two common names for this plant are "Grandmother's Flannel" and "Our Lady's Flannel." Additional common names are Velvet Dock, Jacob's Staff, Bunny's Ears, Witches' Candle, Woolen Blanket Herb, Jupiter's Staff and Lungwort,

A native to much of Europe and Asia, Mullein can grow almost anywhere. Mullein leaves and flowers are classified in traditional herbal literature as expectorants, (promoting the discharge of mucus, and demulcents and soothing irritated mucous membranes). Historically, Mullein has been used by herbalists as a remedy for ailments of the respiratory tract: asthma, bronchitis, coughs, bronchial congestion, and pneumonia. Additional uses include: treating inflammatory skin conditions and burns, easing ear problems, treating frostbite, ringworm, hemorrhoids, and bruises. Mullein has also been known to relieve constipation, counteract sleeplessness, protect the kidneys, and help ease nervous tension.

The soft leaves were used by children as doll blankets; the seeds were once used by Native Americans to paralyze fish and make them easier to catch. The tall stalks were dipped in tallow and lit as torches. In the Civil War days, the large gray leaves were soaked in vinegar (when available) and hot water and used instead of cloth, which was scarce.

**JAMAICA** (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) Family: Malvaceae (Mallow Family) (Annual)  
Common Names: Jamaica Flower, Jamaica Sorrel, Guinea Sorrel, Roselle.

The flowers of this family have flavorsome, edible calyxes (the outer protective covering of a flower, consisting of a series of leaf-like, usually green segments called sepals). The sepals are red in the Jamaica. It is well known in Asian, Latin American and African cuisines, but not as widely known and grown in this country. Some sources report its use as a diuretic. It requires long, hot summers for the flowers to fully develop for harvest. Jamaica grows from seed to 4 or 5 feet and is a narrow plant with lobed oval leaves and yellow-petaled flowers with fleshy red calyxes that are the parts harvested for culinary use. The dried red calyxes have a tart taste suggestive of cranberry or currant. They are a popular tea ingredient and make delicious preserves that are commonly served in South America. Petals are powdered and used as a topping in Asian dishes, lending a distinctive burgundy color.

**RAMIE** (*Boehmeria nivea*) Family: Urticaceae (Nettle Family) (Tender perennial). Common name: Chinese silk plant (plant fibers can be used in weaving)

This important fiber plant grows in most warm regions of the world. It grows well in the South. It reaches 3 to 5 feet tall and has attractive rich-green leaves and a shrubby appearance. It needs fertile, well-drained soil and is probably best grown as a specimen plant. Propagation is by seed or division.

## New Year: Time to Diet



## 2009 Intern Class Schedule

The new class schedule is on the website. Go to the BCMG main page and look in the green box under "Resources". At the bottom you will find "Master Gardener Intern Page". Click on that link and then on "BCMGA 2009 Class Schedule". There has been a slight change to the schedule on the first class, January 7th. Following the MG Overview and Earthkind Principles presentation by Jayla Fry, State MG Coordinator, there will be a presentation by Mary Ann Everett and Johnny Buck on the JMG program. Following their presentation, local landscaper, Tracy McCloud will speak to the class on "Winter in the Garden" (4pm-5pm). We are excited about the new class and the schedule of speakers we have this year. Please welcome the new class members when you see them!

The New Class Committee  
Fran Sheppard  
Diane Calderwood  
Mary Ann Everett

## New Year's Day Prayer for one and all

*Dear Lord,*

*So far this year I've done well. I haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper, I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in a few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on I'm probably going to need a lot more help. Amen.*

## 2009 Master Gardener Interns

Submitted by Joan Hinshaw

The 2009 class interns attended the new class orientation held December 3<sup>rd</sup> to prepare them for the start of their MG classes January 7<sup>th</sup>. They will be interning in the greenhouse and around the gardens. So when you see our new class members, please say "hi" and welcome them. To help you recognize our interns, their photos and a very brief bio follow.

## INTRODUCING THE BCMGA CLASS OF 2009



**Suzanne Judd**, a retired Medical Claim Examiner, brings 50 years of gardening experience and "just loves to play in the dirt!"

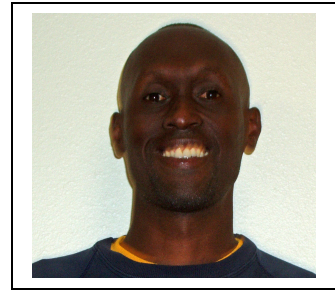
**Connie Watts**, a retired Administrative Assistant who lived and gardened in Alaska, wants to learn about gardening in Texas.



**Roseanne Miles** is a Substitute Teacher who would like to establish a Garden Class at Salado ISD for 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

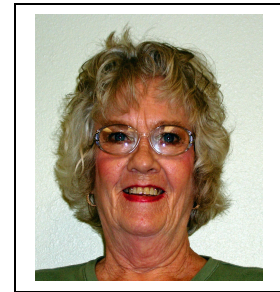


**Terry Williams**, a retired U.S. Army Combat Engineer, is the owner/operator of G3 Kingsway Lawn/Landscape Service.



**Michael Miller** is a Pharmacist with 30 years of flower gardening experience here in Bell County.

**June Adams** is a realtor who retired as Administrative Assistant for Public Works, City of Houston, and has been interested in all types of gardening since early childhood.



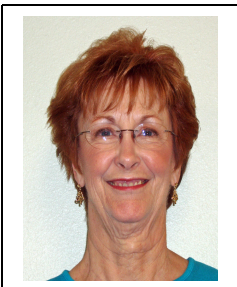
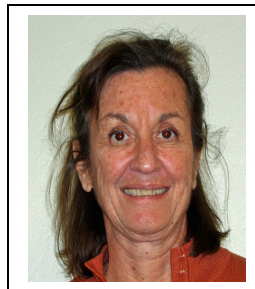
**Gail Jacobs** is a retired 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher who is new to our area and to gardening.

**Jann Dworsky** is a retired elementary teacher who has 30 years experience gardening with flowers and vegetables here in Bell County.



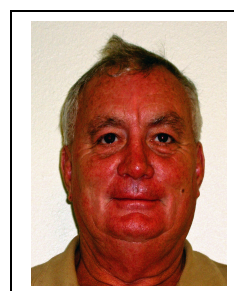
**Laura Murphy** is a Nutrition Support Dietitian with over 40 years of flower and vegetable gardening experience and also has a small greenhouse.

**Nancy Kozusko** is a retired Biology/Marine Science Teacher who is new to our area and interested in both floral and vegetable gardening.



**Beth Buhl** is a retired registered nurse who is new to gardening and also interested in photography and work on the newsletter.

**Bernard McDevitt** is a retired Union Pacific Railroad Engineer with about 30 years of floral and vegetable gardening experience.



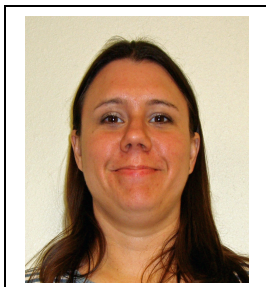
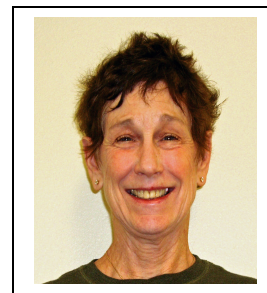
**Charlotte Johnson** is a retired Executive Legal Secretary who loves creating and visiting beautiful gardens.

**Margaret Leigh** is a retired classroom teacher who is interested in developing more gardens and helping others to do the same.



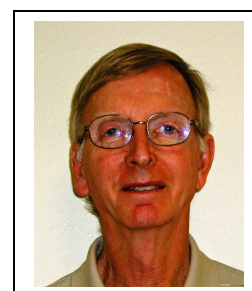
**Bill Buhl** is new to Bell County and wants to become skilled in growing the right trees, bushes, flowers and grasses that will do the very best in Bell County.

**Ellen Majestic** is a Technical Expert for the Social Security Administration who would like to share her acquired knowledge with others, especially the young.



**Robin Pohl** is an Intern Architect who is frequently put in charge of projects that include landscape design. Robin is the 2009 Class Reporter.

**Dale Hughling** is a retired Computer Services Director for Killeen ISD who is interested in native plants, propagation and low maintenance landscaping.



No  
Photo  
Available

**Gail Hughling** is a retired Killeen educator and school counselor who is interested in wildlife habitats in town and is a Certified Master Naturalist (Waco).

## 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: David Fitch, Kim Pringle, Fran Sheppard, Diane Calderwood, Mary Ann Everett and Joan Hinshaw

Editor: Joan Hinshaw

Please submit articles for *The Blooming Bell* to Joan at [irene\\_joan@hotmail.com](mailto:irene_joan@hotmail.com).

