

Blooming Bell

BCMGA Newsletter June 2010

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2 WORKDAY 8:45 Herb Study Group Meeting	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 WORKDAY Burger Wed 10:30 Monthly MG Meeting	10	11	12
						
13	14  Flag Day	15	16 WORKDAY 9:00 Greenhouse Committee Meeting	17	18	19
20 	21 Summer  Solstice	22	23 WORKDAY 9:00 Board of Directors Meeting	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

IF APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS.....WHAT DOES MAY BRING?

Mel Myers, President

May is always an exciting month at Bell County Master Gardeners. Not only do we have graduation of our newest members, but we also are closing a chapter for the board of directors. We have lost five of our directors only to have five new directors in June.

The outgoing board has initiated new ideas in our approach to the fundraising efforts to provide the money to support our activities. The efforts of our organization are now directed toward education instead of production. My thanks to Don Wyatt and others who have worked so hard to be sure this change is a success. I would hope that those who have served their time on the board of directors will continue to lend their expertise in the future plans of BCMGA.

May is also an exciting month as we think about our future plans. We need to make decisions regarding the future of our greenhouse and hardening house. We hope to assemble a committee soon to study these matters. As a minimum, our greenhouse needs some attention and some renovation is a must.

It has turned out that May is also a dry month this year. Jann's article in this week's tip of the week is most timely. We have had the benefit of low water bills this spring, but now we are feeling the need to water.

My lesson learned this month from the Community Garden is one in which I have lots of company. May is a good month to learn about **patience**. During this spring we planted and nurtured our gardens hoping for a good crop. Now we are close to realizing the fruits of our labor. Many of our favorite vegetables are ready to deliver. Here's to a bountiful harvest!!!
Happy Gardening!!!

Annual MG Dues

Submitted by Jan Anderson

It is time to pay your annual dues. The amount is \$25, payable to BCMGA. You can give your check or cash to Jan Anderson at the next monthly meeting or mail to her at 3114 River Place Drive, Belton, Texas 76513. Please pay promptly as July 1st is the deadline. **PLEASE NOTE:** Dues for Junior Master Gardener teachers are covered by the JMG Program. Also, 2010 class members do not pay dues this year as their dues were included in the class fee.

Junior Master Gardener Teacher Training

Submitted by Mary Ann Everett

Any master gardener who is interested in helping with the 4-day Junior Master Gardener Teacher Training from July 27-30 at the Extension Office please come to a meeting on Wednesday, June 9 at 9:00 a.m. This meeting is for those who will be giving a talk, those who want to help with the training, and those who wish to help with this program within the schools as a resource. We are always in need of help with the science days during the school year. If you have any questions, please email Mary Ann at pma4514@sbcglobal.net.

Speakers Wanted

Submitted by Mary Ann Everett

If you have any suggestions for a program/speaker for the monthly meetings, please let me know at pma4514@sbcglobal.net. Thank you

Herb Garden Punch

(Served at the May 12th Herb Class)

Submitted by Diane Calderwood

2 Cans (11.5 oz.) Welch's Orange, Pineapple, Apple frozen juice Concentrate
3 Cans Water
Bunch of Lemon Balm
Bunch of Mint
Lemon Slices
Lime Quarters
Club Soda

Gently wring the bunches of lemon balm and mint to release the flavor. Place them in a large container and cover with the juice and water. Add lemon slices. Chill overnight, occasionally stirring and pressing down on herbs with the back of a wooden spoon.

Prior to serving remove the herbs and replace with fresh ones. Can add more lemon slices, lime slices and orange slices to the pitcher to make a nice presentation.

FOR EACH SERVING: Fill a small glass with 1/2 punch mix and 1/2 club soda. Add a squeeze of lime juice. Garnish with a fresh mint or lemon balm sprig if desired. Can also spike with tequila or rum to taste.

Note: This recipe is adapted from a Herb Garden Punch recipe in "The Herb Garden Cookbook" by Lucinda Hutson

Editor for Blooming Bell

Submitted by Joan Hinshaw

I have assembled and published the Blooming Bell for two years now and, although it has been an enjoyable way to earn my MG service hours, I feel that it is time to step aside and give another Master Gardener the opportunity to edit our monthly newsletter. If you are interested or if you have questions about the job, email me at irene_joan@hotmail.com or call me at (254) 681-0871.

Herb Study Group

Submitted by Kim Pringle

1. Our May meeting was a delicious meeting with herb punches and water, cupcakes with basil frosting (recipe from Frances Idoux) and herb scones.

We had a good discussion about speakers and accommodations at the 2010 Herbal Forum at Festival Hill. Please note the 16th Annual Herbal Forum is March 18th and 19th, 2011, "Getting Down to the Roots" with Herbal Roots and Organic Gardening.

2. Thanks to Frances and Carol for assisting with the program at "In His Garden" Bible Study - First Baptist Church Killeen.

3. The 2010 MG Intern class "Growing and Cooking with Herbs" was May 13. I know Betty, Terrie and Suzanne were program presenters and many others made delicious salsas, dips, pasta, dressing, drinks and desserts. I know it was a lot work to put this program together.

4. Please check your calendars. We need facilitators and topics for July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1, January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4 and June 1.

5. Presentations:

July 14 - BCMGA Association Meeting

July 30 - JMG Teacher Training 10:30-12:00 "Fun with Herbs"

6. NEXT MEETING June 2, 2010 at 9:00 am: Nancy and Frances are coordinating the June program "Herbal Ice Creams and Sorbets" (they took this session at the Herbal Forum).



Sweet Basil and Olive Oil Cupcakes

From "Cupcakes" by Christabel Martin

3 eggs
1 cup superfine sugar (I used regular)
3 tsp grated orange zest
3 tsp grated lemon zest
3/4 cup olive oil
2 1/2 cups self-rising flour
1/3 cup milk
1/3 cup orange juice

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 18 standard muffin cups with paper liners.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a large bowl until well combined. Add the orange and lemon zests, then stir in the olive oil. Stir in the sifted flour alternately with the milk and orange juice. Stir the mixture gently with a wooden spoon for 30 seconds.

Divide the mixture evenly among the paper liners. Bake for 15 minutes, or until a skewer comes out clean when inserted into the center of a cake. Transfer onto a wire rack to cool.

Creamy Basil Frosting

3 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
1/3 cup unsalted butter, sifted
1/4 cup milk
1 tsp natural vanilla extract
2 Tblsp finely chopped basil
plus small basil leaves to decorate

To make the creamy basil frosting, place half the confectioners' sugar, butter, milk, vanilla, and chopped basil in a large mixing bowl and beat with electric beaters until smooth and creamy. Gradually add the remaining confectioners' sugar until the frosting is thick. Decorate each cake with the frosting and a small basil leaf.

Basil

Presented by Frances Idoux at Herb Study Meeting

Basil is a tender herb belonging to the mint family. As a culinary herb, it is widely used in Italian cuisine but also used in the Southeast Asian cuisine of Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Basil was originally native to Iran, India and other tropical regions of Asia, having been cultivated for more than 5,000 years. The word basil comes from the Greek word meaning king. It was believed to have grown above the spot where St. Constantine and Helen discovered the Holy Cross. Basil is considered the "king of herbs." Another biblical connection is the belief that basil grew near the tomb of Jesus.

There are many varieties of basil. Differences in essential oils result in the variety of tastes. These were the varieties that I selected to try to start from seed:

Greek Yevani – strong, spicy basil flavor, a complement to any tomato dish; mounding plant with small leaves, excellent for containers.

Lime Basil - refreshing aroma and strong lime taste

Red Rubin –good for oils and vinegars, also jellies and sorbet, rich deep purple color

Summerlong – compact, bushy, dense basil, slow to go to seed

Sweet Genovese – highly recommended, ideally suited for use fresh or dried

Cinnamon - strong cinnamon scent, one of the most frost tolerant basil

Lemondrop – strong and sweet lemon flavor, use for teas and sorbets, kitchen potpourri

Mammoth – consistent taste favorite, large leaves, dries well, doesn't become bitter after long cooking

Pistou – discovered in France, quick and easy garnish for soups and salads since it doesn't have to be chopped.

Dilly Bread (Dill 2010 Herb of the Year).

Recipe from Nancy Kozusko - Makes one loaf

1 package dry yeast
1/4 cup warm water
1 cup creamed cottage cheese, heated to lukewarm
2 T sugar
1 T instant minced onions
1 T butter
2 tsp. dill weed
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1 egg, unbeaten
2 1/4 - 2 1/2 cups of flour

-soften yeast in water

-combine in mixing bowl - cottage cheese, sugar, onion, butter, dill, salt, soda, egg and softened yeast
-add flour slowly to form a stiff dough, beating well after each addition

-cover and let rise in warm place (85 - 90 degrees) until light and doubled (50 -60 minutes)

-stir down dough. Put into a well greased loaf pan or round casserole dish - shape.

-let rise in warm place (30 to 40 minutes)

-bake at 350 for 40 to 50 minutes until golden brown
-brush with butter and sprinkle with salt

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BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Are sponsored by the
**TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION of
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

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