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# March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b>	<b>2 Work Day 8 - 11 am</b> <b>Herb Study Group</b> <b>8:30 am</b> <b>Chili Cook Off</b> <b>11 am</b> <b>Come One, Come All!</b>	<b>3 Work Day</b> <b>8 - 10 am</b> <b>Grounds</b> <b>Committee</b> <b>Meeting 10 am</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9 Work Day</b> <b>8-10:30 am</b> <b>MG General Meeting -</b> <b>11 am</b> <b>Beverly Wickersham will</b> <b>speak on Wildflowers</b>	<b>10 Work Day</b> <b>8 am</b> <b>Wood/grassland</b> <b>Adv Train. Tem-</b> <b>ple College</b> <b>9-11:30 am</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Deadline for</b> <b>Scarecrow</b> <b>contest</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16 Work Day 8 am</b> <b>Grounds Committee</b> <b>Meeting 10 am</b>	<b>17 Work Day</b> <b>8 am</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Work</b> <b>Day</b> <b>8 am</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Work</b> <b>Day</b> <b>8 am</b>	<b>23 Work Day 8 am</b> <b>Board of Directors</b> <b>Meeting 9 am</b>  <b>Grasses class for interns</b> <b>and Wood/Grassland Adv.</b> <b>Training</b>	<b>24 Work Day</b> <b>8 am</b> <b>Training for</b> <b>Plant Sale</b> <b>Workers</b> <b>9 am - noon</b> <b>Plant Sale</b> <b>seminar 7 pm</b> <b>Growing,</b> <b>Cooking w/herbs</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Work</b> <b>Day</b> <b>8 am</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Plant Sale</b> <b>7:30 am -</b> <b>3 pm</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30 Plant Sale Comm. Mtg</b> <b>Wood/grassland field trip</b>	<b>31</b>		

Important upcoming dates: Garden Tour is May 7, 8 am - 3 pm  
New Class Graduation May 18

# Master Gardeners are Big Hit at 2011 Home and Garden Show

- Louann Hight

The Bell County Master Gardeners participated in the Home and Garden Show held this weekend at the Bell County Expo Center. Various specialists presented seminars on gardening, tree management, herbs and earth kind principles. The “Ask a Master Gardener” booth was kept very busy by answering various questions from show participants. Thanks to all who volunteered this weekend to make this great public interaction a success.



BCMG's putting together their booth for the Bell County Home and Garden Show at the Expo Center. Below, a seminar on Culinary Herbs is presented and MG's answer questions at the "Ask a Master Gardener" booth. Photos are by Gail Christian.



# I WAS TOLD THERE WOULD BE NO MATH INVOLVED!

- Laverne Adams

## How to measure the area of your garden

Squares and Rectangles: Multiply width by length

Triangles: Measure the two sides that meet at a right angle. Multiply the length of one side by 1/2 the length of the other side. It doesn't matter which is which.

Circles: Measure the circle's radius. The radius is the measure from the center of circle to the edge. Multiply the radius by itself. Then multiply that number by 3.14 to get the circle's area.

Curves and irregular shapes: Lay a rope or extension cord along the border. Straighten them out to create a regular shape such as a square. Then use the formula above.



## How to Estimate the Amount of Mulch Needed

$$\frac{\text{Length (in feet)} \times \text{width (in feet)} \times \text{Depth (in inches)}}{324} = \text{CUBIC YARDS}$$

**Example:**  $\frac{15\text{FT} \times 15\text{FT} \times 4 \text{ inches}}{324} = \frac{900}{324}$   
 = about 2.8 CU YDS.

## How to Estimate Mulch Sold by the Bag

There are 27 cubic feet in a cubic yard. To convert cubic yards to cubic feet, multiply the cubic yards by 27.

**For example:** assume you need 2.8 cubic yards of mulch. Multiply 2.8 by 27. That equals about 75.5 cubic feet of mulch.

Most mulch comes in 1 1/2 cu ft bags. So divide 75.5 cubic feet by 1.5 which equals about 50 bags of mulch.

If your mulch comes in 2 cu ft bags simply divide 75.5 cubic feet by 2.

## Soil PH

The ph scale is a measure of alkalinity and acidity of 1 to 14 with 7 being neutral. A measure below 7 is acid soil and above 7 is alkaline soil. You will hear people refer to acid soil as sour and alkaline soil as sweet.

## Sun Protection Factor (SPF)

UVB rays are the burning rays and the primary cause of sunburn. Minutes to burn without sunscreen X SPF number = maximum sun exposure time. Example: If you burn in 10 minutes X SPF20 = 200 minutes. The SPF number applies to UVB rays only. There is no rating system for UVA rays. UVA rays penetrate deeper into the skin. They are the rays that cause suppression of the immune system. (development and spread of skin cancer) and aging. Use a broad spectrum product.

## Sun Protective Clothing

Garments have a label listing the ultraviolet factor (UPF) value which lists the protection the garment gives by the fabric absorbing the UV rays. A UPF rating of 20 allows 1/20th of the suns rays to pass through the fabric.

Continued on next page...

## No Math Involved...continued

### Raised Bed Construction

Everyone is unique so it is nice to custom build. To find the WIDTH of your bed, sit at a table and reach forward until you begin to bend slightly. Measure that distance. It should never be more than 30" wide. For HEIGHT, sit in a comfortable chair. Bend down and measure where your hands can easily reach. Make this your height.

Do the same to measure for a standing or handi-capped bed. DEPTH - 8-9" for most herbs, annuals, and some vegetables to 12" for deeper rooted vegetables, perennials, shrubs. LENGTH - Longer is not better. Have two shorter length beds with space between them. Use a N-S orientation to maximize sunlight. With tall plants consider E-W orientation.

### Building Materials

Most people prefer cedar, red wood, cypress etc. Look at concrete blocks, bricks, or products like polyethylene blocks (some look like stone). There are also the recycled products such as trex.

**RAILROAD TIES:** these are treated with creosote which can leach into the soil but is not absorbed by roots so it will not go into plant tissues. It can, however, volatilize into the air and plant foliage may be harmed by the vapors. This is especially true during hot weather.

**PRESSURE TREATED WOOD** could be used if it is not treated with chemicals such as pentachlorophenol.

**CCA wood:** this is where, under high pressure, chromated copper arsenate is forced into the cells of the wood. It is chemically bound to the wood so it does not leach into the soil. The US Environmental Protection Agency has approved its use in gardens. Wear masks and eye protection when cutting and dispose of leftover materials properly.

*Editors note: There are many different opinions published on the safety of using railroad ties, pressure treated wood and CCA wood for vegetable garden use. Research before you use.*

## Organic Certification Workshop Sheds Light on Process

### - Crystal Fisher

The Texas Organic Farms and Gardeners Association's annual 3 day conference was held at the Killeen Civic Center. "The main focus is on building the health of the soil. If you have healthy soil, you have healthy plants, and the plants resist disease and pests" says Association secretary Amanda Vanhoozier, of Coppell. Guest speaker Howard Garrett, "The Dirt Doctor" has been promoting growing organically since 1985. Numerous commercial projects have attested to 40-50% savings in water use.

Leslie McKinnon's "Organic Certification Workshop" helped to simplify the complexity that surrounds the procedure for getting certified to use the "Organics" label. With 55 agents in Texas who process this certification, Leslie is able to clarify the mountains of paperwork required by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

The trade show, open to the public, allowed direct conversation with those manufacturers of products we have used in Bell County and in our greenhouse. If the opportunity presents itself again in Bell County it is an opportunity not to be missed.

BCMG Crystal Fisher introduced Leslie McKinnon at her Organic Certification Workshop.



Photo by  
Crystal  
Fisher

# Lilium x 'Triumphator' /Triumphator Lily

**-By Myra Crenshaw**

While living in Houston, I read an article about the Triumphator Lily and saw a nursery that had some. I eagerly went to this nursery and they were going quick. I got two of the last ones, and thought they were rather expensive, but the flower was so beautiful. I planted them at home and was thrilled that they came up the next year. When we moved to Temple, I planted them in a pot, so as not to lose them, and they stayed that way, getting very leggy, and looking not so healthy. I had to wait until I had a garden to put them in, probably about a year, and then planted them. I was surprised at how many bulbs I broke apart; now I have several beautiful, glossy, green leaves on shoots coming up. The lilies get to about 2-5 feet and bloom in the summer. These lilies add fragrance, color, and beauty to the garden and may be used in containers or mass plantings. Since they produce a large cluster



of flowers on a stem, they are a great cut flower and add to any arrangement. I am anticipating a sea of pink and white heads blowing in the wind.

## Hardening House to be Removed

**- David Fitch**

*Editors note: I'm including this in The Blooming Bell in case there are any MG's out there who missed the email from David Fitch last week.*

The Board of Directors, at its regular monthly meeting, voted unanimously to remove the structure commonly referred to as the "hardening house." It was further agreed that the structure should first be offered to the BCMGA general members. It was also decided by the Board to pass this issue on to the general membership for a vote of concurrence.

Accordingly, the matter will be submitted to the membership at the regular monthly membership meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Any member who desires to purchase the structure should be prepared to submit a sealed proposal at this meeting. Any and all bids will be opened at the following regular Board meeting scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Members not attending the general membership meeting will need to submit a sealed bid to the Board prior to the Board meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The successful high bidder will be required to have the structure fully removed within 90 days from April 1<sup>st</sup> at the buyer's expense.

# 2011 Intern Class Ready to Work

## - Santana Bay

February proved to be a very eventful month for the Bell County Master Gardener Class of 2011. Earlier this month, the intern class showed up in full force to help out with this year's Youth Fair, Livestock Show and Rodeo at the Expo center. Service hours were readily available as the class interns helped in every aspect from setup to clean up. The class members had the chance to see youth of all ages show their hard work in areas from photography, arts and crafts, baking, and canning. Volunteers labored to make sure every aspect of the Youth Fair went smoothly. It was such a sight to see the Master Gardener Program is always willing to help in all areas of the community.

In addition, work in the demonstration beds is also under way. Students have the ability to earn more service hours by signing up for and working in a bed. The demonstration beds give students the opportunity to work around their busy schedule. If you drive by the extension office, you will see many notable cold crops such as broccoli and onions.

## Interns Enjoy Class with Reid Lewis

### -Mary Lew Quesinberry

Guest speaker, Reid Lewis, and the 2011 intern class were treated to a "folksy" ballad at the February 16th class. The winsome quartet included Mary Ann Everett, Diane Calderwood, Fran Sheppard, and Darla Menking. The new class directors have performed each time Reid has given a presentation.



Below, Temple Horticulturalist, Reid Lewis, awed 2011 class members, mentors and visitors with a presentation on Texas wildflowers, trees and landscaping tips. Reid is a dear friend to our master gardener organization.



Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry



# 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 upcoming 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 deadline for reservations is April 14, 2010.

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](http://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.

### **PECKERWOOD GARDENS**

Beautiful gardens that have more than 3,000 rare

Photo of Peckerwood Gardens by John McCormick



## **Announcements...continued**

### **Upcoming Herb Group Meeting: Using Herbs in your Daily Life**

**- Gary Stone**

Over the past 5 or so years my family and I have tried to live a more sustainable life. We try to grow all of our own fruits and vegetables, we make our own soaps, sodas, wines, beer and breads. We try not to buy anything that is processed. Herbs are just the next step towards sustainability. My presentation is to show how easy and fun it is to work with herbs and how they can be incorporated into your daily life-style."

Some of the herbs I will cover are:

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*)

Astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*)

Elderberry (*Sambucus Nigra*)

Burdock (*Arctium lappa*)

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinalis*)

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)


Come learn about these herbs at the March 2nd Meeting at 8:45 a.m.

### **Class on Landscaping**

Reid Lewis will be teaching Landscaping and Gardening 101 at Temple College Tuesdays and Thursdays, March 22 to April 26, 7 - 8:30 p.m. The fee is \$76, the course code is HALT 1006.



This photo and the photo on the next page are from the Home and Garden Show taken by Gail Christian.



**Scarecrow Contest**

**- 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](mailto:crystal.fisher@att.net) or Kim Pringle at [kimber-pringle@earthlink.net](mailto: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.

# 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.

## Herb Group Opportunities

- Kim Pringle

If you need service hours, below is an updated list of program requests for the next few months. Please check your calendar as your help is needed to present program, answer questions and pass out information. We can copy the power point presentation for you to practice and you can always comment on your personal experiences with herbs. If you are unfamiliar with some of the herbs,

what a great way to learn and become involved.

### PROGRAMS:

March 24 - request from Pat Maskunas in conjunction with Plant Sale to train MGs on herbs. Need a 30 minute talk on general requirements to grow herbs sometime between 9:00 am and noon.

March 24 at 7:00 pm. Power point "Growing and Cooking with Herbs" presentation to public at Extension Office.

April 4 from 5:30 to 7:30 - Sammons Community Center, Temple. Specific topic to be decided.

April 7 from 5:30 to 7:30 - Sammons Community Center, Temple. Specific topic to be decided.

April 9, from 8:30 to 3:30 -Seventh Rockport Herb Festival.

May 10 at 1:00 - Sun City Horticulture Club, Georgetown. "American Colonial Gardens" with costumes.

As always, please contact me with questions or comments.

## Graduation Desserts

- Suzanne Boyer

Volunteers are needed to bring desserts for the New Class Graduation on May 18, 2011 at the Expo Center. If you can help by bringing a dessert please contact Suzanne Boyer at 780-2463 or [suzboyer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:suzboyer@sbcglobal.net).



## ***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***

### **Milam County Nature Festival**

**- Don Travis, El Camino Master Naturalist Chapter**

Announcing our El Camino Real Chapter's "**2nd Annual Milam County Nature Festival**," to be held from 9am - 3pm Saturday April 9 at Wilson-Ledbetter Park in Cameron.

#### **Scheduled presentations:**

"Snakes of Central Texas" by Bill Brooks

"El Camino Real de las Tejas National Historic Trail" by Joy Graham and Lucile Estell

"Horned Lizard, our State Reptile" by Carolyn Todd

"Wildflower Treasures" by Flo Oxley

Children participation activities on: Animal Tracks, Pollinators, Wildflowers, Junior Master Gardener, Archeology Digging, Face Painting and more.

And many other exhibits and activities regarding birds, bats, bees, reptiles, harvester ants, knapping, and wildlife control, fire prevention, and various nature items for sale. We will also have some wildlife visitors from the Cameron Zoo in Waco!

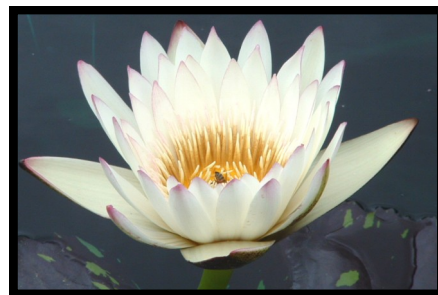
The popular **Nature Photo Contest** will again be held this year, with an entry deadline of March 31 so don't delay! Three age groups this year: under 12, 12 through 17, and 18 and over. Categories include: People in Nature, Wildlife, Landscape/Scenery, Plants/Flora, and Funny Nature Photo. Entry forms and details on our website below.

See our website for a map and more information at <http://txmn.org/elcamino/naturefest/>.

### **San Angelo Water Lily Gardens**

MG's Laura Murphy and Beth Buhl went to the San Angelo Water Lily Gardens last year. They

have a festival in September. The Gardens are open to the public. Go to [www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com](http://www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com) for more information. The Municipal Rose Gardens are in the same area. San Angelo boasts 6 other garden areas. You'll find them by googling "San Angelo Public Gardens." These are Laura Murphy's photos.



***Editor's note: Send your information on upcoming events and interesting websites to me at [moompie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moompie45@hotmail.com) - T.H.***

## For Your Information...continued

### Living Wall Planters Available

*Editors note: I found this site on facebook and thought it was very interesting. I emailed them to get some general information and prices. I wanted to pass along the information to you.*

The BrightGreen Living Wall Planter consists of a single polymer unit available in three sizes: 20x20x2½, 10x20x4, and 8x18x4, and is lined with our proprietary moisture mat. Simply populate the planting cells within each unit with plants purchased at your local nursery by following the planting instructions provided with your kit.

Mounting your planter is easy! Each unit can be hung separately or in groups. Tilt the unit upright and attach it to any sound, vertical surface using the mounting bracket included with your kit.

Water thoroughly. Water enters through the top watering chamber and spreads evenly across the moisture mat. Plants can be watered manually by installing our patented Irrigator™ or through a built-in drip line system.

These planters cost \$44.00 for the 20 x 20 x 2 1/2 inch (45 cell) and \$29.00 for the smallest (10 cell). There is an extension for the 20 x 20 one to extend the depth to 5 inches. Go to [www.brightgreenliving.com](http://www.brightgreenliving.com)

*I'm not endorsing them, but I'm going to get one sometime soon and I'll get back to you as to how I like it! - T.H.*



Photos by Bright Green Living.

### Great Dragonfly Website

If you're interested in identifying that dragonfly you just saw in your yard, go to [www.odonatacentral.org](http://www.odonatacentral.org) and click on the Virtual Odonata Image Library. From there, click on the download. You can see pictures of dragonflies and move them around to see them from all angles-VERY COOL! This website is managed by UT's Texas Natural Science Center.

They also list a book called *Damselflies of Texas, a Field Guide* by John C. Abbott covering 77 species.

### Butterfly Book

*The Life Cycles of Butterflies* by Judy Burris and Wayne Richards is a terrific book of 23 common and garden butterflies showing pictures from eggs to maturity. It had been recommended by a volunteer at the Texas Discovery Gardens' Butterfly garden on the State Fair Grounds in Dallas. Go to [www.texasdiscoverygardens.org](http://www.texasdiscoverygardens.org) for information on their programs.



# ***MG's Snow Covered Gardens***



Mary Lew Quesinberry's garden art was covered in snow in February's big snow-fall! And Crystal Fisher's garlic and yard was also covered with the white stuff!



***Send your pictures of wildflowers for next month's issue of The Blooming Bell to [moompie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moompie45@hotmail.com) - T.H.***



**Officers and Directors 2010- 2011**

<b>President</b>	<b>Mel Myers</b>
<b>First Vice President</b>	<b>Mary Ann Everett</b>
<b>Second Vice President</b>	<b>Rutha Leffel</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Jeanette Karr</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	<b>Ellen Majestic</b>
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<b>David Fitch</b>	<b>Louann Hight</b>
<b>Pat Maskunas</b>	<b>Beth Buhl</b>
<b>Kathy White</b>	<b>Janelle Burson</b>
<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	
<b>Dirk Aaron</b>	

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Pictured on the top of this page and on the cover page, one of MG Werner Hahn's Plum trees in bloom. Banner on second page is one of his peach trees blooming.