

A photograph of a lush garden filled with numerous yellow flowers in the foreground and several clusters of red flowers in the background. The text 'The Blooming Bell' is overlaid in a large, white, cursive font.

The Blooming Bell

May, 2011

BCMGA Newsletter

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Work Day 8 am Herb Study Group 8:45 am - Vermiculture Salad Social Wednesday 11 am	5 Work Day 8 am Grounds Committee Meeting 10 am- noon	6	7 Garden Tour 8 am - 3 pm 
8	9	10	11	12	13 Deadline for Graduation lunch	14
15	16	17	18 New Class Graduation!	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Board of Directors Meeting 9 am	26 Work Day 8 am-noon **	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming Dates to Remember: June 1, Herb Study Group *Last Meeting?*
****tentative date-check with Pat**

The President's Corner

Season of Change

We usually think of the changes of the seasons from summer to autumn, but for Bell County Master Gardeners the season of change is June 1. You have elected new officers and board of directors and they will take office on that date.

I want to thank the directors and officers who will have completed their term on May 31. These are Janelle Burson, Kathy White, Lou Ann Hight, Jan Anderson, Rutha Leffel and Mary Ann Everett. Their contribution as well as the contribution of those who are serving their second year has made my job a lot easier. As you know, I had to hand the ball to Mary Ann several times when I was on vacation or my wife was going through radiation therapy. Sharon is doing very well and her MRI indicates that the therapy was a success.

Yes, and there is more. Shortly after you read this copy of the BB we will be having graduation of our new interns. This is always an exciting time as the new class is transformed from interns to Master Gardeners. Now the fun really begins. We have enjoyed the class as they have progressed and look forward to their contribution to our organization.

As if that was not enough, Dirk pulled a fast one on us and decided to "retire". We will miss him and thank him for the many things he has done for Master Gardeners. I have always enjoyed teasing Dirk about spending too much time talking into the microphone. Well, the last time I will be able to do that will be the graduation and meeting on May 18. Dirk, we wish you the best and thank you for the many things you have done for BCMGA. Give our best to your wife and the two of you will be in our prayers.

There is another Master Gardener I would like to thank. She served as nominations chairman when David was president as well as the two years I served in that capacity. Mary Lew Quesinberry has done an outstanding job finding people to serve our organization. She has also done it with such a positive attitude and by being willing to do anything she was called on to do. In addition to this, she has contributed many hours by coming up with articles for the "Tip of the week" which appears in the Temple and Killeen papers. Also, it is not uncommon to see her on work days helping around the gardens.

In conclusion, thank you for your support, and please thank Laura for the job she is taking on. - **Mel Myers**

Garden Tour-May 7th!

Grounds Director Pat Maskunas and intern Carla

Harmon spruce up the grounds in preparation for the May 7th garden tour.



Photo by Mary Lew Quesinberry

Here are the gardens on tour!!!

Submitted by the Garden Tour Committee

The Bell County Master Gardener's Demonstration Gardens

1605 N. Main, Belton

The demonstration landscape incorporates the seven principles of EARTH KIND gardening. The planning and design was developed by Ursula Nanna and a committee of Master Gardeners. The soil analysis was done by Dirk Aaron, our county agent and Gary Slanga by collecting samples from numerous sites. We amended the soil by adding compost and crushed shale. Zoysia grasses, developed for Texas heat and drought conditions, comprise the three practical turf areas separating the plantings of native and adaptive perennials. Drip irrigation was installed under the two layers of mulch. Newspaper then Texas hardwood mulch was the initial mulch, then fine cedar mulch on top. Last year a container garden of cactus and succulents was added. The harsh winter showed us we need to research more tolerant species.

The entire area is maintained by the Bell County Master Gardeners on a monthly schedule.

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Garden Tour ...continued

Directions - The Demonstration Gardens are located in front of and behind the Bell County Extension Office. Going South on IH35 take exit 294B toward 6th Avenue. Turn right on TX Hwy 317. Continue to 1605 N. Main, next to S&W Clinic.

Jheri Lynn Smith's Garden

4467 Blue Ridge Drive, Belton

A Gardener's Delight. Come and explore this beautiful 2 acre property overlooking Lake Belton. This property features every type of garden bed imaginable from square foot vegetable, herb, bird and butterfly, fruit, rock, container, vines, Texas native and adapted, Earthkind roses and more. A large variety of hardscapes are also on display from pergolas, arbors, rustic fences, terraced retaining walls, a natural swimming pool, bird aviary, pond, dry streambeds, and many different types of pathways. Cool off while touring this garden site with water features such as bird baths, ponds, bogs, and a disappearing fountain. This gardener's delight includes working compost bins, vermiculture habitat, compost tea operation, a large outdoor potting area, rain harvesting barrels, and a beautiful sunroom used for propagating and overwintering tropical plants.

Directions: This garden is located at 4467 Blue Ridge Drive in Belton near Lake Belton. Off FM 439, take Sparta heading north towards BLORA. When the road divides, stay to the right on Waterworks. Turn right into Woodlake subdivision, turn left on Blue Ridge Drive. Follow road around into Cliffs of Woodlake subdivision. The house is to the right facing Palisades Point. Look for a two-story, brown brick house with a large log in the front yard with "Smith."

Laura Murphy's Garden

1315 Trails End Drive, Salado

Five and ½ years ago this was an empty lot. Many landscape improvements have been made since completion of the house. Rocky soil has been amended and planted with native and adaptive plants. Red yucca blooms in the front landscaping beds along with other Texas native plants. A side garden with crushed granite paths contains fig trees, a fruit bearing pome-

granite, natives and favorites. A small greenhouse provides potted plants a winter shelter. Down a garden path, through a native grape arbor and hidden from view, is a vegetable garden. Raised beds are planted with herbs and a large variety of vegetables. Using available stone for posts, the garden is fenced from the local wildlife. Rainwater harvesting tanks and a wildlife guzzler capture much needed water for plants and animals.

Directions: From the north, go past the town of Salado on I-35 and take Exit 283 (FM 2268/FM 2843). Proceed south on the one-way service road for about two thirds mile. Turn right (west) onto FM 2843.

From the south take Exit #283 (FM 2268 Holland & Salado) off of I-35. Proceed to the 1st overpass. Turn left (west) at the overpass, go over it and then left again (south) at the stop sign. Proceed south on the one-way service road for about two thirds mile. Turn right (west) onto FM 2843.

Travel west about 4 miles on FM 2843 to Hidden Springs subdivision. Turn right onto Hidden Springs Drive. It curves a couple of times. Turn right onto Long Meadow. At the very next corner, turn left onto Mission Trail. Travel over the bridge, continue up the hill passing a couple of streets, turn right onto Cheyenne Pass. Turn right onto Trails End Drive. 1315 is the 4th house on the right.

Johnny Chu's Orchid Greenhouse

601 Erie Drive, Temple

A delightful display of many orchids. Over 200 pots of orchids are blooming in a 16' X 24' Greenhouse. While orchids of the Phalaenopsis group are generally considered the easiest to grow in partial sunlight and a temperature range of 55 to 90 degrees F, this collection also contains Paphiopedilum, Vanda, Oncidium, Dendrobium, Cymbidium, Cattleya and hybrids, Laelie, Zygopetalum, some of which are difficult to make bloom in Texas. Directions: Coming North on Loop 363, exit at W. Adams Ave (FM 2305). At the top of the ramp (stoplight), go straight across FM 2305 onto Ermine Trail (There is a 7-11 store on the corner of FM 2305 and Ermine Trail), travel about 1/2 mile on Ermine Trail, then turn right on Erie Drive to 601.

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Garden Tour ...continued

Margaret Leigh's Garden

6530 Cedar Creek Road, Temple

Come and be inspired to landscape a blank canvas! This garden, previously a barn lot and wheat field, now features Texas natives and well-adapted plants such as chaste tree, lantana, sage, sotol cactus and coral honeysuckle. Rocks from the neighboring field border the beds for a natural and rustic appearance. Take a leisurely walk to the nearby creek, lined with rock walls and ledges. Hints of pioneer Texas surround you on this garden tour.

Directions - Take HWY 317 to CEDAR CREEK ROAD. (NORTH of intersection with HWY 36 approximately 1.4 miles). Travel 1.4 miles from HWY 317 to home. White 2-story house sitting back from the road on left about .4 mile. Lane meanders through wheat and corn fields.

Michael and Ilene Miller's Garden

2914 Olympia Drive, Temple

Located in the rocky cliffs of Canyon Creek, the current yard really began to evolve 11 years ago when oak wilt ravaged the grove of native live oak trees in the front yard and take-all patch killed most of the lawn. Up until that time, the yard had been the neighborhood sports field. The Millers constructed 13 separate beds using mulch and a drip irrigation system to reduce the lawn maintenance and watering. A variety of plants were added to make better use of the shady areas in the back overlooking the greenbelt below. Roses, bulbs, perennials, grasses, wildflowers, herbs, colorful bedding plants, native trees and 6 varieties of oak trees can be viewed throughout the grounds. One small part of the landscape was left natural and unplanted as a reminder of the way the lot looked when the home was constructed in the woods 28 years ago.

Directions : Take 31st. Street past the mall to Canyon Creek Drive and turn right on Canyon Creek Drive until you come to the 3-way stop at Hemlock. Go thru that stop and take the next right (which is several more blocks around the corner). Turn right on Olympia and continue until the road curves sharply to the

left. The Miller garden is on the right side of Olympia at that curve.

Take IS 35 from Belton to Temple and exit at Midway Drive. Turn right on Midway and stay on that street until you come to the traffic light at Hickory. Turn right on Hickory and follow it until you see a traffic barrier and stop sign right past St. Francis Church. Turn left and you will be on Stratford Drive. Stay on Stratford until you come to the 4-way stop at Olympia and Stratford. Turn left on Olympia and come down 3 blocks. The Miller garden is on your left.

The Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden Project

Located behind the Killeen Civic and Conference Center

The Killeen Municipal Court Garden project, organized in October 2008, provides an opportunity for the Municipal Court Judge, the Teen Court, and the Bell County Master Gardener Association to offer positive life-changing community service and educational opportunities for the young people of Killeen. The produce from the garden benefits the Killeen Food Care Center and additional Food Centers and Kitchens in Killeen and Harker Heights.

The "Garden" consists of several areas:

1. The "farm" area where vegetables are grown and harvested for distribution.
2. The raised, trellised, and square-foot beds that demonstrate various gardening techniques and landscaping possibilities.
3. The seven formal raised beds reserved for herbs and a wide variety of blooming plants that are successfully grown in the Central Texas area.
4. The large succulent bed containing cacti and grasses that require very little maintenance and almost no watering beyond what nature provides.
5. Trees that thrive in our area and Earth/Kind roses are planted in various spots in the garden.
6. Several "raised beds" are being constructed on the west side of the farm area and will be planted in

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Garden Tour...continued

spreading vegetable crops such as pumpkins, cantaloupes, watermelons, and decorative gourds.

7. The “farm” area is devoted to vegetable gardening. All produce is delivered to the food centers and kitchens in the area.

8. A “Rainwater Collection System” is set up on the Garden’s storage building.

9. A fruit and pecan tree orchard was planted this spring. We are looking forward to our first harvest.

DIRECTIONS: From Temple/Belton take the W.S.Young exit in Killeen, go under the Freeway heading south. The Killeen Civic and Conference Center is on your right just past the Vive Les Arts building. Take any right turn into the Center grounds. Drive to the back of the Center for Garden parking.

A. Texas AgriLife Extension Office - Demonstra-

tion beds – 1605 N. Main, Belton

Garden Tip: Composting – Snow cones (afternoon)

B. Gardens of Jheri Lynn Smith - 4467 Blue Ridge Drive, Belton

Garden Tip: Invasive Species , Square Foot Gardening and composting

C. Gardens Laura Murphy – 1315 Trails End Drive, Salado

Garden Tip: Rainwater Harvesting, Dry Stacking demonstration and Texas Native Book sale

D. Gardens of Johnny Chu - 601 Erie Drive, Temple

Garden Tip: Orchids

E. Gardens of Margaret Leigh - 6530 Cedar Creek Road, Temple

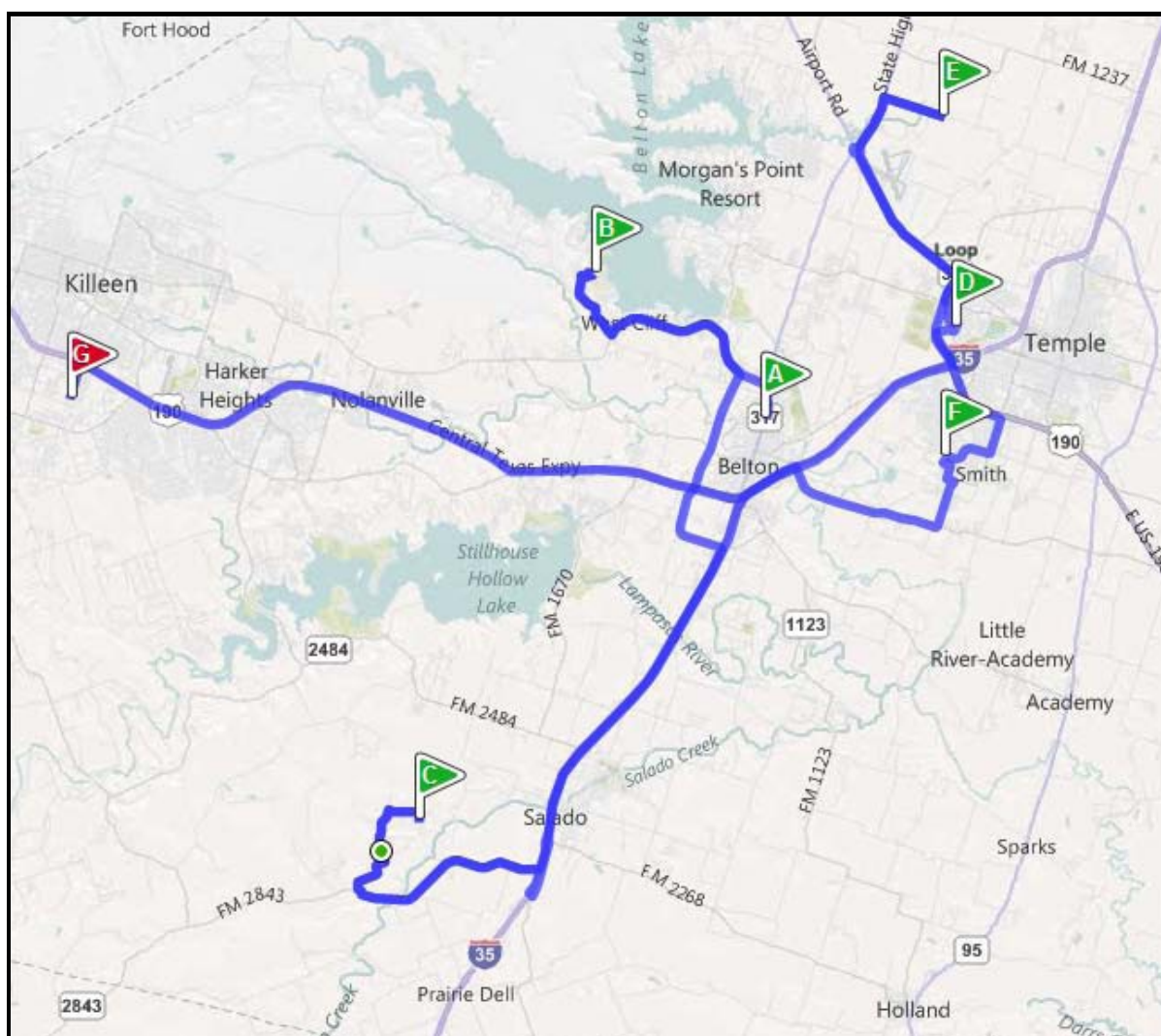
Garden Tip: All About Bees and Texas Prairie Pottery demonstration and sales

F. Gardens of Mike & Irene Miller - 2914 Olympia Drive, Temple

Garden Tip: Garden Pests – Plant Markers and Garden Critters for sale

G. Killeen Court Gardens – 3601 South W.S. Young Drive, Killeen

Garden tip: Tomato Clinic



Don't Swat the Swallowtails

- Santanna Bay



Over the past few weeks, I have had some welcomed guests join my garden. It is that time of year again to be greeted by the swallowtail caterpillars. You will most likely find them more interested in your herbs than any other part of your garden. Their diet mainly consists of members of the Umbelliferae family which include parsley, fennel, dill, carrot, and celery. Be aware the swallowtails possess a unique defense mechanism behind their head. Normally hidden, an orange v-shaped structure will appear if the caterpillar feels threatened which emits a very strong odor.

Every year I gladly allow them to harvest my herbs for me so that I can see them later on in the summer.

Editors Note; Santanna Bay happened to choose a topic for her article with a photo that coincided with Crystal Fisher sending in these three pictures on the right. Great close-ups!

Blooming in the Quesinberry garden is the Anachoa Orchid Tree. This small tree starts blooming in March and is very sweetly scented. It has interesting hoof shaped leaves. It is a drought tolerant tree and thrives in sun or shade.



Herb Group Update

- Kim Pringle

Beverly Wickersham shared her knowledge with an informative program on important culinary herb families and a quiz on Mexican mint marigold during the April 6th meeting. The classification of salad burnet in the rose family was unexpected!

NEXT HERB STUDY: May 4 at 9:00 am. **Vermiculture** presented by Glenda Winnett Johnson, a local worm grower. If you know you want to purchase red wigglers or African night crawlers and pick them up at the meeting, you may contact Glenda directly at gjdivadogs@yahoo.com or call her at 254-277-0118. I think she is selling the worms for \$5.00 a scoop and I think the price is negotiable for larger orders.

She will begin by explaining the anatomy and life cycle of the earthworm...this term actually includes 4 species and variations of those. After this explanation she will answer questions about this information.

Next, she will explain the materials necessary to begin vermiculture, including the needs of the three varieties that have proven to be most successful with composting and improving the garden soil. This explanation will include the requirements, both in regards to temperatures, drainage, and soil depth, and preparation of appropriate feeding materials. She will emphasize the importance of providing adequate amounts of materials to keep the worms healthy and reproducing.

Finally, we will take a look at putting together a compost box that is important to establishing the worms and preparing them to graduate into the garden area. It is very important to clarify the issues of why worms stay in one place and thrive, as opposed to deciding to head for greener gardens. She will bring along a small, established worm box that is clear so the worm can be observed, undisturbed, underground. You might want to bring a little note pad to list supplies needed to be successful vermiculturists. The equipment is inexpensive and readily available at our local stores.

This demonstration should take about 45 minutes to an hour. The price of the worms will vary according to the needs of the gardener/composter. She will also explain the cost of producing the worms and the expenses involved in keeping them to maturity. This cost is the reason adult worms are more expensive.

Presentation May 10, 2011 at 1:00 pm for Sun City Horticulture Club, Georgetown. "American Colonial Gardens" with costumes.

HERB STUDY June 1, 2011: *As many of you know, the Herb Study has been meeting since July, 2006 with discussions and programs about herbs and the many beneficial aspects of growing herbs in your garden. I can't believe we have been meeting for five years. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the meetings, participated in outreach programs and assisted with the Extension demonstration gardens. The June 1 meeting will be a five year celebration.*

Then the Herb Study will take a rest.

That is, unless someone wants to

assume responsibility for

coordinating the group.

Announcements

May Monthly Meeting and New Class Graduation

Submitted by the New Class Committee

Graduation for the Class of 2011 and the May Monthly Meeting and Installation of Officers will be held on Wednesday, May 18th at the Bell County Expo Center. We will have a social time beginning at 11:30 a.m. followed by lunch at Noon. The Graduation and monthly meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m.

The cost of the luncheon will be \$12. Please make your reservation by Friday, May 13th with Fran Sheppard, 254-698-3532 jts8099@embarqmail.com or Diane Calderwood, dcalder@hot.rr.com.

The luncheon will be catered by Expo Catering and will be "A Taste of Mexico". Desserts will be provided by BCMGA members.

Field Trip to Peckerwood Gardens

-Mary Lew Quesinberry

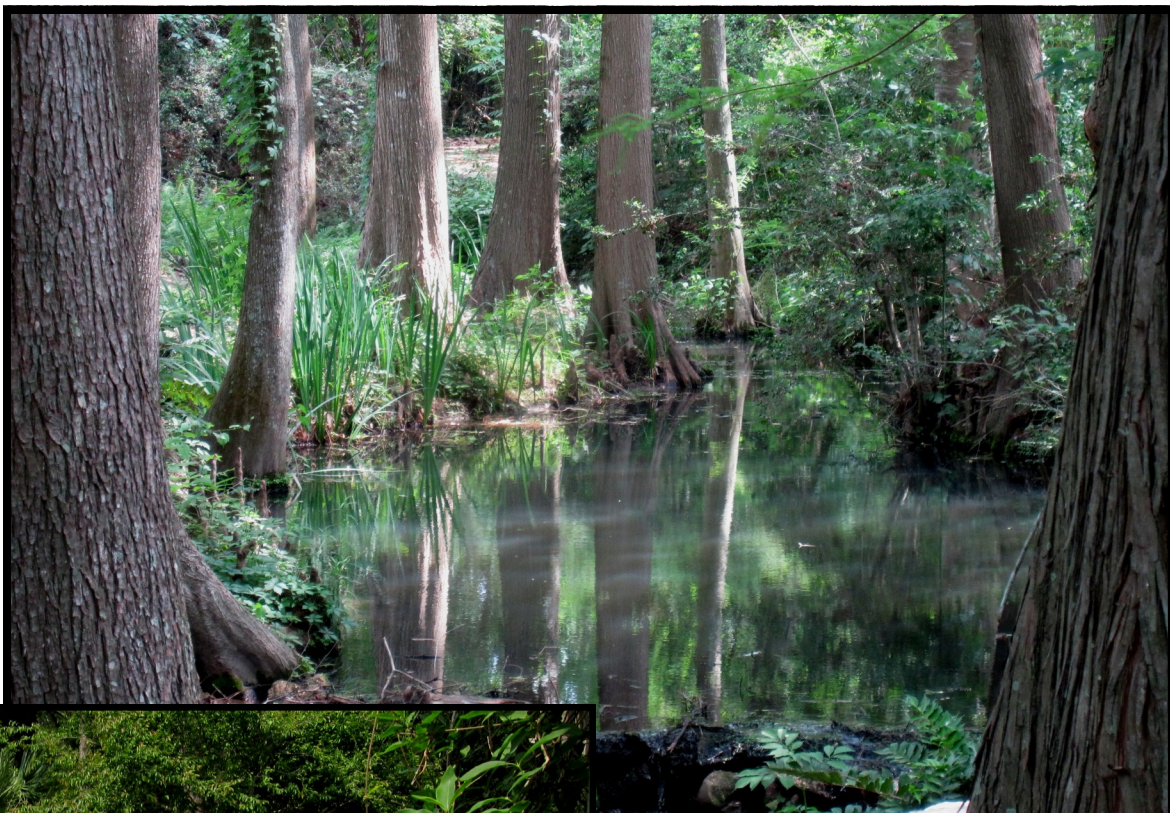
Master Garden interns enjoy a guided tour at Peckerwood Gardens in Hempstead. The 39 acre garden has more than 3,000 rare and unusual plants from U.S., Mexico and Asia.



Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry.

Field Trip to Peckerwood Gardens ... continued

Photos of Peckerwood
Gardens on this page by
Myra Crenshaw.



...and to the Rose Emporium

Antique Rose Emporium owner Mike Shoup, tells the
interns the history of rose rustling and the joy of an-
tique roses and companion plants during their field
trip to Independence, Texas.

Photo by Mary Lew Quesinberry



Native Landscaping Class Visits the Calderwood Garden

-Mary Lew Quesinberry

Diane Calderwood opened her garden to the Temple College Native Landscaping class. She explained the technique of square foot gardening to the class.



Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry.



Help Wanted...

The Speakers Bureau

- Gary Slanga

Well, the speakers bureau is off to a flying start. Thanks to all who volunteered to participate. We still need interested Master Gardeners to help as assistants and are willing to take over as back-up speakers if necessary. Any one with an interest in the topics that we have in our speakers library is welcome to help.

Here is a list of the topics that our speakers are currently presenting:

Butterfly Gardening

Insects in the Garden

Vegetable Gardening

Square Foot Gardening

Rain Water Harvesting

Making Rain Barrels

Wildflowers of Texas

Vermiculture (Raising Earthworms)

Trees of Central Texas

Earthkind Roses

Earthkind Principles

Common Poisonous Plants

Planting/Pruning Trees and Shrubs

Safe Use/Handling of Pesticides

Integrated Pest Management(IPM)

Drip Irrigation

Fire Ant Control

Raised Bed Gardening

Growing and Cooking with Herbs

ABC's of Herbs

American Colonial Gardens

Oak wilt/Tree Diseases

Edible Flowers

History of Spices

Chili Peppers

Hardscaping

Basic Plant Propagation

Soda Bottle Propagation

African Violet Leaf Propagation

Succulents and Their Propagation

Propagating Roses

Perennials/Selection and Planting

Growing Grapes

Thinking About a Backyard

Greenhouse

Composting

Native Plants

If any of these topics are of special interest your help as an assistant or back-up speaker will be appreciated.

Thanks again to all the volunteers. Keep up the good work, and those of you who would like to be speakers, but don't know where to start, just contact me and we will get you started.

What's Happening in Your Garden?

-Beverly Wickersham

Green Flowered “Antelope Horn” Milk- weed and Yellow Flax

The Monarch Butterfly depends on nectar from the “Antelope Horn” Milkweed. To ensure that this important milkweed is not mowed down during the growing season, we have identified 34 milkweed plants on our property with a white flag.



Honeysuckle

One of the first landscaping projects after our home was finished in 1982, was to Plant 100 honeysuckle shrubs around the inside of a concrete driveway circle. The plants were watered on a regular basis during the growing season for a three year period. Since that time, the honeysuckle has become very-well established and no additional water has been needed.



Rosemary and Ceramic Chicken

One of our family's favorite meals is baked chicken stuffed with rosemary springs. Make that “real” chicken, not a “ceramic” version!

What's Happening in Your Garden?

- Crystal Fisher

Asparagus Aberration-asparagus growing flat and spiraling. Tomato plants showing where the roots might come out when the stem is planted under ground. Rain Lilies coming up with no water.



Officers and Directors 2010- 2011

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Front cover photo of Englemann daisies and snapdragons by Terrie Hahn. Banner photo of Rain Lilies by Crystal Fisher.