



OCTOBER 2008 ACTIVITIES

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 WORKDAY BURGER WED Get Ready for 10/11 Plant Sale	2 WORKDAY HOLISTIC TEACHING GARDEN SALE	3 HOLISTIC TEACHING GARDEN SALE	4 HOLISTIC TEACHING GARDEN SALE & SEMINAR
5	<div> <p>DON'T MISS Judy Barrett, founding editor and publisher of <u>Homegrown, Good Sense Organic Living for Texas</u>. Her topic will be "Antique & Heirloom Plants – Oldies & Goodies".</p> </div>		8 WORKDAY 8:25AM Herb Study Group* 10:30AM Monthly MG Meeting**	9 WORKDAY	10	11 FALL PLANT SALE
12	13	14	15 WORKDAY 11:00AM Greenhouse Committee Meeting	16 WORKDAY	17 Nolanville Elementary MATH & SCIENCE DAY	18
19	20	21	22 WORKDAY	23 WORKDAY	24	25 KEEP TEMPLE BEAUTIFUL
26	27	28	29 WORKDAY	30 WORKDAY	31	

*Herb Study Group - Lotions Class (lip balm, lotion, hair rinse) – Rowena Fengel - \$8/person

**Monthly BCMG Meeting – Social Starts at 10:30AM – Special Guest Speaker – Judy Barrett

President's Corner

Submitted by David Fitch

We continue to move along with the Strategic plan. I was able to go over some of the details at the last Monthly Membership meeting and at the Greenhouse Committee meeting. I am finding that as members become more aware of the intended purpose of the Committee and its function, the more acceptance there is in the direction it is taking. I will continue to keep members apprised of the progress of the committee as information becomes available.

While the Strategic Planning Committee is focusing on longer term issues, there are some matters that deserve attention today. One of those is the management of the Greenhouse. We've attempted to put together an organizational chart that will even out the workload so there is less dependence on a few. The chart is sound but we have not been able to fill all the positions, in particular the top three positions. We need some members to step forward and take a leadership interest in the operation of the greenhouse. Donald Wyatt, Gary Slanga and Karla Tomaka are at present shouldering the load. We are still looking for a Chairperson, a Production Manager and a Greenhouse Manager. The job descriptions for these positions can be found in the By-Laws. There are plenty of workers at the greenhouse. We need someone to step up and assume some of the leadership. I would encourage anyone interested in one of these positions to contact Donald or me. This is a golden opportunity for some members to get involved while the likes of Lawrence Cox and Charles Spencer are around to guide and teach you. This is also a great opportunity for someone to come in while we are at the forefront of revolutionizing the direction of the greenhouse operation. An opportunity to become involved at the beginning stages of realizing the real potential of this facility.

At the September Board meeting, the Board took action to begin the process of dealing with a rather significant challenge in the greenhouse. For some time now we have been dealing with a pest problem. Although the major pest is the white fly, there are numerous pests and numerous issues relating to the introduction and eradication of the pests. This is a serious issue and one that has the potential to jeopardize the greenhouse operating permit if not brought under control soon. To that end, the Board

put into motion a three-prong attack on the "bugs".

First, a decision was made to remove all plants from the greenhouse and hardening house. That process will begin at the October plant sale. Plants that do not sell will be available to members at the October membership meeting. This will be a great opportunity for members who attend the October membership meeting. Plants remaining after that time will be discarded. The Board is also asking that, for the time being, members do not bring plants to the greenhouse. This is a practice that began years ago and was the foundation of the plant inventory available to the membership. However, for now, we are asking for your cooperation and understanding while we attempt to vacate the facility of all plants. Once this is accomplished we will take whatever steps are necessary to rid the beds of all pests while at the same time not be endangering plants and workers.

The second phase of the Board action is to initiate the process of ordering plants for the spring plant sale. This is an alternative to the present practice of planting and raising the plants for the sale. Taking this step now will allow us ample time to debug the greenhouse and at the same time will provide us with an opening to explore the opportunities and challenges of utilizing this process in the future without making a long term commitment now.

The third phase of this action is for the Greenhouse Committee to investigate, develop and recommend appropriate steps to reopen the greenhouse in a manner consistent with sound greenhouse management concepts while providing appropriate and adequate safeguards against the return of "The Bugs".

All of this will be accomplished by the end of the year so that we will be prepared to reopen the greenhouse in time for the 2009 BCMGA class with a clean greenhouse, a new set of operating procedures, a new class and a new and exciting future for the BCMGA. Yaaaaa gotta love it!

Be sure to take note of the information regarding the October Monthly Meeting. Francis Idoux has arranged yet another captivating program. Weather permitting, we will meet out of doors with a picnic lunch format.

Some of you are aware of this but I want to elaborate a bit on another subject. Deborah Martin has given us many, many hours of her time in developing the BCMGA website. Please take the time to explore what she has done. If you have not been there yet, let me provide you with the road map. Go on line with your favorite browser. Go to <http://bell-tx.edu/> Once there, you should bookmark this site (add to your Favorites). Click on the Bell County Master Gardeners link. That will take you to our website. Notice, amongst many interesting selections, a new area under Resources, Members Only. Click on Members Only and you will be presented with a log-in screen. Click on "log in" and you will be asked to sign in. Enter your email address and use w1ldfl0wer (that's wildflower with a number (1) in place of the l and a Zero (0) in place of the o). Press the Login button and voila, you are in the member only site. If you have difficulty logging in, please contact me or Deborah. In this site you will find the Member List, Board minutes, Member Handbook, and Project Plan (being developed). We will be adding lists for Speakers Bureau and Specialists.

Mark your calendar for the October 11th Plant Sale. This event should be the last formal activity of the year for the greenhouse.

So far we have twenty paid applicants for the new class with at least two more applicants who have not yet paid. Given that our target enrollment is twenty-two to twenty-five, I think we are in good shape in that arena. Plans and curriculum are beginning to be developed. We have a great New Class committee with lots of energy. I am so excited about the new class I am thinking about going back through again.

Well, look at me. I am the one who is advocating brevity in the Blooming Bell to promote readership and I now find myself rambling on.

In parting let me make one more plea for three people to set up and take a leadership role in a new, exciting, innovative and challenging greenhouse operation. Come share the excitement with me and the rest of the Board.

Ever wonder how "Keep off the grass" signs get where they are?

Don't Miss our October 8th Meeting!

Submitted by Frances Idoux

Our special speaker for the October 8th monthly meeting of the Bell County Master Gardeners will be Judy Barrett, the founding editor and publisher of the magazine Homegrown, Good Sense Organic Living for Texas. Her topic is "Antique and Heirloom Plants – Oldies and Goodies." Judy was previously the editor of The New Garden Journal and one of the hosts of the public television series, "The New Garden". She is the author of several gardening books and her newest book, "What Can I Do with My Herbs," will be published by Texas A&M Press in the spring of 2009.

Following our meeting, we will have a Bring-Your-Own-Bag Lunch and a plant exchange. Members who would like to participate in the plant exchange should bring a small plant (or seasonal bulbs). Please label the plant with plant identification and your name.

The Christmas Party is Coming!

Submitted by Marge Croninger

The Master Gardener Christmas party is right around the corner (December date to be announced later). As always, we need items for the silent auction. We have had a wonderful response in the past from the Master Gardener members and we hope that tradition will continue. Also needed are volunteers to decorate, prepare desserts, and help with the auction. If you are interested in being on the committee, or have questions, please contact Ilene Miller (mmiller007@hotmail.com). The first committee meeting is scheduled for October 1st at 1:30 at the Extension Office.

Nolanville Elementary Math & Science Day

Submitted by Mary Ann Everett

Friday, October 17th, is **Math & Science Day** at Nolanville Elementary, a Junior Master Gardener School, from 7:30AM to 2:30PM. We have been helping them with activities for quite a few years and this year we will be working on the following projects: grass heads with pre-K and Kindergarten; nature wheel with 1st grade; nature mask with 2nd grade; and rainwater simulator and collection with 3rd grade thru 5th. We are still in need of 5 more master gardeners to share the fun. Please email Mary Ann Everett if you can help at pma4514@sbcglobal.net

Keep Temple Beautiful

Submitted by Mary Ann Everett

October 25th is National Make a Difference Day and we have been contacted by **Keep Temple Beautiful** to help with their Canyon Creek Drive Median Project located between 5th Street and 31st Street. The project will be completed in one day with the help of many local volunteers during an old-fashioned type event starting at 8:30AM. Master Gardeners will be the crew chiefs for each median end cap and will be assigned a crew of workers. Each crew chief will have a detailed drawing for their median end cap. There will be two master gardeners assigned to each end cap.

As this project progresses, I will be contacting those who have signed up to help so they will know what to do on that day. Zoe Rascoe and Tanya Gray have been busy going to various organizations soliciting their help on this project. The drawing of this project really looks nice. We will be planting around 1,500 shrubs and grasses, among them are Gulf Coast Muhly and Gold Lantana. I do not know the other plant. (There are only going to be 3 different plants.) The city will be planting 48 trees along the median.

Just to let you know, **Keep Temple Beautiful** has supported our Teacher Junior Master Gardener Training the past two years. Thanks to those of you who have signed up. However, I have already had several who have had to drop off the list for various reasons. Please consider this worthwhile project and, if you can help, email me at pma4514@sbcglobal.net.

BCMGA Website Update

Submitted by Deborah Martin

The BCMGA website has recently had some changes and updates. Now there is a "members only" area where the handbook including bylaws, the organizational chart and other admin information is located. There is a member listing page, a page where ongoing projects will be listed for volunteer opportunities, and page for official minutes and other official communications. Some of these pages are blank or have limited info at this time. The site will be built up over time. You are encouraged to check it often.

In order to see the materials in the "members only" area, all members must be enrolled. You are enrolled by email address according to the information the Association currently has that would have gone into a

printed handbook. You log into the "members only" page with your email and a password. The password you should use is w1ldfl0wer ("wildflower" with the i as the number one and the o as a zero).

The first time you log in you will see a welcome page where you accept the use of the system and proceed to the members only area. I strongly encourage all members to log in to make sure your email works. If you have any problems or questions, please contact Deb Martin.

Please note that you cannot log in on the home page. You go to the private site by:

1, go to <http://bell-co.tamu.edu/> and click on Bell County Master Gardeners (gets you to the home page).

2. scroll down about halfway and look on the green listing under Resources for "members only".

3. Click on "members only" where you are taken to the new page. This is where you will see the term "log in" at the top right. Click here, put in your email and the password w1ldfl0wer in the boxes and press the enter key. You will be admitted to the members only area. Look at the admin and other info there.

Please note that the member roster is shown as a long list. Your info has been entered for your enrollment, but the info displayed may not be complete. I am working on fixing this glitch and, in the future, member info will be displayed more clearly. However, the pdf file at the top of the page is a spreadsheet with all member info in a more readable and complete form. You may open the pdf here to find members; you may download it to your own computer for future reference; and you may print it out to keep it by your phone. If kept on the computer, you should be able to email a person directly by clicking on their email address which opens your own email program to send email as you regularly do.

The member only area is the place from which all broadcast email messages to the entire membership will be sent in the future. We have over 150 emails to send messages to when Marge makes an emailing for the organization. Most personal email programs cannot handle that load and, consequently, Marge's computer has been experiencing frequent crashes. This website system will allow for such a large transmission. Therefore, it is incumbent on the entire membership to make sure their email is kept up to

date. Please check your info on the pdf spreadsheet as that is the most complete we have at this time. If any changes are required, please contact Deb Martin

If you need help using the members only area, we are happy to get together with you at the MG computer in the MG office to walk you through the process. As always your comments, feedback, and suggestions are welcome. BCMGA wants to make the website a useful, manageable, and easy tool for the whole membership and with your help it will be a valuable asset. Let Deb, Dirk, Marge, or David know what you think.

Holistic Teaching Garden - Fall Seminar & Sale

Email from Joseph R. Novak, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer

The Holistic Teaching Garden's Fall Seminar and Plant Sale is to be held from 9:00AM to 12:00PM on Saturday, Oct. 4. The seminar will be on Fall Vegetables, Growing Strawberries as an Annual Crop, and Fall-Winter-Spring Bedding Plants. Admission to the seminar has an \$8.00 fee. You can register at the door on Saturday morning or you can call Louis Castillo to pre-register. Louis' phone number is 979-845-3915. We will open the sales area at 8:00AM so that the people attending the seminar can also purchase some plants before the seminar begins. There will also be plenty of time after the seminar to attend the sale.

The Holistic Teaching Garden's Fall Bedding Plant and Vegetable Plant Sale is to be held this week on the following days and times:

Oct. 2 - 9:00AM - 3:00PM

Oct. 3 - 9:00AM - 3:00PM

Oct. 4 - 8:00AM - 3:00PM

The sale is located in the back of the Horticulture and Forest Science Building (HFSB). The location can be found on this campus map:

<http://campusmaps.tamu.edu/>

SPECIAL NOTE: Please bring boxes, trays or other containers to carry plants. We will provide as many containers as we can, but if you have something that you can bring, it would help us out. If you need to clean out your garage or shed and are looking for a place to donate stacks of old pots or trays that have accumulated, we can always use them at the Holistic Teaching Garden!

FALL VEGETABLE PLANTS: Globe artichoke, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cardoon,

cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale, leeks, lettuce (leaf, Boston, Bibb and Romaine), Swiss chard and more.

HERBS: Basil (different types), cilantro/coriander, chamomile, dill, fennel, marjoram, Mexican mint marigold, mints (several types), oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, and more.

**FALL / WINTER / SPRING BEDDING PLANTS
INDOOR OR HOUSE PLANTS** (will be available on Saturday):

Young, healthy plants in a wide selection which include assorted types of aloe, begonias, bromeliads, cacti, succulents, ferns, tropical foliage and more. Several types of hanging baskets.

LANDSCAPE PLANTS:

(Some new types of landscape shrubs, vines and perennials will be offered, but we will also have a reduced price clearance of landscape plants that have been held over from our last sale.)

NOVELTY ITEMS:

Dish gardens, seedy characters, fern bottle gardens or terraria.

The interactive campus map shows locations of the Horticulture and Forest Science Building, Parking Area 74, West Campus Garage, driving directions, etc. <http://campusmaps.tamu.edu/>

Other sales:

The Holistic Teaching Garden is holding its Holiday Sale which will feature gift plants, amaryllis and other bulbs, herbs and fall - winter - spring garden plants on Nov. 20, 21, 22 (early this year because Thanksgiving is the last week in November and immediately before final exams.

Thank you for supporting the Holistic Teaching Garden.

Please check our fourth newsletter on the Holistic Teaching Garden internet site:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/holisticgarden/>

A Reminder!

Don't forget to submit your new subscription or renewal for The Texas Gardener magazine to our Treasurer, Judy Herrmann. BCMGA receives a portion of each subscription we process.

Roasting Tomatoes

Submitted by Jane Capen

Some things I just don't seem to be able to grow well--like tomatoes. I tried this summer, I really did, and I will probably try again. I bought some very nice tomato plants at the MG spring veggie sale-- cherry, roma, and something called Cherokee Purple. Things went well--for a while. Then the weather got hot, we left town and soaker hoses proved inadequate. My little crop languished.

I needed plan B. The Belton Farmer's Market was it. (There is also one in Temple.) I had been reading a lot about the "locovore" movement, buying food from sources within a hundred or so miles. Did you know the average serving of food on your plate travels 1500 miles to get there? Given the cost of fuel, buying locally makes a lot of sense.

Saturdays in downtown Belton May through September (and perhaps a little in October), at Penelope and Central, you can find local farmers selling their produce from about 7 in the morning until it is gone. While not totally organic, many of the vendors eschew pesticides. "I'm afraid I might poison someone," one old farmer told me. Sometimes the produce is not as big or pretty as it is at HEB, but for many of us, it is worth it. Of course I still buy produce at local groceries, the farmer's market doesn't have everything, but I buy locally as much as I can.

Currently, I am stocking up on tomatoes while they are in season and plentiful. I don't can, but I do freeze them roasted, to use later in sauces, on pizza, or as a topping on chicken or meat. Roasting is easy and a wonderful way to prepare them. There are lots of recipes available, some using a slow roast method, others a faster cooking. Many recipes call for cherry or roma, but I have found that if you do not have either one, a regular large tomato can be cut into chunks and it works just fine.

This is how to do it. Preheat the oven to 475 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Wash, core, and seed the tomatoes. I squeeze mine a bit so as to get as much liquid out as possible. They should be in uniform smallish chunks (cut in half if they are plum or romas). Spread on the parchment paper in a single layer and drizzle with olive oil. Top with some minced garlic and herbs if you like. Roast from 15-35 minutes, depending on the size. Check every once in a while, they should caramelize on the bottom, but not burn. (At this point they are good served warm as a

side dish.) When they have cooled they can be placed on a clean baking sheet in a single layer, and placed in the freezer. After they are frozen place in a plastic zip top bag for use in recipes. Enjoy!

Deb Martin alerted us to two timely articles from AgNews:

Yikes! Ike-related flooding likely to cause mosquito population explosion

<http://agnews.tamu.edu/showstory.php?id=736> about watching for mosquito problems due to recent storms & standing water.

Post-Hurricane Ike Livestock Rescue Continues in Southeast Texas

<http://agnews.tamu.edu/showstory.php?id=739> about Extension help in post hurricane livestock rescue. Our own Dirk Aaron was called away urgently last week to help in this effort. Last I knew he wasn't back yet. In conversation, it was said that without this rescue effort, the livestock industry was in real trouble as feed grains are under water, livestock themselves are in danger, and there's not enough fresh water for them to drink. This is just another side effect of the hurricane that we don't hear about on the evening news but requires intervention to restore Texas to normal.

Herb Study Group Meeting October 8th

Submitted by Rowena Fengel

We are going to be making lip balms, body lotion and herbal hair rinses. Each participant will go home with one 2 oz. container of lotion, 2 lip balms and 1 rinse. All of the ingredients will be provided as well as the containers. We will have lavender/lemongrass and pumpkin/vanilla as the fragrances. We will need a couple of extra double boilers and some plastic tablecloths to work on. Cost of the workshop and all supplies will be \$8.00 per person with recipes and sources provided. We will meet at the Extension office as usual. It would be great if we had some sort of head count for this but I have enough supplies for 12 participants.

Q: What do you call a mushroom who buys everyone drinks and is the life of the party?
A: A fun-gi.

BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

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TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION of TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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