

# Blooming Bell

BCMGA

October 2009

## OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30 WORKDAY 8:00AM Grounds Project	1 WORKDAY 8:00AM Grounds Project	2	3
4	5	6	7 WORKDAY 8:00AM  8:45AM Herb Study Group  POTLUCK WEDNESDAY	8	9	10
11	12 	13	14 10:00AM Fall Plant Swap  11:00AM Monthly Mtg	15 	16	17
18	19	20	21 11:00AM Greenhouse Com. Mtg	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 9:00AM Board of Directors Meeting	29	30	31 

## PLANT SALE IS ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY!

Submitted by Mel Myers

We have experienced a very severe change in our weather patterns in the last thirty days. No sooner than Sharon and I leave for Colorado to escape the heat, the temperature moderates and it starts to rain. I hope your landscape was not severely affected by the rains. I am constantly made aware that we should be careful what we ask for.

We have just concluded our fall sale with record turn out and results. It seems everything just fell into place and more than just a few Master Gardeners are responsible. To all who participated.....**THANK YOU!!!!** While we didn't sell everything available, we came very close. Some of you figured a way to even sell burr oaks that appeared distressed. A lot of you went the second mile to make this sale a success. The person in charge of the weather even cooperated. Starting with the newspaper article on Thursday, T.V. exposure on Friday and a tremendous turnout of volunteers on Saturday, everything seemed to fall into place. Again, to everyone involved... thanks. Can you believe that we even had almost thirty in attendance in each of our seminars? I have never seen such audience participation and interest. This was a stark contrast to the few who attended during our spring sale.

On another note, we are moving to make a big change in our landscape along Main Street. I hope that we will get the same participation in the planting of the shrubs and perennials this week.



## Mark Your Calendars for the Christmas Party

Submitted by Jane Capen

Remember the Master Gardener Christmas Party is scheduled for Thursday, December 10. Make a note on your calendar to join us. More details will be coming soon.

In keeping with our Christmas tradition, we will have a silent auction. For that we need as many people as possible to donate something. It does not have to be garden related. We have always had a wonderful response for this in the past and hope that we will again this year. Thanks in advance.

## INTERN CLASS OF 2010

Submitted by The New Class Committee

The New Class Committee is busy getting ready for our next Master Gardener class. Mary Pearl, Diane and Mary Ann are finalizing the schedule; Fran Sheppard is working on the orientation; Suzanne Boyer is organizing the mentor duties; Sue Judd and Dee Coffeen are coordinating the field trip; Werner Hahn is hard at work re-writing the homework to correspond with the new textbook.

We have now closed the class enrollment with 22 new students. The Orientation is set for Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1:00-4:00p.m. Our first class will be Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

The next New Class Committee meeting is set for Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:00AM at the Agri-Life Extension Office. Anyone in the organization who is interested in what is happening with the new class is invited to attend.

We look forward to another great class!

## NEW CLASS MENTOR SIGN UP

Submitted by Suzanne Boyer

Would you like to help during the new class lectures starting in January? It is a wonderful opportunity to earn hours, meet the new Master Gardeners-to-be, and review one of the class topics at the same time. Sign up will be for each individual class for the following jobs:

1. Two mentors who will do the same mentor tasks done in previous years - helping to set up the room, monitor homework turned in, etc. These mentors will be required to work from 12:00 to 5:30.
2. Two Refreshment Mentors who will coordinate with each other and bring refreshments. These mentors will be required to be present to set up refreshments at 12:30. They can then leave, but must return to clean up at 5:00-5:30.
3. One Video Mentor. Not all the classes will be videotaped, but we need one or two people to videotape the new classes and/or copy the videos onto DVDs. Set up at 12:30 and video from 1:00 -5:00. **IF YOU CAN VIDEOTAPE, PLEASE CONTACT ME RIGHT AWAY! (780-2463)**

SIGN UP SHEETS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING. SEE YOU THERE.



**Calendula**

**Herb Study Group**

Submitted by Beverly Wickersham and Kim Pringle

The major study topic for the October 7 Herb Study Group will be the herb Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*). Two common names are English Marigold and Pot Marigold. (A fill-in-the-blank quiz will be given prior to the formal study and prizes awarded.)

In addition to the herb study and if time permits, there will be an information handout on The Saguaro Cactus that is protected in the Saguaro National Park in Arizona. This will be a "just for your information" study.

Also, if you have seeds (any type) to plant in the fall that you would like to share, please bring them to the meeting. Just a reminder -- there will be a plant exchange at the monthly meeting on October 14.

**Websites of Interest to Texas Gardeners**

Submitted by Deb Martin

For an informative article in the Fort Worth Examiner, ***Texas Native Plant Week to Highlight Benefits, Economic Impact of Flora***, go to:

<http://www.examiner.com/x-4397-Dallas-Hunting-and-Fishing-Examiner~y2009m9d9-Texas-native-plant-week-to-highlight-benefits-economic-impact-of-flora>

And for a free ***Texas Wildscapes Interactive Habitat Planning DVD***, go to:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildscapes/>



**A Painted Bunting is only one of the colorful songbirds that can be attracted to yards having effective wildscape planning.**



**Poison Ivy**

**Leaves of three, Let it be.**

**It's A Dangerous World Out There**

Submitted by Jane Capen

Of course you know what poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac can do. You know better than to chew on a branch of oleander or eat a castor bean. But there are other sinister plants out there just waiting for an innocent victim.

Did you know that raw cashews are part of the same family and can have the same effect as poison ivy? Yep, a skin rash. While the nut itself is actually safe, if it comes into contact at all with the shell during the harvest (hard to prevent), it can cause an unpleasant rash. For that reason, grocery stores do not sell raw cashews.

A red kidney bean if not cooked can have detrimental effects on one's gastrointestinal system. You want your kidney beans to be completely cooked as it only takes a few to cause distress.

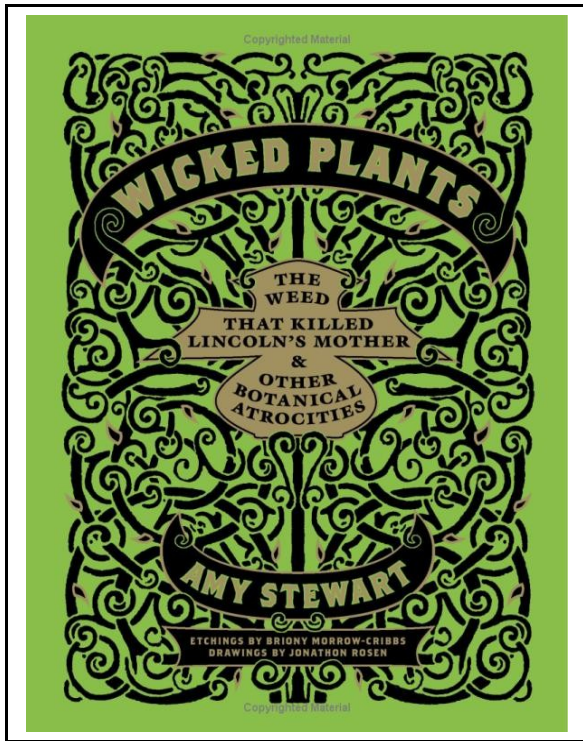
Watch out for elderberries, too. Don't ingest any of its fruit uncooked. Most parts of it contain various levels of cyanide, and while maybe not enough to kill a person, enough to cause serious misery.

Even corn, if the diet does not contain certain other minerals can be a danger. Too much corn, without other foods to help the body absorb the niacin in it, can result in a disease called pellagra, niacin deficiency. The masa used for making corn tortillas contains slaked lime which aids in the absorption of niacin, in case you were wondering about all the corn that is eaten by Native American peoples. Apparently they understood that corn alone was not good for a healthy diet and added the necessary other foods. Pellagra victims in Europe may have even been the inspiration for tales of vampires due to certain symptoms the disease causes including paleness and sensitivity to sunlight.

Some food plants, including celery and lime, contain or produce phytotoxins, which in the right amount can cause skin irritation when the person is exposed to UV rays. Other plants that can cause skin irritations are tulips, hyacinths, and alstromeria.

Beware of certain flowers as well, especially if you are using them as decorations on a cake or in proximity to your food. Azaleas, foxglove, hellebore, hydrangea, larkspur, lantana, lobelia, sweet pea, and Carolina Jessamine are among the lovely flowers that can poison you.

All of these facts and many other interesting ones can be found in a new book by garden writer Amy Stewart, titled "Wicked Plants, the Weed that Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities."



It's an entertaining and enlightening read, with artfully drawn illustrations. Stewart obviously did a lot of research on everything from plants used in making poisoned arrows to invasive plants (labeled "Weeds of Mass Destruction") to psychedelic plants to carnivorous plants, killer algae and more. Also included is a list of poisonous plant gardens that can be visited to see some of these malevolent plants up close.

**Moss Roses Like it HOT!**  
Submitted by Jann Dworsky

Moss rose, or portulaca is a beautiful and delicate flower that looks like a very small rose. Don't let the looks fool you though because this little flower is tough-as-nails and loves living in full sunshine. These little plants come in fuscia, pink, orange, scarlet, yellow and white and have a mossy tender foliage. They accept the Bell County heat as if it were a welcome guest, and flourish. Even now in September,

portulaca plants are available in the local nurseries to refresh the tired and burned out places in your garden. Once you have a few plants that do well they often come up voluntarily nearby. If mine are in the "wrong" spot they transplant easily when tiny. Late in the evening just take an old tablespoon, scoop a spoonful of dirt and roots, then transplant and water it well. This year about 10 plants came up voluntarily, a soft yellow, and every morning they do a great job of unfurling their delightful blooms to let the bees come in. The bees fly peacefully from one flower to another and crawl around leisurely, having a nectar breakfast. If you wanted to study bees, this is the plant for you because it is low to the ground. You can sit down beside the plants with your camera and wait for a good angle to take a photograph. The bees won't even notice you. Years ago I killed every portulaca that I planted. Our daughter Carla, then a teenager, bought some moss roses and grew them right on our front porch all summer. I admired her ability and I finally broke down and asked her what she was doing that I wasn't. She said it was the full sun and the large, low clay pot providing great drainage for the roots that was the secret. Moss roses don't like their roots to stay wet and her secret was the great drainage with the big, clay pot. She could soak them without rotting the roots. She has since graduated from college and married, but I still plant moss roses in that pot every year. She reminded me on her last visit that she had bought that pot with her own money and I just agreed with her and smiled.



**Moss Rose or portulaca comes in fuscia, pink, orange, scarlet, yellow and white.**

<b>BCMGA Website Utilization Report as of 9/26/09</b>		
<b>Page Name</b>	<b>Sep 2009 Page Views</b>	<b>Aug 2009 Page Views</b>
Home	876	1084
Calendar	238	387
Officers	27	33
Program Overview	23	37
Application & Certification	63	101
Strategic Action Plan	24	36
Current Newsletter	143	241
Archives	239	278
Texas Master Gardener	0	0
Texas Master Gardener Association	0	0
Master Gardener Special License Plates	0	0
Bell County Extension Office	0	0
TCE Bookstore	0	0
Jr Master Gardener	0	0
Play The Game	0	0
Newspaper Articles - Gardening Tips	717	771
Educational Articles - General Interest	123	139
Gardening To-Do-List	106	93
Texas SuperStar Plants	0	0
Rainwater Harvesting	0	0
Earthkind Landscaping	0	0
Earthkind Roses	0	0
Oak Wilt in Texas	0	0
Master Gardeners In Action- Photos	146	132
Ask a Master Gardener Email	18	27
Members Only	0	0
Speakers & Specialists	82	114
Advanced Master Gardener Training	80	92
Master Gardener Intern Page	60	49
Report Volunteer Hours	0	0
Volunteer Hours Log	0	1
A Few Basic	20	13
Handbook	0	5
<b>Grand total page views</b>	<b>2132</b>	<b>3633</b>

**Submitted by Deb Martin -- This table illustrates the recent frequency of use of the BCMGA Website over a two-month period. This data is for information purposes only.**

## Fall Plant Swap Reminder

Submitted by Louann Hight

The fall plant swap will be held at the hardening house at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, October 14th, prior to the monthly business meeting. If you have potted perennials, potted houseplants, bulbs, tubers, or seeds you would like to trade with other Master Gardeners, this will be a great time to do so! Some items to be traded include roses, fig trees, iris, day lilies, small cactus, tangerine yucca seed, Pride of Barbados seed, double red poppy seed, and much, much more. Be sure to bring your favorite plants to share with other Master Gardeners. Items to be traded should be brought to the hardening house before 9:30 am on October 14. If possible, tag each item with the its common name. If you are interested in helping with the plant swap, please contact Louann Hight.

## Planting Our New Beds

Submitted by Ursula Nanna and the Grounds Com.

After a great plant sale, we're ready to get plants in the ground at the Agri-Life site. We'll begin at 8:00AM both Wednesday and Thursday, September 30 and October 1. There's something for EVERYONE so if you can't plant, you can help count newspaper pages. Please bring: wheelbarrows, spade and sharp-shooter shovels, rakes, scissors, watering cans and pitchforks with which to move mulch, and extra lengths of hose as the faucets are a distance.

We'll have a great time as usual.

## Plant Sale News

Karla Tomaka and the Greenhouse Crew

Our fall plant sale was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who helped! We had members who made signs, advertised, made information booklets, unloaded trucks, organized, provided customer service and, of course, sold plants. This is the first year we had vegetables, herbs, trees, perennials and roses all in one sale and also the first time that we had the ability to allow members to place preorders. We also had two seminars, one on fall vegetable gardening and one on a brand new topic, wildflowers of Texas. Both seminars were very well attended. We cleared over \$4,000.00 profit which can be used to support many of our ongoing outreach efforts and the expansion of our demonstration gardens. There are a variety of roses remaining from the sale that will be available for \$6.00 each. Come by while we are working on the demonstration gardens this Wednesday and Thursday for the best selection.

## BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Are sponsored by the

### TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION of TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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