



Deanna Rankin: BCMGA Will Miss Her

Deanna Rankin died at her Belton home on November 30. Deanna is survived by her husband, David, 3 sons, William David, Christopher David and David Anthony, one daughter, Neigh Ann Johnson and four grandchildren. Above is a picture of Deanna from the 10th anniversary garden tour. She was on BOD, Garden Tour Committee and her garden was shown many times on MG tours and the Belton in Bloom Tour in 2005. She was in the class of 2001. She epitomized grace. She was an artist and her home, garden and life reflected this.

### *Remembering.....Deanna Rankin*

I have known Deanna for many years as we were neighbors on the same street and worked together in real estate. Although she was at a different office, we would talk for time to time. She was a wonderful person and so willing to "go the extra mile" for anyone. She gave of herself.

After she moved from our street and I too moved away, I didn't see or hear from her as much until I decided to be a Master Gardener. It was soon after the introduction class that we had our Christmas Dinner and Auction. I was a little apprehensive attending the event without knowing anyone but I went anyway. To my surprise there was Deanna! She said, "sit here with me". I was so happy to see her and also to know that I had a friend at that gathering. Of course I knew nothing about the auction at that time, I was so green. So I bid and bid and won! But the money I had with me was short of the total bill. Deanna said "here, this will cover it" and she gave me the money. I know she did not care if she got it back or not. Of course I did pay here later. And the next year, I sat with her again and enjoyed her company so much. It seemed that this might be an annual thing.

But God had other plans for Deanna, and my friend was called home to her eternal reward. I am not like those who have no hope, for I know where Deanna is and who she is with. And someday I will see my friend again. I thank God for Deanna's life and the opportunity to have known her. I am sure others in the Master Gardener's Association feel the same way. We never know how our life affects others, but I know we all will miss our friend Deanna Rankin.

Submitted by Barbara Beebe

## December Calendar

December 13 6:30 p.m. Christmas Party, Bell County Expo Special Activities Room

Dec. 19 9:00 a.m. , BOD meeting at Expo

## 2008 Calendar

Jan. 9 New class begins

Feb. 23 – 26 Home and Garden Show, Ask a Master Gardener Booth

March 15 Spring Veggie Sale and Seminars

April 19 Springtacular Garden Tour

September 6 Fall Veggie Sale and Seminars

October 1 Plant Sale and Seminars

October 18 Fall Glory Garden Tour

## President's Corner

I hope that I can be the first in line to wish all of our volunteers a very merry Christmas and a blessed and productive new year. The activities of Christmas have forced two changes in the schedule for meetings. As usual, the Monthly Meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Expo. Because Christmas falls on a Wednesday, the day before the usual date for the Board of Directors Meeting, the meeting has been moved back one week to December 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. - again at the Expo.

If you have not visited the Extension Office recently, please do so. The offices are almost completed. The secretaries have moved back into their previous room, and everything is new, shiny, and very attractive. You can tell they like it by the smiles on their faces when you enter their realm. Mary Ann Everett and Mary Lew Quesinberry are working with Dirk to set up our Master

Gardener Office, which will be something new for us. Hopefully our schedule of regular meetings will resume at the Extension Office come January.

## Annual Christmas Party:

I hope that you will all consider attending the Christmas Party on December 13<sup>th</sup>. It should be a very nice affair this year, highlighted by good food, an outstanding silent auction, and presentation of awards. Ilene Miller and her committee have spared nothing to make this an outstanding event.

In addition to presenting awards for service hours, the Green Thumb Award, and the Golden Trowel Award, Life Membership Awards will be presented to several of our members. The Life Membership Award is a new honorary award presented to individuals by the Board of Directors for contributions to the Association for long and dedicated service above and beyond the call of duty. Besides having their names engraved on a plaque, they are being presented with a distinctive name-badge, they will no longer will be required to accumulate service and education hours to maintain certification and They will not be required to pay annual dues.

I would be remiss if I did not remind you that the silent auction is one of the major fundraisers of our Association each year. I'll look forward to seeing you there on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

## New Web Site:

Be sure that you check out the new Web Site for our association. In contradistinction to the old site, the new one will be an integral part of our communications. It will contain an up-to-date monthly calendar of events, and both the current Blooming Bell newsletter, as well as archived past issues.

The Blooming Bell will no longer be sent to you as an email attachment. Therefore, you will have to start making it a routine to access our web site for information concerning the Association. (Those of you who do not have computers will still have the Blooming Bell sent via the mail.) The best way to gain access is to go to the state Master Gardener website ([www.texasmastergardeners.org](http://www.texasmastergardeners.org)). Their home page has 6 boxes. The one on the upper left is titled Texas Master Gardener County Web Sites. Click on that link and you will see a list of these web sites. Click on Bell County and voila, there it is.

If you have information that needs to be posted on the calendar, send that to Deb Martin. Information or articles or pictures for the Blooming Bell should be sent to Mareta Deiterman. To be successful and interesting, the web site and Blooming Bell will need to have your continued interest and support. Remember, any article you write is considered service and the hours spent can be used toward your annual certification.

#### **Gardening Tip of the Week:**

If you have a gardening tip that is screaming to be let out, write it up and send it to Mary Lew Quesinberry. We are currently collecting gardening tips (tips, not tomes) of 300 words or less for publication in the weekend edition of the Killeen Daily Herald. Candice Mullen has graciously consented to be the final editor and she will decide when each tip is to be used. Please do not send your tip directly to her, since it will have to be checked for accuracy prior to her involvement in the process – send it to Mary Lew.

#### **Financial Woes:**

I don't like to be the harbinger of bad news at this time of the year, but you need to be aware of financial problems that have developed over the past 5 months. The problems started with the automated watering system delivering far too much water to the irrigation system. Although the water bill jumped considerably starting in July, the change was not noticed until about 6 weeks ago. Initially the increased consumption was attributed to the hot, dry weather we had over the latter part of the summer and the fall. To make a long story short, we were paying water bills ranging from \$250 to \$350 each month.

Then two other problems developed that exacerbated the budgetary loss. We did not have a garden tour this fall due to the lack of interest expressed by no one wanting to enter their yard in the tour. The fall garden tour of 2006 netted the Association \$800 – this year, nothing. Then the greenhouse had some production problems this fall and so the gross income from the fall sale was only \$1700, compared to \$3000 the fall of 2006. This gave us a decreased income of \$2000 and an increased outlay of about \$1000.

In spite of the fact that, at this point, the water irrigation system problem seems to be solved, the Board of Directors finds itself very short on operating funds and has to be extremely careful about funding any projects over the next several months. This makes it even more important that we have a successful garden tour in the spring.

#### **The Spring Yard Tour:**

Frankly, I was upset by the fact that, out of 145 certified master gardeners, we were unable to entice even 8 people to enter their yards on the fall tour. Since there seems to be a lot of misconception regarding yard



## Christmas Plant History, Myths, & Trivia

### Poinsettia

The poinsettia is native to Mexico where the Aztecs originally used it for fevers and making red dye.

Legend has it that some poor children in Mexico, lacking money for flowers, were picking weeds for the nativity scene at their church. When they laid down the plants they had collected, the tops of the leaves turned bright red and the manger became surrounded by these beautiful flowers.

National Poinsettia Day is on Dec. 12.

### Christmas tree

Primitive cultures believed evergreen trees had special powers and also symbolized immortality. Evergreen boughs were brought into the home to keep its occupants safe and ensure the return of the forest the next year. Some believe that Martin Luther was responsible for the first Christmas tree. Inspired by seeing the stars through some trees, he cut down an evergreen, took it home and decorated it with candles.

### Mistletoe

Mistletoe is the state flower of Oklahoma. Mistletoe myths date back to the Druids, who considered it sacred, along with the oak trees on which it grew. It was believed that kissing under the mistletoe increased one's chances of marriage in the year ahead. Early Christian groups banned its use for this, but the Victorians brought it back.

### Holly and Ivy

For the ancient Romans, holly was a sacred plant used to honor Saturn, their god of agriculture.

The Druids also used holly in their celebrations, combining it with ivy. For them the holly represented the masculine, and ivy the feminine. They thought that by using a balance of masculine and feminine they could ward off evil spirits. The Druids died out, but the legend continued, with some modifications for

religions. During the period when mistletoe was considered evil, kissing balls were made of the combination of holly and ivy.

It was considered bad luck, however, to have more ivy than holly in the kissing ball.

### The Christmas Pickle

Finally there is the Christmas pickle. Of the stories surrounding it, probably the best is the one of two young boys from Spain traveling home for the holidays from boarding school. An evil innkeeper one night stuffed them in a pickle barrel. St. Nicholas halted at the same inn that evening. He became aware of the boys predicament, struck the barrel with his staff, and miraculously freed them. The pickle ornament commemorates this event. Berrien Springs, Michigan calls itself the Christmas Pickle Capital of the World.

Submitted by Jane Capen

<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1995/12-8-1995/trad.html>

<http://www.backyardgardener.com/masterg/59.html>

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/greenman/lore.pdf>

<http://www.floridata.com/tracks/transplantedgardener/hollyandivy.cfm>

<http://www.floridata.com/tracks/transplantedgardener/mistletoemyths.cfm>

### Christmas Gifts for the Gardener

Gardening books are always a favorite. Most gardeners have a few and are sure to have more on their wish list. Be sure to get books on gardening in Texas. A must have is Jill Nokes' *How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest*. For wildflower enthusiasts: Geyata Ajilvsgi's *Wildflowers of Texas* and Sally and Andy Wasowski's *Native Texas Plants* are sure to please. *Landscaping Region by Region and Southern Herb Growing* by Madalene Hill, Gwen Barclay with Jean Hardy are also very popular books. The rose enthusiast will appreciate Dr. William Welch's *Antique Roses for the South*.

There are also gardening tools and supplies. A gardener can always use a good pair of by-pass pruners.

A garden kneeler is a handy thing to have. It provides a padded place for the knees and can also be used as a padded seat.

If your gardener has wanted a special tree or decorative shrub, now is the perfect time of year to treat them to it. Another great gift idea is a start from a plant in your garden or seeds from a plant that your gardener friend has admired. If that plant has a "history" be sure to pass along its story; plants passed from friend to friend are especially cherished

My last suggestion is garden art items. These take the form of whimsical stepping stones, wind chimes, statues, personalized garden rocks, planters, sundials, gazing balls, signs or garden flags.

I am sure that you will come up with an idea that will be very special to the

By Debbie Lauer from the BCMGA 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

Share Your Love of Nature and Gardening with Articles for the Killeen Daily Herald.

Candy Mullen will be the editor of the BCMGA "Tip of the Week" beginning January 1, 2008 and she will need our support. Candy will edit and check the articles for length and categorize them as to topic/season and send them to Dirk. Dirk will send an article each week to the features editor, Rachel McReynolds. This article will appear in the Home and Garden section of each Saturday edition.

You can start sending articles to Candy now so she can begin the process. Just compose your interest in 300 words and e-mail to Candy Mullen.

Your article can be about any gardening or a nature subject, suitable for any time of the year. Write about a subject you are passionate about or interested in. You could do a short article on a particular plant or a project you

have accomplished such as rain water collecting or attracting birds to your garden. Following are guidelines for articles.

1. Confine your article to 300 words.
2. Photos are welcome
3. Save your article as a word document, or cut and paste to an e-mail to Candy Mullen [Candylane@taptrain.com](mailto:Candylane@taptrain.com) using the following format:
4. BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENER  
Tip of the Week  
by (your name here)  
"Title of Your Article Here"
5. Don't include the words in the Header in your word count.
6. 25th of the month deadline.

If you have already written articles to the Blooming Belle- edit them to 300 words and send to Candy.

Questions: Dirk Aaron ( 254-933-5305), Candy Mullen (254-698-2304), Mary Lew Quisenberry (254-780-3625)



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