



# *The Blooming Bell*

*July 2007, Newsletter  
Bell County Master Gardener Association*

## *Monthly Meeting*

*Wednesday, July 11th, 2007*

*11:00 a.m.,  
Bell County  
Extension  
Office*

*Rowena Fengel*

*Discussing;*

*The Good, the Bad and  
the Bugly!*

*(Child in photo was taken at a recent JMG Summer Camp event)*

## **BCMGA Events Schedule**

- Belton Greenhouse Workdays,  
Wed. & Thurs., 7 am, Belton
- Burger Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday
- August 25<sup>th</sup> – Fall Veggie Sale
- October 20<sup>th</sup> – Fall Garden Tour
- October 27<sup>th</sup> – Fall Plant Sale

## **President's Corner**

The last day of May was the end of the 2006-07 fiscal year. It marked the close of a very productive year for our association, which could not have been accomplished except for the hard work of our many volunteers. The list of your accomplishments is too long to be enumerated at this time.

June first started our new fiscal year. Last month, I introduced you to the new members of the Board of Directors. I look forward to working with them to accomplish our goals and objectives. Although the last Board accomplished a lot, we cannot afford to rest. Indeed, the new BOD members that I have talked to are more than anxious to get going.

The committee structure for the New Year is almost in place. At this point our leaders (Coordinators, we call them) will be:

. New Class Committee Coordinator - Janice Canard has graciously consented to lead the new class for another year. She did a great job last year, graduating one of the best classes we have seen. I know she will do an excellent job again this year. Committee meetings are already underway.

Program Committee Coordinator - The By-laws dictate that this position be filled by the First Vice-President. Francis Idoux has already grabbed the reigns and has come up with an outstanding group of programs for our monthly association meetings.

Public Relations Coordinator - Mary Lew Quesinberry has consented to take on this job for another year. She did such an outstanding job promoting our association last year that I could not conceive of anyone else doing it.

Garden Tour Coordinators - Our association is very fortunate in procuring the talents of Sue Morgan and Rae Schmuck once again. Under their direction, last year was the best year we have ever had in terms of both numbers of visitors and income received.

Ag/Safety Day Coordinators - This year Mary Ann Everett and Joelle Bedwell will ably fill these important positions. They will coordinate with the extension office to help insure that these important school activities become a reality.

Audit Committee Coordinator - Once again Gladys Newsome will certify our financial records. We are very fortunate to have someone with her talents to do this important function.

Email Coordinator - Margaret Croninger will perform this important communication task, which she does so ably, for another year.

Events Database Coordinator - Mareta Dieterman will assume the task of maintaining the database containing the email addresses of the patrons that want to be informed of our sales and activities.

Budget-Finance Committee Coordinator - Again, our Bylaws specify that this task belongs to the association Treasurer, Judy Herrmann.

. By-Laws Committee Coordinator - Rutha Leffel will once again assume this job, which is reserved in the Bylaws for the Second Vice-president.

Greenhouse Committee Team - Once again Lawrence Cox will be the coordinator. Annette Ensing, the Production Coordinator, and Karla Tomaka, Greenhouse Manager, will assist him.

Vegetable Demonstration Garden Coordinators: This year these gardens will be the responsibility of three young, talented, and strong gardeners, Ken Richey, Don Wyatt, and Gary Slanga.

Linda Hunter will continue to manage the Buyer's Club and the Speaker's Bureau will continue to be managed by the extension office, Marietta Dieterman has agreed to become our Historian and our Librarians will be Gary Slanga and Beverly Wickersham.

I am currently negotiating with one of our members to take over as Editor of the Blooming Bell. I hope that this person will accept. If not, no one else has expressed an interest in this important part of our communications. Also, no one has expressed an interest in the position of Production Coordinator for the Blooming Bell. This person is responsible for mailing the newsletter to those members who do not have computers. If no one comes forward, we may have to disband mailings.

The Handbook Coordinator position is also vacant. Maureen Montgomery was the coordinator for last year's Handbook. She is moving to Bandera, TX, but would be willing to work with the new coordinator. If no one comes forward, we may have to do without a new handbook this year. It is a shame for no one to volunteer with an association as large as ours.

### ***So, what's up, doc:***

This year will also be busy for all of us. I hope to accomplish the following goals over the next 10 months:

The security of the greenhouse area will finally be completed when we obtain proper locks for the gates and finish the fill under the fence on the east. The plan will be to have a combination lock at the southeast walk-in gate with all other doors or gates being locked with keys. The keys will be kept in the greenhouse. All members will have access to the combination for the main gate.

The Board will be asked to wrestle once again with a disaster plan for the greenhouse area. The JMG program is conceptually off the ground, with teacher training scheduled for the third week in July. To make the program viable, we need volunteers to work with the teachers at the various schools. The time commitment, though minimal, is very important.

I need you to step up to the plate and email Neil Cochran for details.

The Board will be asked to support a Rainwater Harvesting Demonstration Project to be used to teach the principles of rainwater collection, sometime in the fall.

I want to continue to stress community education through the Speaker's Bureau. This program is starting to blossom, but still needs encouragement. Everyone who has a Master Gardener Specialty is fair game to do programs in their specialty.

The Board needs to continue to support the plans of the Landscape Subcommittee. The Herb Group just added a "silver garden" to their repertoire. Other planned work includes development of a Earthkind Rose Garden to the west of the Greenhouse.

The Board of Directors will be asked to support the development of in-service education in greenhouse gardening techniques for those who have been certified in years past. The Greenhouse Committee is currently developing plans to coordinate greenhouse activity for the new interns of the 2008 class with the didactic materials they receive each week in the classroom.

The A&M extension office reported that most of us become Master Gardeners so we can improve our own yards, but we remain Master Gardeners because of the camaraderie. Therefore, I hope to be able to promote a couple of social get-togethers, where we can have fun together, but have no educational agenda.

Remember that while the Board of Directors can promote and pontificate, you volunteers are the ones that make it happen.

***Gy Okeson***  
***President BCMGA***

## *Yarrow--History and Myth*

As the weather heats up we all look to those plants which can take the Texas summer heat. One that many of us use in our gardens during the hot weather is yarrow or *Achillea millefolium*. Happy to grow in poor soil as long as there is good drainage, yarrow provides spots of bright color in a hot sunny garden. The *millefolium* part of the name comes from the multitudinous fine leaves of the plant-- mille = 1000; folium = leaves.

Like many of our plants, *achillea* has a long and interesting history, with frequent use as an herb for healing. The name *achillea* is a reference to the mythological Greek hero, Achilles, who purportedly used it to stop the bleeding of wounds among his soldiers. Unfortunately for him, it could not cure the fatal wound in his heel inflicted by Paris. It's use as an aid to control bleeding led to other common names for the plant including Soldier's Wort, Knight's Milfoil, Bloodwort, and Stauchweed.

Ancient Chinese people used dried yarrow stalks when they consulted their oracle, the I Ching. It is said to grow around the grave of Confucius. Another oriental tradition assured travelers that where yarrow was growing they would be safe from tigers, wolves or poisonous plants.

Northern invaders seeing the usefulness of the herb in stanching the blood of battle wounds took it back home with them, where it became a popular herb in some European gardens. The Saxon word for it was 'Gearwe' (which may have meant "to prepare" or "to be ready") and the Dutch term was 'Yerw'; over the years it became the word we know today--"yarrow".

Yarrow has been used over the last few hundred years for a variety of treatments besides the stanching of blood. Various people have used it for stomachaches, headaches, earaches, blindness, insanity, chickenpox, measles, gastritis, liver problems and labor. In the Middle Ages the Scots thought it helped to control baldness.

The plant has long been found in North America too. Many Native American tribes from Maine to the southwest plains made use of *achillea* for, not only for its styptic uses but for the treatment of indigestion, toothache, sore throats, and a good many other ailments.

It was used to treat battle wounds during the Civil War.

*Achillea* has had a few other uses too. A sachet of yarrow placed under the pillow was once thought to induce dreams of one's true love. Before the use of hops, it was used in the flavoring of beer.

Today, however, it is best to enjoy yarrow for its decorative purposes. Modern medicine has better ways to control bleeding and in some people yarrow can cause severe allergic skin reactions. It is a useful plant in the landscape or in flower arrangements. It is happy in dry conditions and is available in several colors including white, yellow, and red. Harvested, it is attractive in either fresh or dried arrangements .

References:

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*Submitted by Jane Capen*

## ***On the Road with the Herbies*** **April, 2007 Garden Tour**

The Herbies spent a lovely day in Georgetown on April 27. Starting out bright and early, an eager group traveled down from the Belton area to the first stop at the home of Werner and Terrie Hahn. Terrie introduced us to her wonderful collection of roses. Just ask her about her 'babies' next time you see her! Terrie's favorite roses include Sea Foam (a white trailer & Earthkind) along with an apricot rose (an HEB special and gift from her father). Other favorites on her list are the Perl d'Or, Purple Angel Face, Garden Glow and Queen Elizabeth. Added bonuses of the garden were beds of iris and herbs; a large vegetable garden and a fruit tree orchard with Werner's favorite plum, pear and peach trees! Terrie treated us to a delightful table of goodies and iced tea on the back patio overlooking the pool and gardens. It was so very hard to move onto our next destination.

But move on we did ... to the waiting gardens of Neil Cochran! Neil greeted us in the front yard that was minus a few blooms. It seems like the deer had visited the garden the night before and had quite a rose feast! Fortunately, most of the garden remained in tact and a feast for our eyes! The new bed that bordered the street side show Neil's dedication to urban beautification. And a short stroll through the garden gate revealed a large vegetable bed and more roses. One surprise were the aspen trees used as container plantings! Neil's bouncing little dog, Lola, showed us how a lovely garden can be a source of energy!

From the north side of Georgetown, we moved downtown. Susan Firth took us on a tour of two neighboring gardens. Hidden behind a tall picket fence, the back gardens at San Gabriel B&B are filled with over 30 varieties of roses, iris, columbine, bamboo and other assorted goodies. Owners Neil & Dee Rapp graciously invited us to clip and snip samples. And you know you don't have to ask us twice! We moseyed down the street to another walled garden, newly replanted with roses and fern-leaf lavender.

A more formal parterre, the centerpiece was an antique stone & shell urn planted with pansies! Our garden tour ended with lunch at Susan's. And what a spread was served! The pot-luck herb inspired buffet was delicious, the conversation enthusiastic and the friendship delightful.

The Pot-Lunch Herb-Inspired Buffet included:

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Judy    | Herbed olives, tomatoes & feta cheese   |
| Terrie  | Fruit salad & herb rolls (in the garden); Mint Mojitos & Chocolate Italian Cream Cake |
| Diane   | Rye bread & herb spread with chipped beef   |
| Nancy   | Zucchini Gratin   |
| Jeanne  | Lemon Dill Pasta  |
| Linda   | Tabouli and Blue cheese dip   |
| Frances | Martha Stewart chocolate cupcakes w/ edible flowers                                   |
| Ursula  | Herbed iced teas  |
| Rowena  | Fruited couscous with fennel  |
| Kim     | Garden salad with citrus cilantro dressing  |
| Susan   | Lavender bread  |

Where the Herbies will venture next? We all anxiously wait the next destination!

*Submitted by Susan Firth*

## JMG is Underway!

Every Tuesday in the month of June, Master Gardeners have conducted summer camp activities for the children, 70 + or -, of the Clement Boys and Girls Club, Stonehaven Unit in Georgetown, Texas. The activities include Grow Cards, Suck a Bug, Know and Show Sombreros, and Plantzilla Neck Pets. The children were divided into four equal groups, primarily by age, and attended a different activity station each week.

While this may be the first Master Gardener Program in Williamson County, It is indeed the first JMG Program in Williamson County. The results of this program are profound. The volunteers from Bell County are now committed to the JMG Program and will be integral in the upcoming Bell County Teachers Training, July 24-27.

These activities would not have been possible without a financial grant from the Bell County Master Gardener Association. Bell County Master Gardeners who have contributed time on this event include, Frances Idoux, Judy Herrmann, Nancy Hawkins, Joelle Bedwell, Gary Slanga, Ken Richey, and DJ Campbell. Other members include Wayne Rhoden, John Womack, Eileen Files and Neil Cochran All volunteers having been trained and then actually implementing these activities have been a method of multiplying efforts with committed "hands on" volunteers. Two of these volunteers want to become JMG Specialist at the next training.

I want to thank The Bell County Master Gardener Association for all the support that has been provided. Also I would like to thank Dirk Aaron for his support of this program. I now know the only limiting factor in the JMG program is our ability to implement it properly with Master Gardener Volunteers.

*Neil Cochran  
JMG Specialist*



## ***BIRD FEEDING AND FEEDERS***

When we dine out, we have seating and food preferences: Booth or table; smoking or not; chicken or fish; baked or broiled. And we are not the only ones with these preferences...our feathered friends have them also.

As gardeners, we enjoy watching the butterflies and bees visiting our Texas native plants. We see an occasional dove or two and want to add the dimension that attracts more birds of many species. Be forewarned, though, once hooked on attracting birds to the yard, the next step is designing bird feeders and experimenting with different feed mixes and choice offerings.

Here's where the preferences come into play. Some birds are ground feeders and some will take the bird feed on elevated surfaces and from feeders. Because of this, there are several feeder types to serve different dining pleasures.

A tray made of plywood and having several holes drilled in the bottom for drainage can be set on blocks or bricks almost on the ground. This will satisfy the doves, tohees, and house sparrows which are ground feeders. A tray elevated to 3-4 feet will be high enough to enjoy observing and easy enough to fill and clean. These feeders can either be elevated or hung from a limb with chain or wire. Wire helps deter squirrels and other mammals that will eat from a tray feeder. For finches, cardinals, jays, grosbeaks, nuthatches, chickadees, woodpeckers, and titmice, this elevated tray is excellent.

The advantage to these tray feeders is the ability to feed many different birds at one time without the squabbling exhibited at tube and hanging feeders. If the tray feeder has a mesh bottom, use only large seeds, not niger, grass or lettuce seeds as these will fall through the bottom and be scattered. So, fill the tray feeders with sunflower seeds, milo, white proso millet, peanuts, raisins, and other offerings.

Tube feeders are long cylinders that have perches and some feeding holes. Cylinders are good for smaller birds like the variety of finches, pine siskins, titmice, and sparrows. For the smaller seeds like niger, grass, and lettuce, there are tube feeders with very small holes just for this type of offering. In my yard, I have a few acrobatic doves that have mastered tube feeders by balancing on one leg and hanging the outside wing over the side of the perch.

Globe feeders usually have only holes, no perches. They attract some birds that like to do some serious gymnastics and feed up-side-down like chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches.

Usually mounted on posts, the hopper feeder usually resembles small barns with a slanted base used as a catch tray. Even ground birds, like doves and sparrows, will flock to these feeders. Attracted to the hopper feeders are cardinals, grosbeaks, and buntings.

All of these styles of feeders can be purchased or home-made. Remember to choose or build feeders that are easy to fill and clean as well as easy access for the birds to dine. Please, NO pressure treated materials as this will poison the birds or at least make them ill. Use cedar or for as DIY materials.

As you can see from the feeder styles, many birds will eat at almost any style feeder if they want the seeds bad enough. It's the offerings, the choice of seeds provided, that are the primary attraction to the birds. I have learned that the southwestern birds will consume different offerings than do their north-eastern counterparts. There are some basics that will entice our mainstay as well as our migrating birds.

Black-oil sunflower seed is the most palatable across bird species. It has a soft black shell easily broken by smaller birds. Striped sunflower seeds have a harder-to-break shell and less heart meat.

Cracked corn is the least expensive feed well liked by sparrows, juncos, tohees, as well as grackles and blackbirds. Since the grackles and blackbirds crowd out the cracked corn offerings, I usually offer the corn separately and sparingly.

Niger (thistle) seed is an Asian import sterilized not to germinate. Many species love niger seed like finches, pine siskins, doves, tohees, and juncos.

Millet is that small reddish-brown seed found in commercial feed. Northern birds don't care for it, but southern birds do. White proso millet is the most desirable. Seed eaters, like wrens, doves, sparrows and juncos enjoy millet.

Safflower seeds look like sunflower hearts. Cardinals love safflower seeds as the seeds are oil rich.

Keep all those scrap pieces of bread, doughnuts, cakes, and fruit and present them on the low table feeders or add to your suet mix.

A great mix is: 16oz. Peanut butter, ¼ cup vegetable oil, 1 cup oatmeal uncooked and cornmeal, and ½ cup raisins. Mix all together and roll small offerings and refrigerate the rest. When offering nuts, it is preferable to offer raw, unsalted nuts or unsalted cocktail nuts. Nuthatches, Carolina wrens, titmice, and woodpeckers love nuts. Another mix is: 5 scoops of sunflower seed, 3 scoops of white proso millet (or red millet), 2 scoops of milo, and 1 scoop of niger seed. These seeds can be purchased at a local feed store.

Suet is easily made from rendered fat mixed with various seeds, nuts and fruits and offered in a suet feeder. Suet goes bad very quickly in the summer so it's mostly offered in the winter as birds require more fat.

When setting out your feeders, locate them close enough to observe, like 15 feet from the window or patio. Be patient and don't expect visitors right away, but when they do begin to show up and word gets out that you've got the best seed in town, the bird population and diversity will increase in your yard. Now you can sit back and enjoy. Oh! Almost forgot.....You will observe many different species as the seasons and migration patterns change.

*Submitted by Ursula Nanna*

## **Requested Recipes**

### **Artichoke Pasta Salad**

1 Cup Penne or Bowtie pasta  
1 6oz. jar marinated artichoke hearts  
½ cup quartered, fresh small mushrooms  
1 cup cherry tomatoes cut in half  
1 cup pitted kalamata olives  
½ cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)  
1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley  
2 tsp. chopped fresh basil  
1 tbsp. chopped fresh oregano  
2 cloves minced garlic  
Salt and pepper to taste  
¼ cup pine nuts (optional)

Cook pasta just until al dente. Drain well and rinse with cool water. Combine ingredients and toss well. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving.

*Submitted by Judy Herrmann*

### **Basil or Mint Jelly**

*I received basil jelly as a gift from Sue Spivey a couple of years ago, fell in love with it and knew I had to make it to share with others. So thanks to Sue, so can you!*

Ingredients:

1 cup basil or mint leaves  
2 cups water  
1 cup vinegar (white)  
6 ½ cups sugar  
2-3 drops green food coloring  
2 pouches Certo (Liquid Pectin)

Directions:

Combine first 5 ingredients; heat to a boil (use large pot as it will foam up and may overflow). Add liquid pectin; heat to full, rolling boil and boil one minute. Remove leaves. Jar, cap and process ten minutes in water bath. Yield: 6-7 pint sized jars. Serve over a brick of cream cheese w/crackers.

Hint; if you blend a couple tablespoons of the jelly with softened cream cheese before serving you'll have a more spread-able dip.

It's also great as a basting sauce for rotisserie chicken!

*Submitted by Jeanne Richard*





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