



The Blooming Bell

June 2007, Newsletter

Bell County Master Gardener Association

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, June 13th, 2007 - 11:00 a.m.,

Bell County Extension Office

Carolyn Insall w/the

Poison Control Center ~

Poisonous Plants,

Spiders & Snakes!

BCMGA Events Schedule

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

President's Corner

The IMGA Convention:

My wife and I had the distinct pleasure of attending our first International Master Gardener Meeting. Jane Capen and her husband also represented our Association there. These meetings are "international" only because they have gardeners attend from both the United States and Canada. Nevertheless, it was a worthwhile trip, especially since the location was Little Rock, Arkansas.

Violet and I attended a "pre-convention" tour that took us to the Blanchard Caverns of northern Arkansas and then to Mountain View, Arkansas, in the heart of the Ozarks. We stayed at the Ozark Folk Center. Their life is conducted on a scale close to 100 years ago. Their commitment is to continue the customs and the music from the period beginning in 1840 and ending in 1942 - which was the birth of the electric guitar. The evening was filled with "folksy" music both at the Center and in the town of Mountain View, where every evening local musicians gather in small "bluegrass" type bands to pick and sing.

The next morning we toured the village at the Center where all types of handcrafts are preserved. This included a tour of the extensive herb gardens conducted by a lady who was past president of the International Herb Society, Ms. Tina Marie Wilcox. She is currently the head horticulturalist at the Center. She was an excellent teacher. She imparted her obvious love and enthusiasm for herbs by consuming them raw as she toured us around the beds.

The Conference in Little Rock was well attended by over 1200 master gardeners. The days were consumed with seminars and multiple tours of local gardens. Violet and I were impressed with how well everything seemed to grow there. I blamed it on the acid soil and increased humidity. I am glad that we spent most of our time on tours, rather than in the classroom.

One of the highlights was Little Rock's most famous gardener. I'm sure you will recognize his name - P. Allen Smith. He has a TV show on garden landscaping that appears weekly. Unfortunately, in our area it is viewed Saturday mornings at 5 a.m. on KCEN-TV. P. Allen gave an excellent talk the first morning at the convention entitled "Confessions of a TV Gardener" and opened up his new "estate" for the master gardeners to tour each day. It is a very elaborate place that he is developing to use as a huge natural set for his programs. The gardens that he has designed so far are very European, consisting of well-defined symmetric rooms located on an estate that is being patterned after the French palace at Versailles. The host was most gracious to his guests by being present each day for pictures and autographs.

The other speaker that really caught our eye was a Texan from Fort Worth. His name is Wayne Pianta, and he described his experiences working for the commercial greenhouses that grow the plants that fill our local nurseries - including Lowe's and Home Depot. He described the integrated and complicated process of going from plant to seed to seedling to the plant that we see on the shelf waiting to be sold to us at a specific date. It was a fascinating and complex story.

The International Master Gardener Association Conventions are held only on odd numbered years. The next one will be in 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada – and the next in 2011 in one of the Carolinas.

Other News:

Last Wednesday the Association graduated the 26 Interns that comprised the class of 2007. Twenty-two graduated as certified Master Gardeners, and the other 4 will complete their hours soon. Everyone has been extremely pleased with this class and they have gained the reputation of being one of the best classes that we have ever graduated. Kudos are due the New Class Committee headed by Janice Canard and Ginger Jones and the Class Coordinators, Mary Ann Everett and Mary Lew Quesinberry. Also, the new members of the Board of Directors were installed, even though their first official meeting is not until June. Next week will be the last board meeting for several of our colleagues. Mary Ann Everett has served admirably as Vice President, and has been my "right hand person". Marty Portmann was recording secretary. She always kept me in line when I misspoke or misspelled a name. Jan Anderson was treasurer. I can't think of anyone I would rather have caring for my money. Other Board Members leaving include; Bob Gordon, Linda Hunter, and Gabriele Marsh. They will all be sorely missed.

New Officers coming on the BOD include our new Vice President, Francis Idoux, Recording Secretary Laverne Adams, and Treasurer Judy Herrmann. New at large Board Members include Jeanette Karr, Rae Schmuck, Deanna Rankin, and Johnny Buck. They will team up with the second year members that include our Second Vice President Rutha Leffel, Corresponding Secretary Mary Lew Quesinberry, and board members Emilie Butts, and D.J. Campbell. I look forward to working with all of them so the Association can have another great year in 2007-08.

I wanted to review some of the good and bad things that have happened over the last year and go over my goals for the coming year, but I will wait to discuss that in more detail next month. This last fiscal year was a great year, all in all. One measure of how we did is reflected in our income from sales and yard tours. Last fall we thought we were breaking all records when the yard tour grossed a little over \$800 and the plant sale grossed a little over \$2000. This

spring the previous records were demolished by a yard tour grossing over \$1200 and the sale grossing over \$5000.

The Yard Tour Committee was co-chaired by Sue Morgan and Rae Schmuck. They really did a great job and have already consented to do it again next year. We remain forever indebted to Lawrence Cox for all that he has taught us and to Karla Tomaka for being such a great greenhouse manager. They will also be remaining in their positions for another year. Crystal Fisher was a wonderful, hard working production manager. Unfortunately, she was unable to continue in that position due to foot problems. Annette Ensing has taken her place and has already added a necessary element of efficiency to the greenhouse production. Crystal has just informed me that she will assume the duties of Editor of the Blooming Bell next year, in place of Jeanne Richard. I think Crystal will develop into an excellent Editor. Thank you, Jeanne for the great job you did with the Blooming Bell and the Award we received at the state convention this year.

Hat's off to all of you that worked so hard to make 2006-07 an exceptional year.

Gy Okeson
President BCMGA

Fall Garden Tour

If you would like to show-off your garden this fall, you need to sign up for the Fall Garden Tour. Now is the time to start thinking of participating. We would to have some new yards to show case in the fall tour. Please think about volunteering. Also, in addition to earning service hours as a host garden, hours can be obtained by helping the host garden prepare for the tour.

Please contact Sue Morgan (txmorgan2@earthlink.net) or Rae Schmuck (rae616@earthlink.net).

Greenhouse Workday Planner

During the month of June we will be trying something new. Due to requests by volunteers who work full time and would like an opportunity to work in the greenhouse, we will be testing Saturday workdays from 8:00 – 12:00. The greenhouse planning calendar for June is as follows:

June 6th – Burger Wednesday

Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants from Greenhouse Gears Up For Fall Sales article.

June 7th – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 9th – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 13th – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 14th – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 16th – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 20th – Seed wildflowers.

June 21st – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 23rd – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

June 27th – Seed peppers.

June 28th – Seed peppers.

June 30th – Bring in babies/divisions of wish list plants.

There are always a myriad of other tasks to be accomplished in the greenhouse! Look forward to seeing you there.



Karla

Greenhouse Gears Up For Fall Sales

Our spring plant sale was very successful bringing in \$5,327.00! Thank you for all your hard work and commitment in making this happen. You would think we could now pat ourselves on the back and go on vacation – but as Gy likes to remind us, things do not slow down over the summer! Our seed order for the August 25th vegetable sale is in. We will be

growing 7 types of tomatoes, 3 types of peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cucumbers, cabbage and squash. We are also trying something new. We will also be seeding some fall blooming plants to sell along with our vegetables and herbs in August. If our customers plant these in August, they will have blooms in the fall. Plants we will try to grow from seed include Black Eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Weed, Oxeye Daisy, and Mexican Mint Marigold. We are not sure if this experiment will be a complete success. These plants are also on the wish list below for gathering material from your gardens. We will be determining dates for all starting all the various seed types throughout the summer months

Plant Material Wish List

(Babies/Divisions/Cuttings)

For August Sale

Bulbine
Black-eyed Susan
Butterfly Weed
Fall Aster
Gayfeather
Indigo Spires
Purple Coneflower
Mexican Mint Marigold
Obedient Plant
Oxeye Daisy
Turks Cap

For October Sale

Bachelor Buttons
Blue Plumbago
Candlestick Plant
Chile Pequin
Copper Canyon Daisy
Coreopsis
Firebush
Four Nerve Daisy
Goldenrod
Hardy Hibiscus
Hollyhock
Mexican Bush Sage
Sedum
Yarrow
Zexmania

Trip to Festival Hill

“Herbs have something to offer everyone,”



emphasized Madalene Hill as she talked with a group of Bell County Master Gardeners who on May 17 visited Festival Hill, the garden complex developed by Hill and her daughter, Gwen Barclay. “Some people use herbs in cooking, while others use them in crafts,” she continued, “but everyone can use them as wonderful plants in the landscape.”

Talking with Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay was the highlight of a beautiful day for Master Gardeners Kim Pringle, Rowena Fengel, Joyce Richardson, Frances Idoux, Jeanne Richard and her friend Brenda Smith. Kim Pringle had brought her copy of *Southern Herb Growing*, the classic book by Hill and Barclay, and the authors autographed her book. They discussed the development of the gardens and described creative ways to interest young gardeners in growing plants.

The group spent the morning working in the Pharmaceutical Garden with Henry Flowers, the director of gardens at Festival Hill. In the afternoon, Flowers gave the group a tour of the beautifully landscaped gardens, concert hall, and housing accommodations in the complex. At the end of the tour, gardeners were invited to take cuttings from extensive containers and beds and also given a very generous donation of plants. In addition, they took home the gift of inspiration of a delightful day in a charming setting.

Submitted by Frances Idoux

COMPOST TEA

By: Ursula Nanna



Sometimes plants benefit even from a good cup of tea. What makes compost tea so good? It contains the beneficial nutrients that add that certain jolt to the soil and a punch to the plants. As the plants experience an increased root system, you'll see the difference in a more robust plant, and if the plant flowers, more plentiful flowers with a healthier leaf structure.

If you already have a compost pile up and going, excellent. If you don't, start gathering leaves from the garden and grass clippings to start the compost pile. Then you can make compost tea with the rest of us.

Compost tea extends the benefits of composting by increasing the presence of mycorrhizal fungi and beneficial microorganisms and helps break down soil toxins. This preparation is done by brewing compost and adding nutrients to the brew water and then aerating the mix for 2-3 days. Then apply to your plants either as a soil drench or foliar feeding. As gardeners, we use compost tea to cut down on harmful inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides and increase the beneficial nematodes, fungi, and bacteria that feed the plant roots and condition the surrounding soil.

To make compost tea, you'll need a mature compost pile – one that has been turned and allowed to heat enough to kill any weed seeds and pathogens. Depending on the compost material used, there are two kinds of compost tea that can be made: one dominated by bacteria and the other by fungi. You may want fungal tea if spraying berries, fruit trees, and the lawn or bacterial if applying the tea to vegetables and plants.

Compost Tea Continued

Most gardeners use the bacterial dominated brew.

For bacterial compost tea, the compost pile should consist mostly of nitrogen materials like grass clippings, legume materials from beans or peas, or alfalfa. You may also add coffee grinds, some wood chips, and shredded newspaper or documents.

Mix a large pile at one time and pile it high so proper heating of 103 to 160 F degrees takes place. Moisten the pile to damp, not wet, and allow the pile to stand 3-4 days once heating starts. Measure the temperature with a long thermometer into the center of the pile. Then turn the pile every few days as the more the pile is turned the more the beneficial bacteria is fed and activated.

In about five weeks the compost pile will begin to cool down and the organic material will exhibit a humus stage, not soil, but highly organic. The compost is now ready to brew.

Let's keep the process simple so any of us can do it, including the children. You'll need: a 5-gallon bucket, a small aquarium pump to aerate the brew, a gang valve with 3-5 valves to distribute the air, 3 bubblers and some air tubing. These can be purchased anywhere aquarium fish are sold. A stick will help mix the unsulfured molasses and old nylons to filter the brew.

If you try to short-cut and not bubble the mix, harmful anaerobic bacteria will dominate the brew. You'll know by the terrible sewer-like stench of the mix and it will harm your plants. Oh, if using city water instead of collected rain water, bubble the water overnight to blow off the chlorine and then add the compost.

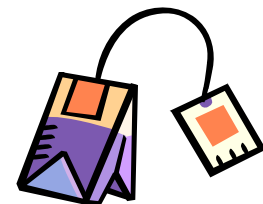
Fill the five-gallon bucket about half full with compost keeping the compost loose. Cut 3-5 lengths of hose long enough to reach the bottom of the bucket and attach the bubblers, Fill the bucket almost full with water and start the aerator pump. Once things are up and going, add 1 oz. Unsulfured molasses and stir well. You may need to arrange the bubblers again – stir several more times the 1st and 2nd days. Be sure to arrange the bubblers again.

In 3 days it's time to turn off the pump and remove the bubblers. Add 1 more ounce of molasses and let the brew rest about 20 minutes. Now it's time to strain the mixture through the stockings into a clean bucket.

Use this tea as soon as possible – within a couple of hours- so the beneficial organisms are fresh and well fed. Please, if the brew smells badly, discard it. You gain nothing by using it.

If you or your neighbors have been using chemical pesticides, several applications of the compost tea will be necessary at 10 day intervals. Once you use the tea as a regular garden staple, spraying compost tea once in the spring and once in the fall is sufficient. Put the filtered solid material back in the compost pile for the next batch.

This can be a fun family project and if you work during the week, begin the pile on Wednesday or Thursday for weekend application.





Daisy History and Myths

“He loves me, he loves me not”, daisy chains, innocence and purity, daisy icons symbolizing “make love, not war” from the 70’s... The list of daisy symbols and meanings goes on and on.

Four thousand years ago the Minoans had beautiful gold hairpins with a daisy design. Daisy carvings can be found in the tombs of the Pharaohs from 3000 B.C.E. In ancient times the daisy was dedicated to the Artemis, who was considered the goddess of women by the Greeks. Later, Christians called it the Maudlin daisy in honor of St. Mary Magdalene. During the Middle Ages daisies were used to treat jaundice, tumors, small pox, insanity, and skin diseases. Later, Henry VIII is said to have eaten them in an effort to relieve the pain of his stomach ulcers.

According to Roman myth, the Dryad Belides (symbolizing childhood innocence) was dancing with her companions at the edge of a forest when she was seen by Vertumnus, the god of orchards. In an effort to escape his attentions, she transformed herself into a daisy.

The name daisy comes from the Anglo Saxon words "daes eage," or "day's eye". The daisies They were regarding closed at night and opened with the sun. Of course, not all daisies share this characteristic; they are a large and very diverse family known as Asteraceae. There are about 1500 genera and 25,000 species of daisies, the largest of any plant family, accounting for approximately 10 per cent of all flowering plants.

The Ox Eye daisy, grown by many Texans, is the genus *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* or

sometimes *chrysanthemum vulgare*, part of the Asteraceae (Compositae) family. “Ox-eye” was an affectionate name given to the goddess Hera, the queen of the Greek gods.

Daisies have been known by a very large number of names, including: Bull's-eye Daisy, Dun Daisy, Dutch-curse, Golden Marguerites, Herb Margaret, Horse Daisy, Maudlinwort, Midsummer Daisy, Moon-penny, Poorland Daisy, Poverty-weed, and Rhode Island Clove.

Finally, a bit more daisy trivia:

There is an English saying that spring is not here until you can step on twelve daisies.

With her eyes closed, a girl pulls a handful of grass; the number of daisies in with the grass tells her how many years until she will be married.

Another chant counted on daisy petals was “This year, next year, sometimes, never” to predict when one would get married.

If you dream of daisies in the spring or summer is good but if in the fall or winter it is bad luck.

Transplanting wild daisies to a tended garden was once considered to be very unlucky.

If you eat three of the blossoms after a tooth extraction you will never have another toothache.

References:

"Myth and Folklore: Daisies" (c) 2004 Gregg M. Pasterick - All Rights

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Submitted by Jane Capen

BCMGA HERB STUDY (2007-2008)



MONTH/YEAR	PROGRAM	Herb Study 2006-2007 Review
July 11, 2007	“It’s HOT!!” Let’s bring and chat about our favorite herb books while we enjoy samples of cool, refreshing herb drinks.	REVIEW: “Anise Anyone” Herbs: Fennel, Mexican Marigold Mint
August 8, 2007	“Planning for Fall: Herb Garden Designs and Theme Gardens” (Please share an interesting design or theme.)	REVIEW: “Exquisitely Aromatic” Herbs: Lavender (deer resistant), Lemon Verbena
September 12, 2007	“Hardy Butterfly and Hummingbird Favorites: Sages, Salvias and Butterfly Weed” (Please pick 2 of your favorites and share why they are your favorites.)	REVIEW: Herbal Topiaries: “A Twig in time becomes a tree.” Latin American proverb
October 10, 2007	“Other Herbs to consider for Garden Color and Texture” Herbs: Anise Hyssop, Columbine, Echinacea, Feverfew, Hyssop, Lady’s Mantle, Nigella, St.-John’s-Wort, Soapwort, Tansy, Yarrow	REVIEW: “Pretty Edible Flowers” Herbs: Calendulas (Pot Marigolds), Dianthus, Nasturtium, Roses, Violets
November 14, 2007	“Herb Decorating Projects and Gifts for the Holidays” (Please bring a project or gift idea to share.)	REVIEW: “Mediterranean Flavors (Perennials)” Herbs: Marjoram, Oregano, Poliomintha, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme
December 12, 2007	“Christmas Tea” (Location and time will be announced later) Herbs: Garlic chives, Onion chives, Society garlic	REVIEW: “Tea Time” Herbs: Scented geraniums, Chamomile, & Stevia

January 9, 2008	“RELAX: Pamper yourself with Herbs and Flowers” (Please bring a lotion or bath salt recipe.)	REVIEW: “Instant Gratification: A, B, C & D (Annuals)” Herbs: Arugula (roquette), Basil, Cilantro, Dill (Also Perilla)
February 13, 2008	“Out of the Ordinary Salad Greens” Herbs: Costmary, Cress, Lambs quarters, Orach, Purslane, Sorrel	REVIEW: “Season to Taste” Herbs: Chervil, Dandelion, Lovage, Parsley, Savory (winter and summer)
March 12, 2008	“Herb options for shade/part-shade Gardens” Herbs: Cuban Oregano, Dead Nettle, Sweet Woodruff	REVIEW: “Cool Cucumber” Herbs: Borage, Salad burnet
April 9, 2008	“Garden Tours Galore – Charting a course with so little thyme!!” (Let’s share information, dates, locations, details and pictures!! Come prepared to talk or listen.	REVIEW: “Stately, Classic Cottage Garden” Ornamentals Herbs: Bay laurel, Comfrey, Foxglove, Lemongrass
May 14, 2008	Annual Herb Plant and Seed Exchange (Please share and leave space in your own garden.) Tender Herbs: Cardamon, Ginger and Tumeric in the Zingiberaceae Family	REVIEW: “Mingle with the Mint Family (Labiatae)” Herbs: Spearmint, Peppermint, Bergamot(bee balm), Lemon balm, Catmints, Pennyroyal
June 11, 2008	“Plants to Compliment a Silver Herb Garden” Herbs: Horehound and Rue	REVIEW: “Silver Herb Gardens” Herbs: Artemisia, Dittany of Crete, Germander, Lamb’s ear, Santolina

The next meeting is June 13, 2007 at 8:25 am "Silver Herb Gardens". The herbs to study are Artmesia, Dittany of Crete, Germander, Lamb's ear and Santolina. Meeting time is 8:25 am. Please bring your lawn chair and a cup of coffee. We usually meet near the picnic table (weather permitting) unless otherwise noted or announced.

Please do one of the following to prepare for the meeting: (1) research the herbs or project and report something interesting you learned, (2) if you grow the herb, describe your experience, (3) use the herbs in a project, bring a recipe using the herbs or sample to taste or (4) bring a photo of herb used in the landscape.

Notification of special tours and projects will be announced by email and/or the BCMGA Newsletter. Please stay after the meeting to propagate herbs, tend to the herb beds and other greenhouse projects. Number one priority is to have lots of fun!!



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