

The Blooming Bell

May, 2012

BCMGA Newsletter

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Hamburger Wednesday 11 am	3 State Conference May 3rd-5th San Antonio	4	5 Flower Moon
6	7	8 	9 NO MONTHLY MEETING TODAY	10	11	12
13 Mother's Day	14	15 	16 Class of 2012 Graduates 1 pm Join in for an Ice Cream Social	17	18	19
20	21	22 	23 Board of Directors Meeting 9 am General Meeting 10:30 am Installation of Offi- cers/Brunch	24	25	26
27	28 	29	30	31		

Upcoming Dates to Remember: Fall Plant Sale is September 22nd

The President's Corner

As May rolls around I anticipate Mother's Day, which means to me a new hanging basket. When my children were young we lived in a climate friendly to hanging baskets. The tradition was born in our family that my husband took our children to the nursery to pick out a basket as my Mother's Day gift. Some years it was a beautiful basket, others the bright flowers were the attraction for my children. But they selected my gift and that was what mattered. Eventually all of the baskets looked wonderful and the whole family enjoyed them throughout the summer. I don't have much luck with hanging baskets here in central Texas. I think I just can't keep them moist enough with the heat and wind. I continue to try numerous techniques, and know that eventually I will find the secret to a lush basket. Water is definitely the key ingredient and as the season heats up and dries out it will be a concern for more than my hanging baskets.

If you are not harvesting rainwater, maybe you should begin to give it a try. You don't have to start with a large tank. Any container can catch water. Directing a downspout on your house gutters into an existing garden is also a good way to use available rainwater. I was reminded of the importance of and privilege of collecting rainwater by a recent letter I read. Some states, Colorado was mentioned in the letter, do not allow collection of rainwater by the homeowner. Now is the time to get ready for the summer. There are several people in our MG chapter that are willing to help you get started in rainwater harvesting. Take a walk around your home and think about where you might collect rainwater. Rainwater harvesting as well as drip irrigation are wise uses of water. There is a new drip system installed in the special needs beds.

The new class field trip was fun and informative. We saw drip systems, large vegetable gardens, shopped a farmer's market, learned how to select plants from other countries for our climate, and also learned techniques for building disappearing fountains and streams. Thank you Suzanne for planning another wonderful field trip. Graduation for the new class will be May 16th at the extension office. It begins at 1:00 pm and will be followed by an ice cream party. Please RSVP to Bernie, as she is keeping a count to determine the amount of ice cream needed.

May has several opportunities for Master Gardeners. The state conference will be May 3rd - 5th in San Antonio. We will not have a monthly meeting the second Wednesday of this month. There will be a brief monthly meeting following the Board meeting on May 23rd. The installation of new officers will take place at the monthly meeting followed by brunch. May 18th Willow Springs Elementary School has asked us to be a part of their science day. Please let Mary Ann Everett know if you can help with this event. You will enjoy being a part of science day.

My vegetable garden is now producing. However, the caterpillars and grasshoppers are taking more than their share. I have worked on the theory of plant enough for everyone interested for several years, but the crowds are increasing. I might have to rethink my theory. I leave you with a thought about Mother. "Getting right down and smelling the fresh soil is good for any one. It is mother earth's own breath."

Hope to see many of you at Graduation...Laura

All BCMG's Are Invited

to attend the

**New Class Graduation
and Ice Cream Social**

16 May 2012

One O'Clock

**Bell County Extension
Office**

RSVP by 4 May

**Bernie Hurta at
bhurta@gmail.com**

What Are We Learning?

- Gail Christian



A full house of MG's listened as Ursula Nanna gave a seminar on Cacti and Succulents at the April General Meeting. For her cacti, she uses 1/3 potting mix without soil, 1/3 decomposed granite and 1/3 expanded shale. Transplant your cacti in spring rather than fall and stop watering after August.

Gary Slanga taught the class on conserving water with a drip irrigation system. As usual Gary was very knowledgeable, had samples for everyone to see and even had hands on with attaching the different connectors to the larger hose. The class was for the new class, but was well attended by other MG's.



Killeen Farmer's Market Opens

- Gail Christian

These pictures are of the Grand Opening of the Killeen Farmers Market. It was the Saturday after our plant sale. We sold some herbs and vegetable plants. Ursula and I had a table and made butterflies with the kids out of coffee filters. Everyone had a great time.



Snake Etiquette

Spring is a high activity period for local snakes, both venomous and nonvenomous. The most commonly encountered snakes in our area are nonvenomous (Texas Ratsnake, Eastern Hognose snake, Texas Brown snake) but Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes have been found around the Headquarters campus.

Some tips:

- Don't put your hand, foot, or any other part of your body where you can't see it. Most bites are on the hand or ankle. Use tools (or gloved hands) to pick up covered objects.
- Rattlesnakes will rattle if they feel threatened and have the opportunity. Striking is a tactic of last resort. So, listen for the "buzz" when working around areas that could have rattlers.
- If you encounter a Rattlesnake, take inventory of your surroundings. Where is the snake? Are there others? Do you have a clear path to leave the area? Move slowly away from the snake.
- Snakes avoid noise and vibration so whacking the brush before removal should give them fair warning that you are in the area.
- Most snakes encountered are harmless and most rattlers encountered do not attempt to strike. They would rather leave the scene or hide.
- Have fun!

Andrew G. Gluesenkamp, Ph.D., Herpetologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Salado Celebrates Earth Day

- Gail Christian

On April 21st, the BCMG's helped Salado celebrate Earth Day. They put together a booth with information and activities involving grass heads, butterflies, composting and rainwater harvesting.



Gardening for an Old Friend

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Janet Stein, new class intern, and Mary Ann Everett plant EarthKind roses, Rosemary, Deer Muhly, Red Yucca, Missouri Primrose, and Caesalpinia gilliesii, at the recently completed Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District building. Former Bell County extension agent, Dirk Aaron is the manager of the facility which serves to protect the 1,055 square miles of Bell County's ground water.

Photos by Gail Christian



News from the Master Gardener Class of 2012

- Pat Smith

What a wonderful learning opportunity this class has been, with more to experience in May! The month of April has been a busy traveling month for the Class of 2012. Here are highlights of some of our adventures.



On Friday, April 6, Ursula Nanna (above) taught us the benefits of rain water collection by showing us her amazing setup at her home. We were in awe of her knowledge and creativity. Her beautifully landscaped gardens were an added treat to all who attended this tour. This photo shows our undivided attention to Ursula's demonstration. Thank you so much Ursula. Next stop was Killeen Municipal Court Community Gardens.

Field trips are always fun and so was the class field



trip to Austin on Wednesday, April 18. Special thanks go to Suzanne Boyer and Kim Pringle for arranging this reward-

ing day. The first stop was **Boggy Creek Farms** (www.boggycreekfarm.com), a USDA-certified-organic urban market farm. This farm raises organic vegetables and flowers for sale to local restaurants, Whole Foods and in their own market (held on Wednesdays and Fridays). We were amazed at what is being grown on this five-acre plot in the city limits of Austin, Texas. They also have a much larger farm at

Gause (close to Cameron) which they also intensively cultivate. Many of us found treasures of veggies, baked goods, magazines (free), and recipes (also free) in the market.



Above, Boggy Farms market; rows of snapdragons; left, Carol Ann Sayle, co-owner of Boggy Farms talks with some MG's; below, tomatoes planted solidly in greenhouse.



Photos by Pat Smith, Gail Christian and Terrie Hahn

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News from Class of 2012

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The next stop was **Great Outdoors Nursery** located at 2730 South Congress Avenue in Austin (www.gonursery.com). This amazing nursery is a treasure trove of wonderful plants from all over the



world that will grow in the Austin area and may also do well in Bell County. Here we listened to a presentation give by General Manager, Merrideth Jiles who travels all over the world looking for plants adaptable to this area. We wandered through the maze of plants displayed, made our selections for purchase and loaded them on the bus. One of the best parts of this stop was finding a shady place to eat our picnic lunch. Having loaded our treasures and ourselves on the bus, we proceeded to Hill Country Water Garden, our last stop of the day.



Below, Merrideth Jiles talks with the group.



Hill Country Water Garden (www.hillcountrywatergardens.com) in Cedar Park is

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Photos taken by Pat Smith, Gail Christian and Terrie Hahn

News from Class of 2012

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a home of disappearing fountains and streams and ponds for demonstration and purchase. Here we were shown how easy it is to build a disappearing fountain and stream. We received detailed instruc-



Above, Steve Kainer of Hill Country Water Gardens demonstrates how to build a disappearing stream.

One of the best ways to learn is by seeing the implementation of master gardener techniques. On Wednesday, April 25, our class toured four showcase gardens in Temple and Belton. Special thanks go to Diane Calderwood, Mary Lew Quesinberry, Barb Sayls, and Annette Ensing and their husbands for allowing us to enjoy the beauty of their garden creations and ask questions about implementation while observing some of the principles we learned in class.

Below is a photo taken in the square foot garden of Diane Calderwood.



tions which are available on the Hill Country Water Gardens web site. This nursery also sells plants and other fountain and pond accessories, just about everything you need for your pond, including fish. They are a full service garden center with lots of garden art also available for purchase.



Photos by Pat Smith, Gail Christian and Terrie Hahn.

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News from Class of 2012

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After experiencing these wonderful gardens, it was difficult to remain indoors for the afternoon class.

Clockwise from above, Mary Lew Quesinberry answers questions about her yard; Barb Sayls points out interesting plants in her yard and goes down to the lake with the MG's; Annette Ensing talks about growing grapes and shows her gardens describing how she put her greenhouse together. Check out the front page and banner of the calendar for this month's Blooming Bell for another photo from Diane's and Mary Lew's yards.



Photos by Terrie Hahn

Continued on next page...

News from Class of 2012

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We are looking forward to receiving our T-shirts. Maritza Kincaid's entry won the vote of our class. We will submit a photo of the finished product along with our graduation photo in May's newsletter. Graduation is May 16! Only two more classes to go!

During April's classes, we were treated to a delicious array of snacks and goodies. Maritza Kincaid brought a delicious Flan Cake and agreed to share her recipe.

Orange Flan Cake

For the flan layer

- 1 12 ounce can evaporated milk
- 1 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 5 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened

For the cake layer

1 ORANGE cake mix and ingredients for mix

(Can use any flavor of cake that you like, the flan works with any flavor)

Directions

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees and place rack in middle of oven.
2. Heat some water (about 8-10 cups) to boiling to use for the water bath.
3. In a medium bowl or standing mixer, mix all of the ingredients for the flan until well mixed, about 2 minutes.
4. In another medium bowl prepare the cake mix as directed on the box.
5. Pour the flan mixture into the bundt pan. Pour the cake batter on top of the flan mixture (Don't worry - it will float).
6. Place the bundt pan into a roasting pan or cake pan to use for the water bath - use the smallest tall sided pan you have that will fit the bundt pan. Pour the boiling water into the outer pan to go up the side of the bundt pan several inches.
7. Place in the oven and cooking until a toothpick inserted in the cake layer comes out clean (60-70 minutes).
8. Allow the cake to cool on the stove for about 15 minutes. Loosen the sides of the cake with a knife and allow to cool to room temperature. Flip the cake onto a deep serving platter. Cool in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours or overnight.

Announcements

General Meeting Information

- **Bernie Hurta**

The **May Monthly Meeting** is scheduled for **May 23rd** at 10:30 am after the 9:00 am Board of Directors Meeting.

The **installation of new officers** will be held after the meeting followed by a brunch. If you would like to contribute to the brunch, please email Bernie at bhurta@gmail.com. We're having meat dishes, salads, and desserts. We also need someone to bring iced tea, ice, and cups.

There will be no second Wednesday monthly meeting in May..

Volunteer for Junior MG's

- **Mary Ann Everett**

Willow Springs Elementary School has contacted me about their science day, which will be on Friday, May 18, from 9:00 to 2:00 p.m. We would need to leave the Extension Office by 8:15 in order to get there and get set up.

Our activity will be nature masks. We will have over 200 children, second grade and up.

Please let me know if you can help with this activity. Thank you.

Plant Sale Information

At the April General Meeting, Carla Harmon announced the Spring Plant Sale profit was over \$7,000. The Fall Plant Sale will be September 22nd. Plans are already being made, so if you would like to be a part of the Plant Sale Committee, contact Carla.

All BCMG's Are Invited

to attend the

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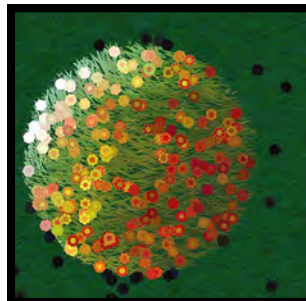
16 May 2012

One O'Clock

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RSVP by 4 May

**Bernie Hurta at
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The Flower Moon

-**Terrie Hahn**

Naming full moons dates back a few hundred years to the Native Americans and then early European Settlers. The Northern and Eastern Tribes named the entire month after the full moon. Some Algonquin tribes referred to May's full moon as the Corn Planting Moon or the Milk Moon. According to the Old Farmer's Almanac, May's **Full Flower Moon**, also called Mother's Moon, marks a time of increasing fertility with temperatures warm enough for safely bearing young, a near end to late frosts, and plants in bloom.

Image from <http://thingswelove2.blogspot.com/>

What's Happening in Your Yard?

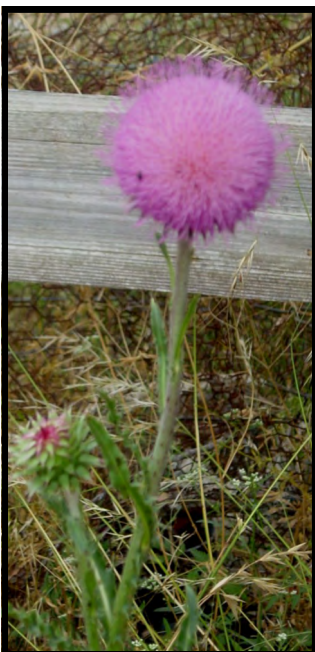
- Gail Christian

James Anderson's artichoke plant has taken on a life of it's own. It is huge. I took some pictures of him cutting the center artichoke. I think there are about six more surrounding this center one. He was going to take it home and enjoy eating it.



- Terrie Hahn

Below are some wildflowers that are both beautiful and painful! They are the Texas Thistle and the White Prickly Poppy. To the right is my Jerusalem Sage.



What's Happening in Your Yard...continued

- Frances Idoux

These top photos are of Peggy Martin (the Katrina survivor). The blooms are spectacular, and the roses are climbing the cedar tree! It's amazing what enough rain can do. The bottom right picture is Henry Duelberg -- even salvias seem to like rain. What a beautiful spring!



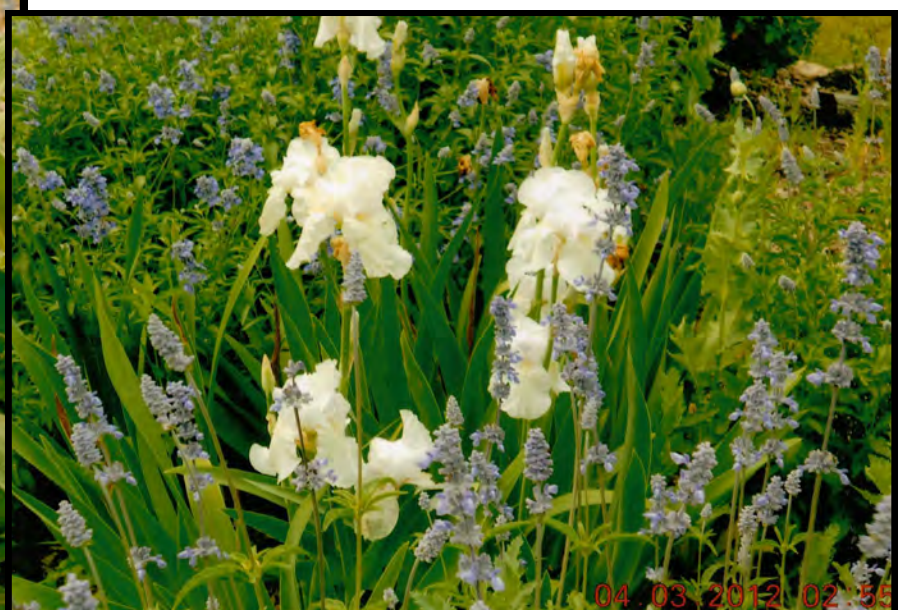
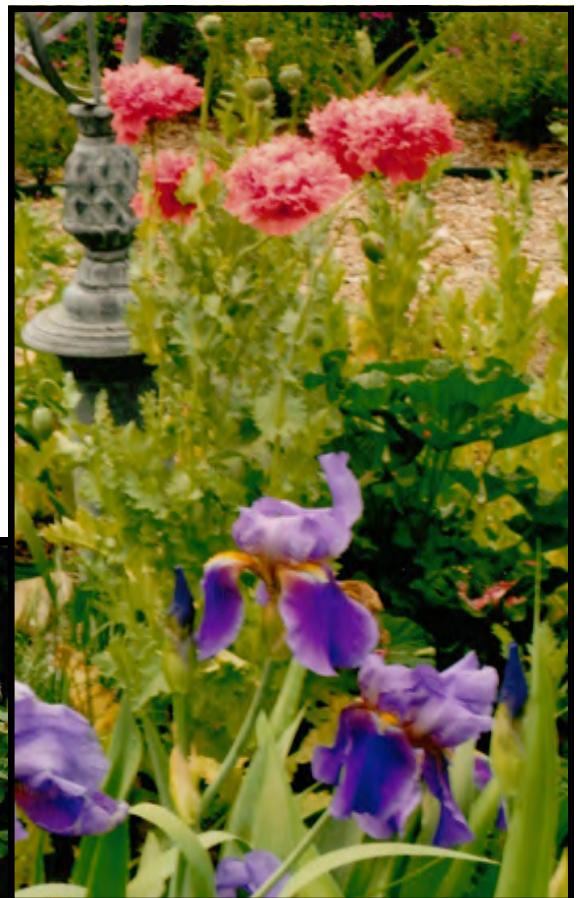
- Sue Judd

Bastard Cabbage - taking over!!!

What's Happening in Your Yard...continued

- Carol Runyan

My yard is in full bloom! To the right, clockwise; pink Double Poppies and Purple Iris; Summer Wind Rose; Mealy Blue Sage and White Iris; Jerusalem Sage and Red Poppies; and Souvenir de St. Anne Rose.



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Greenhouse Mel Myers

AgriLife Agent Randall Rakowitz

Contributing Writers:

Laura Murphy
Pat Smith
Mary Lew Quesinberry
Gail Christian
Frances Idoux
Bernie Hurta
Carol Runyan
Mary Ann Everett
Terrie Hahn

Contributing Photographers:

Gail Christian
Mary Lew Quesinberry
Frances Idoux
Sue Judd
Terrie Hahn

Editor:

Terrie Hahn

Proofreader:

Werner Hahn

“Snake Etiquette” reprinted from TCMG’s Newsletter, *The Compost Bin*. It was written by Dr. Andrew G. Gluesenkamp, Parks and Wildlife Department

A publication of the Bell County Master Gardener Association sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension of Texas A & M University

1605 N. Main St.
Belton, Texas 76513
(254) 933-5305



Front Cover: Diane Calderwood’s Bottle Cactus in amongst wildflowers.

Banner: Mary Lew Quesinberry’s Goldenball Leadtree

Please submit articles and photos for the Blooming Bell to Terrie Hahn at:

moompie45@hotmail.com

321 Logan Ranch Rd.
Georgetown, TX 78628