



May Calendar of Events

14th - 8:25 Herb Study Group
14th - 11:30 – Expo Center
Graduation, lunch and meeting

President's Corner 4/26/08

TMGA Conference:

The state Master Gardener Association Convention was held this last weekend in Conroe, Texas. It was hosted by the Montgomery County MGA. It was a great conference for learning, seeing old friends, and new things. I would estimate that there were about a dozen Bell County gardeners present to share in the festivities.

The conference began Thursday afternoon with a talk on Landscape Architecture by Dr. Neil Odenwald, Emeritus Professor of the LSU Department of Landscape Architecture. He presented an interesting talk the principals of landscape design. His talk was followed by Neil Sperry. Neil needs no introduction to Texas gardeners. He followed Dr. Odenwald's talk with a different perspective on landscaping.

Friday was a day full of lectures of covering a wide range of horticultural topics coupled with workshops on making concrete leaves and identifying plant pathology.

Friday noon featured the Specialist Award Luncheon. Bell County members that were awarded specialist status at that meeting were: Deborah Martin – Earthkind, Gary Slanga – Entomology and Greenhouse Management, Annette Ensing – Greenhouse Management and Plant Propagation, Kenneth Richey – Greenhouse Management, Donald Wyatt – Greenhouse Management, Mary Ann Everett – JMG, and Barbara Beebe – Plant Propagation.

Violet and I attended the TMG Delegate Meeting on Friday afternoon. The TMG budget for the coming year was discussed and passed. Doug Richards, manager of the state web site and communication specialist, is retiring after a long and meritorious service to the organization. A new web master has been hired and a new web site is in the process of development. Doug Welch has also resigned as MG Coordinator, a position that he has held for the past 21 years. Doug said that he will still be around but, the duties of his new job in the TAMU Horticulture Department will consume most of his time. The young lady that will be taking his place was introduced to the group.

Friday evening we gathered for the Awards Banquet. Each year the MG Associations are encouraged to compete for various awards that are available. Our NCMGA Awards Committee consisted of myself, Deb Martin, Mary Ann Everett, Mary Lew Quesinberry, and Karla Tomaka. Judges are all out of state to minimize "local bias" and Associations are judged within groups based upon their size. Associations are grouped into four sizes - small, medium, medium large, and large. Our Association is considered by their definition to be a medium size Association and therefore only competes with other medium size Associations.

I think we did pretty well. We received a third place on last summer's JMG Teachers Training course, a third place on our Association's programs that were important to the community, a second place on our nomination of Johnny Buck for Individual Master Gardener of the Year, an honorable mention for graphic presentation for Deb Martin's PowerPoint entitled "Native Bulbs", and first place on our exhibit that highlighted our Rainwater Harvesting activities, Handicap

Garden, and JMG Teacher's Training, all three grouped under the overall theme "Spreading the Word".

Saturday was tour day. Violet and I went on the Home Garden Tour. The conference also offered tours of The Arbor Gate, King's Orchard/Bernhardt Winery, Walker County Extension/Hope Farms, and Mercer Arboretum/Botanic Gardens. I personally always feel that the tours offer the best learning experience at these meetings. The Home Garden Tour featured 4 homes ranging from less than an acre to 72 acres in size. Of course, being in the piney woods with the acid soil and increased rainfall made them spectacular.

I wish more of our members would consider attending next year's conference. It will be held in Marshall, Texas, and will be hosted by the Harrison County MGA. Watch their web site for registration materials and information and sign up early. This year there were about 800 gardeners registered. It might be larger next year.

Board Of Directors news:

At the April 23rd meeting of the Board of Directors, it was announced that the Deanna Rankin Memorial Garden Tour grossed about \$1,120.00. There were some expenses, but the net income should be in the \$700 - \$800 range, which is very good.

I told the group that we are currently sold out of Doug Welch's Home Garden Almanac. The board decided that, in the future, they would purchase and continue to sell this great book at BCMGA functions. I want to thank my wife, Violet, for conceiving and starting this project as a fundraiser for the Association. Total profits to the Association at this time will be about \$900.00.

The Board recognized Mary Ann Everett for the award she received at the Volunteer Day Awards Supper on April 17th. Actually, three of our Association members received awards, but two of them concerned their work with other organizations. Mary Ann received her award for

her work specifically with our Association.

The New Class Graduation is rapidly arriving. It will be on May 14th. This reminds me that the fiscal year is rapidly coming to a close. Remember that dues are to be paid before June 1, 2008. A good time to pay them would be when you come to graduation to greet the new gardeners.

Gy Okeson

President BCMGA

2008 Class Field Trip to A&M and Round Top



Dr.

Joe Novak was a gracious host to the 48 master gardeners and interns who toured the Holistic Garden on the A&M campus. Dr. Novak explained the holistic approach to gardening and guided the master gardeners through the process. Holistic gardens demonstrate enabling planting beds, ergonomic tools and man's relationship with nature. Master gardeners toured the gazebo, greenhouse, cottage garden, Maroon and White Garden, and many planting beds demonstrating companion plantings.



Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay, legends in herb gardening, garden design and uses of herbs welcomed Bell County Master Gardeners

to their home at Festival Hill in Round Top. The group of 48 master gardeners and interns were awed by the beautiful and unique grounds of Festival Hill.

2008 Graduation May 14th !

The May meeting and Graduation Lunch for the Class of 2008 will be May 14 at 11:30 at the Expo center. The event will be catered, so reservations are needed. Cost for the lunch is \$11 per person (Note: 2008 class members are not required to pay) Members can pay at the door or send a check in advance to Judy Herrmann (address below).

Please make your reservations no later than May 7.

President Gy Okeson and Dirk Aaron will present certificates to the class of 2008. The general meeting will include reports on the recent plant sale and garden tour, and new officers and board members will be installed. We hope everyone will make plans to attend and congratulate the graduating class members, as well as enjoy a good lunch with friends.

Pay 2008-2009 Dues by June 1st

Include your correct address, phone number, and e-mail with your payment of \$25 so that we can update our database. You may pay Judy Hermann or leave a check in the treasurer's box at the greenhouse, or mail it to 941 Rattlesnake Road, Harker Heights 76548. New class members are exempt from the dues (it was part of your tuition) for this year only. Last year's JMG teachers will need to pay their dues this year to remain a BCMGA member. If you have not done your service hours, you can remain as an associate member by paying your \$25 dues.



Wickersham Butterfly Garden

Beverly Wickersham and her husband created this lovely butterfly garden. The area was cleared of junk trees and they began work on landscaping and improving the soil during January and February and began setting plants in mid-March.

The two gardens include Red Possumhaw bushes, Chaste trees, Corelberry bush, several varieties of Salvia, Butterfly bush, American Beauty Berry bush, Dwarf Red Coreopsis, Bluebonnets, Yellow Natural Columbine, Blackeyed Susan, Passion vine, Coral vine, Cecil Bruner roses, Yellow Trailing Lantana, and Pink and Purple Petunias. The flower colors of these plants are attractive to butterflies.

Saving a Tree One Catalog at a Time

As I write this on Earth Day, I hope everyone's garden is looking really good--perennials have reappeared, annuals are planted, vegetables and fruits are appearing. Many of us are trying out new plants, ordered from an ever expanding array of catalogs.

Catalogs--most of us love them. It's fun to see new introductions, get new ideas, daydream and plan. Of course if you are like me you probably get way too many catalogs. The average household in the United States gets nearly a hundred catalogs a year. According to the Sierra Club over 14 million trees are used each year just to make catalogs. And that is just the trees. Processing, printing, and shipping accounts for a lot of energy used.

Many of the catalogs we receive are unwanted. Our names get sold, and while we are delighted to get that wonderful daylily catalog, we pitch out the ones for upscale pet supplies and overpriced gadgets, usually without even opening them.

Some get taken to the recycling center rather than sent to a landfill. However, even better than recycling is not getting them at all. While we can call or write to companies to get off their lists, there is an easier way.

If you have internet access you can go to www.catalogchoice.org This is a free service, sponsored by the Ecology Center in Berkeley, CA, and endorsed by the National Wildlife Federation and Natural Resources Defense Council. You can sign up for free (they do not sell your name or address) and eliminate any catalogs that you do not wish to receive from their extensive list. So far I have opted out of receiving over twenty catalogs. If I want their products I can easily go to the website and browse, without destroying a tree.

So let's enjoy our favorite catalogs, but let's save some trees and energy by opting out of all of those we don't want.

Jane Capen

Jobs List for the Coming Year

Job opportunities for graduates and Master Gardeners will be on sign up sheets at graduation. It will help our new president, David Fitch, plan next year if every job has volunteers. Blooming Bell editor is an opportunity for someone seeking to earn hours at home. "How to" help is available

The Deanna Rankin Memorial Garden Tour

The April garden tour dedicated to Deanna Rankin was a huge success. Thanks to Marlene, Ursula, Betty, Janice, Ken, Diane, Rowena, and the Rankin Family. Your gardens were outstanding and as one garden owner said "their garden rose to the occasion."

The workers did a wonderful job helping before and during the tours. They wore

bright smiles and were very helpful to the visitors. Thank you so much for all your help. As for the garden owners they are to be commended for all the hard work and long hours they put into preparing their gardens for the garden tour. The time you took to walk through the gardens and explain to your guest all day long. It was so interesting listening to the questions visitors had about the plants and gardens. Each garden was unique in itself and I found them very educational. We truly appreciate all that you did to make this such a successful Garden Tour. I hope everyone took the opportunity to visit these gardens, if not, you really missed something.

Also, a special thanks to Joyce Richardson, she took on the responsibility of Deanna's garden, getting workers to work before the tour and the day of the tour. Also a big thanks to Nancy Hawkins who assisted Joyce.

Because of all the help the MG contributed to preparing Deanna's garden, Dave Rankin has made a very nice contribution to the Master Gardener's program. We would like to give a big thank you to Mr. Rankin.

Thanks to all of you for making this one of the best garden tours ever.

The Garden Tour Committee
Rae, Sue, Mary Lew and Jeanette



2008 Class Tshirt

Vegetable gardens of Charles Newsom



Corn, potatoes, beans, tomatoes, pepers, garlic, onions, spinach, greens, carrots, cucumber, squash, and more.



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