



The Blooming Bell

Bell County Master Gardeners

October 2007

President's Corner

What a strange year. I'm not sure my plants have been able to make any more sense of it than I have. The wet spring and early summer initially felt good. The weather was a little cooler than usual and my plants loved the water. They showed it by growing in perfusion. Then came the floods. I hope all of you were able to escape the run-off. My place didn't flood, but Lake Belton sure did. We usually look forward to having summer fun on the lake. This year I felt robbed. Essentially all of the boat ramps were closed – so no water sports.

Then in July, summer descended with a vengeance. The heat amply made up for the lack of rain. Actually, the heat was not as bad as the relative humidity – I felt like I had suddenly moved to Florida. I suffered – and my plants did too. Some are still having a hard time of it as I write. September is supposed to be one of the two wettest months in Texas. Not this year. The only good thing about the lack of rain is that Lake Belton may actually be back to its usual level in another month. With any luck, we'll get the boat in the water for Thanksgiving.

I would like to speculate that this unfortunate series of events is also the reason we will not be having a Yard Tour this fall. The Bell County Master Gardener Association has a total of 109 certified master gardeners and 41 Associate Members – this makes a total of 150 members. In spite of this, the Yard Tour Committee has been unable to get more than 4 members to agree to show their yards. A reasonable tour requires 6 to 8 yards. I would hope that the recent toll caused by the weather is the reason for the poor showing. Since hope springs eternal, I will expect a better than usual showing for the Spring Yard Tour. Remember, you do not need to have a spectacular yard to show it. The tour should be considered a learning

experience, and we learn from seeing what others are doing.

The next event will be the Fall Plant Sale. The greenhouse crew would like all the help they can get over the next 4 weeks, to get ready for the Sale.

The other big event is in December – the Christmas Party. Ilene Miller already has a committee working, but she would like to have more members helping to put this on. If you are interested in helping, please call Ilene. Her contact information is in the Handbook.

The 2007-2008 Handbook is being finished as I write this. It should be available to the membership in the next 7-14 days. You will be surprised at what a wonderful document the Handbook has become. This year it will be in a loose-leaf binder. It is color-coded and set up so that only obsolete pages will need to be changed each year. This will eventually decrease the cost of production from what it has been in past years. Jane Capen has headed the committee working on this document, along with Jan Anderson, and Judy Herrmann. Thank you for your effort in producing this wonderful addition to our organization.

Three New Additions to our Organization:

The first new addition is adding a Scholarship(s) for member education. Education for our members is important if we are to continue to be educators. Each year there are one or more members who express an interest in taking a specialty course, but who do not feel they can afford the tuition and travel expense. To help correct this problem, the board has voted to set aside \$600 each year, which may be used to pay the tuition to a specialty course for a member.

As with any government program, certain criteria must be met to be eligible for this scholarship.

- ✓ This person would have to be a currently Certified Master Gardener who has previously shown an active interest in Master Gardening by maintaining his or her certification for at least 3 years.
- ✓ This person does not have the personal financial resources that would enable him or her to pay their own tuition, travel, room, and board required for the specialty course.
- ✓ This member would have to be physically and mentally capable of attending the specialty course.
- ✓ The course would have to be in a specialty area that he or she was interested in, and one that the BOD felt was in need of better representation in our Association.
- ✓ The person would be obligated, upon completion of the course, to take an active part in the Speaker's Bureau, giving talks and demonstrations in that specialty area, and would be obligated to be a part of that specialty group, pursuing the goals and objectives of the specialty group in our Association.

The second new addition is the addition of a fifth membership category – that of Life Membership. This would be an honorary designation awarded by the BOD to individuals who are Certified Master Gardeners and who have distinguished themselves through long and meritorious service to the Association. Members so honored would not be required to pay dues or accrue service and education hours and would be certified for life.

The third new addition was the social time that preceded the monthly meeting. This will become a regular feature. I think that everyone had a good time at its inauguration. Thank you, Violet, for providing the snacks.

Let's help Temple with their tree sale:

The city of Temple has purchased a large number of trees that will be sold a minimal price to homeowners who are economically disadvantaged. The city would like to see at least one tree in every front yard. The cities representative, Kim Mettenbrink, is looking for individuals who would be willing to volunteer to

help these individuals plant their tree. Kim was a master gardener and has asked anyone who wishes to participate to call her at 254-298-5411. Kim is also a specialist in Garden Landscaping, and has offered her help in teaching this to the new class of interns next spring. Please consider helping her.

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BCMGA President

October Events

3 rd	Hamburger Wednesday
10 th	Herb Study Group 8:30 a.m.
10 th	Monthly Meeting 11:00 - see below
27 th	Fall Plant Sale

We have been invited Raye Virginia Allen's farm for our monthly meeting on October 10. We will meet at 11 a.m. at her farm, 5880 Hartrick Bluff, Temple. She will give us a tour and point out native plants. We also have been invited to stay for lunch. Please bring a sack lunch, and we will bring cold water. Cameras and sketch books are welcome. Many thanks to Joelle Bedwell for arranging this invitation!

From Belton - go to FM93 (Taylor's Valley Road). Turn left at 31st Street. Go to Dairy Waters Road and turn right. Turn right again at Hartrick Bluff (immediately after Stone Gate subdivision). Cross the railroad track and go past one dirt road. The second road (asphalt) is the way to the Allen Farm. The address is on the fence. From Temple - Go south on 31st street. Turn left at Dairy Waters Road. Go to Hartrick Bluff and follow above directions. Call or email Frances Idoux for any questions.

E-mail notice: If you want to be on the MG e-mail list or if your e-mail address has changed, please e-mail Marge Croninger at margec@clearwire.net I will reply to let you know you have been added on. If you don't hear back, please call me at 778-8578. Thanks, Marge

Herb Study Group Meeting Oct. 10

The Herb Study Group will meet near the picnic table at 8:25 am (in case of rain, we will meet in the extension office lobby)

The study topic will be:

"Other Herbs to consider for Garden Color and Texture" - Anise, Columbine, Echinacea, Feverfew, Hyssop, Lady's Mantle, Nigella, St.-John's-Wort, Soapwort, Tansy and Yarrow
Please do your homework. If you grow any of these herbs, please bring a cutting to show what the flower and leaves look like. We will also have a Fall plant and seed exchange so please bring anything you wish to share. We can donate remaining items to the Greenhouse for the Fall Plant Sale on October 27.

Christmas Party and Auction December 13

Mark your calendars for Thursday, December 13 and plan to attend our annual Holiday Dinner as we recognize members for their service hours and raise funds through the silent auction. A special highlight of the evening is the announcement of the Golden Trowel and Green Thumb winners.

The Silent Auction offers a great selection of items for gifts or yourself. Success of the auction depends on members bringing items and bidding on your favorites. Auction items should be received by December 5th. Registration and the silent auction are from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m.

The event will be held at the Special Event's Room, Bell County Expo Center. Come early for visiting, holiday cheer and bid on "one of a kind" gifts.

Cost of the meal is \$12.00 per person, with checks made payable to B.C.M.G.A. **Paid reservations and entire selections are due to Ilene Miller by December 5, 2007.** Don't miss the fun, fellowship and opportunity to recognize our members for their service to the organization. Make your reservation by completing the reservation form below.

Dinner will be served at 6:45 p.m. Door prizes made by Rowena Fengel and the Christmas committee will decorate the tables. Catering will be Classic Catering. The choices are Chicken Raspberry Chipotle and Pecan Crusted Pork Tenderloin. The entrée will be accompanied by salad, wild rice pilaf and asparagus. Members will be asked to contribute desserts.

Bell County Master Gardeners Association Christmas Dinner

Thursday, December 13, 2007 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Special Events Room, Bell County Expo Center

Menu selection and Registration – Circle one entrée

Name: _____ Chicken Pork

Guest: _____ Chicken Pork

Guest: _____ Chicken Pork

Guest _____ Chicken Pork

Number of people attending _____ @ \$12.00 per person

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please return form made payable to B.C.M.G.A. by December 5 to: Ilene Miller,

2914 Olympia Dr., Temple, 76502 or bring to November 14th B.C.M.G.A. meeting



Herb Study Group Attends Seminar in Austin

The Herb Study Group recently met with the Austin Herb Society at Zilker Gardens in Austin. The program was presented by Lucinda Hutson, featuring cooking with herbs. She autographed copies of her book *The Herb Garden Cookbook* and the luncheon included dishes from the book's recipes.

Goldenrod

What brightly blooming fall plant attracts butterflies, is deer resistant, easy to grow, needs little coddling, and was once experimentally hybridized to produce *rubber*? (*Hint: it has often been maligned as an allergen*).

If you identified the plant as goldenrod or solidago, you were correct.

A member of the family Asteraceae, there are over 80 species, most with slender, hairless stems and large inflorescences, made up of many tiny yellow flowers. While English gardeners have utilized goldenrod for over two hundred years, American gardeners are more recent converts to this attractive plant.

One reason Americans have been slow to embrace goldenrod is that it has had the undeserved reputation of causing allergies. The truth is that most allergy sufferers are reacting to the pollen of ragweed, which blooms at the same time as goldenrod, and whose pollen is easily spread via wind. In general, the pollen of goldenrod is too heavy and sticky to be blown far from the plant.

Like many other plants, goldenrod has had a variety of uses through the ages. It was once referred to as "woundwort" and thought to have healing properties. It's Latin name, *Solidago*, means "to make whole". It has been used for

treatment of kidney and urinary problems. Goldenrod flowers have been used to make dye. After the Boston Tea Party it was one of the ingredients used in a substitute drink called Liberty Tea.

Attractive paired with purple fall asters or blue salvias, High Country Gardens lists it as deer resistant. Newer varieties are more well mannered than some of the older, more invasive species. Goldenrod is attractive to butterflies as well as bees.

An interesting myth associated with the plant says that washing a baby in a bath containing goldenrod leaves assured that the baby would grow up to have a cheerful disposition and good sense of humor. Goldenrod was used as a potential rubber producing plant. When he was eighty years old (1927), Thomas Edison founded the Edison Botanic Research Corporation in Fort Myers, Florida. Its purpose was to develop a process for producing rubber from plants native to the United States. He began experimenting with goldenrod plants, which contain rubber. He crossbred plants until he came up with one whose rubber content was twelve percent.

The USDA continued the work after his death, but the idea was abandoned with the development of synthetic rubber a few years later. There is a story, whose veracity is in debate, that Henry Ford presented Edison with a Model T auto, whose tires were made of rubber from the goldenrod plant developed by Edison.

If you are looking for something to brighten your fall garden and look good with your fall asters or salvias, you might give goldenrod a try. If you cannot find it locally, it can be ordered from sources such as High Country Gardens and Bluestone Perennials.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goldenrod>

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563582_3/Thomas_Alva_Edison.html

<http://www.answers.com/topic/goldenrod?ca=t=health>

http://www.mwrop.org/W_Needham/Goldenrod_061023.htm

<http://www.highcountrygardens.com/catalog/product/91927/>

Contributed by Jane Capen



Herb Study Group

The herb group made bird bath-waterers at the home of Jeanne Richardson Sept. 12. Artist and gardener, Rowena Fengel directed as members stirred, poured and molded concrete into forms. Before the mixture could dry, they were decorated with glass, marbles, leaf a



small herb prints. Sara Lee Perryman photographed the work. Herb dishes provided lunch and recipes were shared.



Tricia Newton (kneeling) brought a great Brie dish and the recipe follows:



Brie and Sun-dried Tomatos

1 lb. Brie cheese (approximate size)

5 Tbsp minced fresh parsley



10-

15 sundried tomatoes in olive oil

4 cloves of garlic finely minced or mashed

1 Tbsp toasted pine nuts, coarsley chopped

1 1/2 Tbsp oil from sundried tomatoes

Chill Brie well before handling. Remove rind from top and place on serving tray. Combine remaining ingredients and spread on top of Brie. Refrigerate until ready to serve. For optimum flavor allow to stand 30-60 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers.

Tomato mixture can be made the day before. (Amounts of each ingredient can vary depend on size of Brie and personal tastes.



Contributing Editor: Jane Capen

Co-Editors: Mary Ann Everett

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ANNOUNCING THE NEW BCMGA WEBSITE

The Bell County Master Gardener Association is pleased to announce that we have a new website currently online and available for use. The old website will be taken offline and will not be updated in the future. All BCMGA members are requested to use only the new website.

You will initially access the site by going to the Bell County Extension website <http://bell-co.tamu.edu/> and clicking on Bell County Master Gardeners on the list of links visible on the home page of Bell Extension. That link will take you to our new website. You may save the opening page of our new website as a “favorite” to find it easily in the future if you wish, or access it through the Extension site each time.

The new website has been constructed through a partnership with Texas Cooperative Extension and TX A&M University who will provide tech support. The site is managed through the Grovesite system <http://www.grovesite.com/> with unique tech support in College Station by an Extension Information Technology Specialist we may call at any time for support and who can provide reports on how often the site is viewed.

Two website managers have been named: Marge Croninger & Deborah Martin will work together to keep the website up to date with our fabulous Agent and Sponsor, Dirk, as backup and local support.

The newsletter will be uploaded each month as a pdf file for you to read online or to download. This method of newsletter transmission should allow all members to get the newsletter without download problems. Pdf files can be opened by any computer with Adobe Acrobat Reader no matter what your operating system, and take up less memory to store on the website or your own computer.

As time goes along we will update the site and add new material. Your input, suggestions, and comments are encouraged and solicited. Give us feedback as you use the site. We want you to like what you see so you will use the site frequently and participate in its content as it is your website and it should reflect the best of BCMGA. We look forward to the opportunity to provide a communication venue that is flexible, informative, and timely.