



# The Blooming Bell

October, 2011

BCMGA Newsletter

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1 Plant Sale!</b> <i>7:30am-1 pm</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 Work Day</b> 8-10 am <b>Hamburger Wednesday 11 am</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>General Meeting 11 am</b> <b>Poisonous Plants with Mary Ann Everett</b>	<b>13</b> <b>Deadline for Field Trip Fee for Home-stead farm</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Greenhouse Planning 9 am</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Board of Directors Meeting 9 am</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Home-stead Farm Field Trip starts at 10 am</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 					

Upcoming dates to remember: Whistle Stop Park Cleanup: November 30  
MG Christmas Party, December 1st

# The President's Corner

As the month of October approaches, I always think of apple trees and pumpkins. Pumpkins are a major crop in Texas. Apples on the other hand, are not. I always thought that good apples could not be grown in Texas. However, there are several places in Texas that now grow a large quantity of apples of varieties that like our Texas weather. A few varieties recommended are Jersey Mac, Adina and Gala. Visit Texas Agrilife for more recommended varieties. Enough apples are being grown in a few locations to offer apple picking and the activities that go with this fall event. Apple picking is a great family activity and especially fun with your children or grandchildren.

It is somewhat interesting that an orange squash plays a major role in what has become a big holiday. Pumpkins in all sizes and colors appear on porches and door steps. Instructions on pumpkin carving, pumpkin recipes and floral arrangements with pumpkins fill October issues of magazines. Then there is the annual rerun of Charlie Brown and his adoration of the great pumpkin. Pumpkins are the only plants that produce a fruit that causes such celebration. A pumpkin patch trip to select a pumpkin or pumpkins is a fall tradition for many families. All of these fall traditions and merrymaking would not go far without gardens and gardeners.

The Master Gardeners fall plant sale seems an appropriate event, since the symbol of the October holiday is dependent on a plant. By the time you read this issue of Blooming Bell we will have held our fall plant sale. Many hours have been spent in preparation. If our financial outcome is not as good as previous years, it will not be due to lack of effort. Our warm temperatures and lack of moisture may discourage some of our previous customers. Thanks to all of you that spent many hours in preparation and in working the plant sale.



The greenhouse committee met on Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. This was the most well attended meeting the committee has ever had. The condition of the greenhouse, the cost of heating the structure and lack of adequate personnel to care for plants on a proper schedule were discussed. The committee voted to remove the greenhouse and begin investigating alternative structures that will meet our future needs. Future plans will include a greenhouse, but on a smaller scale. The membership will also be asked to vote on the removal recommendation made by the greenhouse committee. This vote will take place at our next monthly meeting. If the membership agrees with the greenhouse committee, development of a long term plan and investigation of new structure/ structures will begin. Please plan to attend and cast your vote on this important issue.

The program for our October meeting is "Poisonous

Plants" presented by Mary Ann Everett. Most of us are familiar with poison ivy, oleanders and the stories that surround poinsettias, but there are many other poisonous plants that we are not as familiar with. This will be an interesting and informative program; I hope you plan to attend. We will also be making a field trip this month to Homestead Heritage. If you have not visited the Homestead, you will find this an enjoyable excursion. If you have visited the Homestead, your name is probably on the field trip list because you want to return. It is not too late to sign up.

If you find yourself in search of the Great Pumpkin this year, I hope it will be on a cool, moist evening. Happy hunting and happy gardening.....**Laura**

Photo by Terrie Hahn

# How do Trees Handle Drought?

- Gary Slanga

There have been many questions about how this drought is affecting trees. We see many trees with leaves that have started turning brown much earlier than is normal. The question that I hear the most is, "Are my trees going to die?" That is not an easy question to answer. So let's talk about how a tree deals with a drought.

The one element most important for tree life and health is water. During a drought, hardwood trees display many symptoms and have priorities for dealing with this lack of water. The first sign of stress from lack of water is wilting. This can be temporary, where the tree recovers over night and looks normal in the morning, or permanent, where the tree recovers only if water is added to the soil. Prolonged permanent wilting can, in extreme cases, kill a tree.

Other signs of water stress are curling leaves, which is an attempt by the tree to reduce water loss through evaporation at the leaf surface. Evaporation increases as temperature increases, so our 84 days of temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit did not help the situation. At the same time the pores (stomata) that allow water to escape through the leaf are closed. If the pores are closed carbon dioxide cannot get in and photosynthesis stops. The tree stops growing. Over a prolonged period this will kill a tree.

In technical terms a tree handles a lack of water in this order: awareness of a lack of water at the root zone, adjusting water flow through vascular tissue, closing leaf pores (stomata), producing more root tissue that can absorb water, using stored food while current food production stops, isolating damaged root areas, and finally dropping foliage.

Some trees will hold their brown leaves during the dry period. In these trees water is necessary to initiate the leaf shedding procedure. So after receiving some water it will shed its leaves. You can see where this



Elms on Terrie and Werner Hahn's property, dead or dormant?

might cause concern for a tree owner who thought watering would help his tree (and it will) only to see it lose all its brown leaves thereafter.

Although immediate effect of a drought on hardwood trees is easy to see, the long-range effects are less noticeable. Trees store food and prepare for the next growing season during the current growing season. Buds for next year are set this year.

Soil and location also help determine how a drought will affect your trees. If your trees are in bottomland they will have deeper roots and more moisture will be available to them. If you are in an area of high ridges with rocky soil, or in heavy clay, trees have shallower root systems and can be affected more by drought conditions. Trees in sandy soils will have deeper root systems. It is important to note however that the feeder roots most adapted to taking in moisture grow in the top 12-14 inches of the soil.

...continued on next page

## Drought...continued

In summary, drought stressed trees will show signs that might suggest the tree is dying. The root system is no longer capable of supplying sufficient water and the crown of the tree will begin to go dormant. In fact the entire tree may look like it has gone into dormancy. This is the tree's way of coping with the drought. So how can you tell if the tree has died from the drought or has gone into early dormancy? The Texas Forest Service suggests two simple tests. For the first test, collect some small twigs about 1/8th inch in diameter and try to break them. If they snap and appear dry and dead, your tree may have a problem. If they bend and are difficult to break, the tree may still be viable. Second, take a small twig or branch and scrape off some of the bark, if the tissue under the bark is moist and light green, the tree may still be alive. In either case, it is better to wait until spring, to see if the tree will respond with a new set of leaves before taking any drastic action.

The ability of a tree to respond to a new growing season in the spring is also dependent on the amount of

## Plant Sale Planning Fun

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Pat Maskunas and some of the members of the plant sale committee (Carla Harmon, BA McDevitt, Don Wyatt, Ray Machovsky, Wayne Baker, Johnny Herring, James Anderson) finalize details for the October 1st Fall Plant Sale.



winter rainfall. If the drought continues into the winter it is advisable to do supplemental watering of trees. The Texas Forest Service recommends watering trees every 10 days or a minimum of twice a month. Apply up to four inches of water or soak the soil to a depth of up to 6 inches at each watering. If you are using a sprinkler system, measure the amount of water by using a tall water glass or rain gage. A better method is to use a soaker hose or slow drip watering system to avoid run-off and wasted water. Watering at the tree drip-line, that is the edge of the canopy, is the most efficient area to apply the water. Use a small trowel to dig into the soil to test the depth of wet soil. During cooler weather or if there is rain, watering can be reduced.

How your trees respond in the spring will be the only true method of determining how they weathered this summer. For more information visit the Texas Forest Service at <http://txforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=1283>

## Christmas Party Planning Underway

- Mary Lew Quesinberry



These members of the Christmas Party Committee met before the September monthly to discuss decorations and caterers for the December 1st party. Seated members pictured are Janelle Burson, Linda Young, Mary Ann Everett, Carol Runyan. Standing members Dee Coffeen, Pat Maskunas, Beverly Chenoweth, Edie Campbell.

# Celebrating Two Loves

## - Darla Horner Menking

I had the wonderful opportunity this summer of celebrating my 30th wedding anniversary with my college sweetheart. My husband Butch and I have this system set up where one of us is responsible for planning the anniversary activity every other year. It also means every other year is a surprise.

This year was his year to plan. Since we had just gotten back from a trip to Italy in July, I reminded him not to plan anything big. He decided we'd celebrate on Sat., the 20th. We set out in the morning and headed south on Hwy 35. After breakfast in Georgetown we continued on to San Marcos, where we met in 1978, while attending Southwest Texas State Univ.

After some reminiscing, he drove me to a nursery there, Gardenville. I was thrilled, having never been there; and he was very patient as I looked around. He lugged all the plants I found to purchase, and we loaded up and took off. After a couple other minor stops, he headed into Austin. Before I knew where I was, he pulled into a huge nursery I'd never heard of- The Great Outdoors, located on S. Congress. I was in heaven! I looked and looked, found more plants (and succulents) and took tons of pictures as well. I had the best time.

We set off again and our next stop, The Natural Gardener! WOW, I couldn't believe how he had planned all of our activities around my love for plants. Of

course, I found some things there I couldn't live without.

Our day ended eating at California Pizza Kitchen and then heading back to Killeen. On the way home I thought about this day he planned for me. I got to celebrate my two loves: him, of course, for the wonderful person he is, and plants which get me outside and give me enjoyment and peace.

It was a wonderful day, and I'm already trying to decide what I'm going to do for him next year. I'm sure that it will, in some way, involve GOLF!



The Elephant is the official symbol at the Great Outdoors Nursery. They sell many different kinds and also have a six foot tall topiary elephant at the entrance.

# Clammy Weeds Rock!

- Terrie Hahn

I know back in the June issue of The Bell, I put some photos in of some Clammy Weed growing in my garden. I just wanted to add some info about this remarkable wildflower.

Seed for it blew into a rose bed a few years ago and I always let it grow since it was so unusual, even though it was pretty stinky. Last fall, I bought two four inch pots of Texas Bluebells from the Wildflower Center. They were rather pitiful looking, but I planted them and they proceeded to die, I thought. In the spring I found two Clammy Weeds coming up right where I planted the Bluebells. When the Clammy Weeds were about two feet tall, the Bluebells came up within an inch of the Clammy Weed stem. So I got two plants for the price of one! Or four plants for the price of two!

The Clammy Weed (*polanisia dodecandra*) is covered with glandular hairs which exude a sticky liquid, hence the name Clammy Weed. They got to be about 3 ½ feet tall and 3 feet wide.

You could smell them every time you walked past—a strange smell. They kept blooming up until about the beginning of September. The surprising thing about them was that the hummingbirds really liked the flowers. Every evening, they went from flower to flower. There was almost nothing else in my yard blooming at the time, so maybe they were desperate. I've read that the butterflies like Clammy Weed, but I only saw hummingbirds and insects visit them. Maybe it was too hot for butterflies. Several of their seeds blew over into a different bed and are now about a foot tall.

The flowers have a similar look to Cleomes like the Rocky Mountain Bee Plant also called Stinkweed. They can grow along roadsides or in alluvium alongside a river. In my yard, they came up where the soil was pretty good, but not great—it had been amended with some compost and was fairly loose and in full sun. I think the roots had gone far enough to reach where I was watering some annuals although I rarely watered the Clammy Weeds directly. They did get regular watering when first planted in October since I thought they were bluebell seedlings.

Clammy Weeds are found throughout a good part of the U.S. Lewis and Clark recorded them in their journal in South Dakota in 1804. The seeds are particularly enjoyed by ground birds.

I've gathered some seeds for anyone who would like to try out these unusual wildflowers. I would try sowing the seeds in the fall when other wildflower seeds are sown. Just hold your breath when you walk around them and wear gloves when handling so you don't end up wearing Eau de Clammy Weed perfume.



Do you see the Bluebells trying to peak out around the Clammy Weed?  
And the hummingbird above?

# Plants Swapped!

- Bernie Hurta

Thank you to everyone that brought plants and seeds to the Plant Swap in September. It was a good turn-out. Some of the plants swapped were several varieties of cacti, Iris, Ox-eyed Daisy, Zexmania, Blue/black Salvia and several more. Seeds were: Poppy flower, Larkspur, Red Yucca, Lindheimer morning glory, Hyacinth Vine, Mexican Buckeye, and more.



Photos by Gail Christian



Sophia Gomez, class of 2011, Bernie Hurta, class of 2007 and Ursula Nanna, class of 2002 have fun at the plant swap organized by Bernie and held before the September monthly meeting. - Mary Lew Quesinberry

Photo by Mary Lew Quesinberry





You are cordially invited to the

## Bell County Master Gardener Christmas Party

*SAVE THE DATE:* Mark your calendars for  
**December 1, 2011** for our Christmas Party.

**Location:** Expo Center, Belton

**Entertainment:**

Spirited and enthusiastic Christmas piano medley by Diane Calderwood and Margaret Leigh

**Slide show** of delightful Master Gardener's activities presented by Gail Christian

**Silent Auction-** Organized by our talented Ilene Miller--she asks that you watch the sales at the garden centers for items to donate

**Awards Program-**Organized by our hard working Gary Slanga

**Menu choices:**

Please choose ONE entree at registration

Sirloin tips with rice

OR

Smothered chicken with mashed potatoes

**Registration Deadline:** Nov. 18

Cost \$10.00 per person

Please make your reservations and payment to Kathy White in person or send your check to

Kathy White  
9008 Burgundy Lane  
Temple, TX 76504

# Baltimore Orioles

## Passing Through

- Carol Runyan

Several of us were overjoyed and intrigued by the visit of some Baltimore Orioles. The males were dressed in brilliant orange and black plumage while the females looked like they could have been gold finches on steroids, i.e. much larger than finches and pale in comparison to their male counterparts. Orioles are not seed eaters, but quickly drained the hummingbird feeders. I also put out orange halves and grapes which disappeared quickly. They also enjoyed clean drinking water and refreshing baths. They stayed exactly two weeks, arriving on September 7th and departing on 21st. I had at least 4 females and 3 males. They were in and out so frequently that it was hard to count. I hope they remember the good accommodations and will return in the spring.

I took this photo (top right) through my kitchen window, so it isn't as clear as I'd like.

Jerry Lewis had these visitors too-the bottom four photos were taken by him on September 16th.

*Editor's note:*  
According to **Basic Texas Birds** by Mark W. Lockwood, Baltimore Orioles pass through Texas from late August through mid-November and mid-March through mid-May.



# Announcements

## Help Wanted

### - Mary Lew Quesinberry

*Tip Of the Week* is in need of gardening articles. Your article can be about any gardening subject that interests you and that you would like to share with the public. Send your 300 word article to Candy Mullen [candylane@taptrain.com](mailto:candylane@taptrain.com)

## Wanted: Mentors for the Class of 2012

### - Peg Fleet

Autumn is finally here, with relief at least from those blistering temperatures, if not yet from that dryness. We take what we can get. I am convinced that time somehow speeds up during this part of the year, and January will be here sooner than we think. The Master Gardeners will have a class of new students, and the cycle will begin again.

My name is Peg Fleet. I am a happy graduate of the Master Gardener Class of 2011, and I am the Mentor Coordinator for the Class of 2012. I count my completion of the 2011 course as one of the best things I have done in my life. From the very first, I was impressed by the quality, detail and thoroughness involved in the planning for that course, as well as by the involvement of the Master Gardeners. The combined package was an amazing gift, one that I wanted to pass along. I volunteered for the New Class Committee, so here I am.

With orientation for the New Class scheduled for November 30th, it's not too soon to begin asking for mentors. Signup sheets will be available beginning with the October membership meeting so that you may choose dates that work best for you. I am hoping for a stampede of volunteers who are willing and able to share their time and skills, so that this class will be as rewarding an experience as the last one. For the next few months, I will provide you with updates to let you know how close we are to filling the list.

Thank you for your consideration. Think rain!

## Fall Field Trip

### - Bernie Hurta

We are going to Homestead Heritage in Elm Mott, Texas on **Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>**. The tour includes: Homestead Vegetable Gardening, Herb Gardening, Gristmill, Fiber Crafts, Pottery Shop, Woodworking Shop, and Blacksmith Shop. The tour starts at 10 a.m. and the cost is \$5.50 for seniors (over 50) and \$6.50 for those under 50. We will have lunch at the Café where they serve homemade food and then we will have a chance to shop. We will do carpooling assignments at the October 12th Monthly Meeting. Please sign up at the meeting or by email to [bhurta@gmail.com](mailto:bhurta@gmail.com) before October 13<sup>th</sup>. The money for the tour is also due by October 13<sup>th</sup>.

## FYI

### Autumn at the Arboretum

From September 17 - November 23, the Dallas Arboretum transforms into a beautiful fall wonderland. The grounds will be filled with 150,000 blooming fall flowers and foliage plantings plus more than 50,000 pumpkins, squash and gourds. Guests will discover displays featuring 45 varieties at unexpected locations – stacked near the entrance, lining the Paseo de Flores and marking the steps to the Women's Garden. While you're in Dallas take a look at:

### Texas Discovery Gardens, Dallas Fairgrounds

On November 5, 11 am - Noon, there will be a Butterfly House Discovery Tour. Go on a guided tour of the Butterfly House and get a behind the scenes look at these winged wonders. Admission (\$8/adults, \$6/seniors 60+, and \$4/children 3-11). Pay at door.

For more information and many other activities and events, check out [www.texasdiscoverygardens.org](http://www.texasdiscoverygardens.org)

# What's Happening in Your Yard?

This is my vote for the best hot weather bloomer!  
Bloomed in the hottest weather-Pride of Barbados.

- Margaret Leigh



This Woolly Pyramid Bush can be found in one of the north parking lot beds at the extension building. These beds are maintained by B.A. McDevitt.

- Mary Lew Quesinberry



Mary Ann Hill received this photo of "Summer Survivors" from her friend, Patricia Camp in Cameron who happens to be a Master Gardener there. Daturas maybe?

When the cactus show signs of drought, we are in trouble!  
Taken at Camp Tahuaya on September 17, 2011. - Jerry Lewis



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Cover Photo by Jerry Lewis

Banner Photo by Terrie Hahn

*Oops! In the September Blooming Bell, two photos of Diane Calderwood's Garlic Chives were mistakenly identified as Society Garlic.*

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