

The Blooming Bell

September 2007, Newsletter

Bell County Master Gardener Association

Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday, September 12, 2007 11:00 a.m.,
Coffee time @ 10:30**

Expo Center Special Events Room

*This month's speaker is
June Ritterbush*

On

Growing Grapes in Bell County

&

The Grape Man of Texas

President's Corner

In Minnesota, they say that if you go out on a warm, humid, summer night and be very quiet, you can hear the corn growing. I don't know if this is true, but I do know that, if you go by our greenhouse, you can almost hear the vegetables growing.

As I write this, we are on the threshold of our fall vegetable sale and seminars, which will have occurred on Saturday, the 25th of August. I hope that you all had an opportunity to help, purchase plants, or both.

Activity in the greenhouse has increased recently due to the change in temperatures. Summer has finally descended with a vengeance, catching both humans and plants off guard. Watering needs have increased dramatically. Because the high relative humidity, the heat has been very uncomfortable to work in, making our work less pleasant than usual.

I would like to thank to those who have braved the heat and humidity to ensure that our plants have been adequately watered during this time. It is this kind of dedication that guarantees great future public fundraising events.

Changes in Meeting Schedules:

You may not be aware of the changes in our meeting locations during the rest of 2007. The Extension Office is in the process of undergoing extensive remodeling. Because of this, the change in our schedule of meetings bears repeating.

Starting September 12, the monthly BCMGA meeting will be held at the Expo Center in the Special Events Room (this is the room that we have the Christmas Party). Remember to come at 10:30 a.m. if you want to have some time for socializing before the regular meeting starts at 11:00 a.m. This meeting will continue to occur on the second Wednesday of the month.

The monthly Greenhouse Committee will continue to be held on the third Wednesday of the month at 11:00 a.m. in the greenhouse. The monthly Board of Directors meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on the 4th Wednesday of each month, but it will be at the Special Events Room at the Expo. The Christmas Party will be held in it's usual location at the Expo Center. The New Class Orientation will be scheduled at the Expo Center.

Other meetings will have to be held either in the

greenhouse or else at someone's home. You will be notified of their time and location.

Greenhouse Standard Operating Procedures Manual

When I assumed the presidency in June of 2006, we had just experienced an almost complete turnover of greenhouse personnel. There was almost no written information from the previous greenhouse crews telling us when to do what and how to do it. Fortunately Lawrence Cox had most of that information locked in his brain - the result of his years of experience as a nurseryman.

Because of this experience, I became painfully aware of the need for documenting what we were doing in the greenhouse, month by month, and how we did it. I had encouraged the Greenhouse Committee to keep a "diary" of their activities for future greenhouse managers to use. My wish has been granted. The Greenhouse Production Coordinator, Annette Ensing, has produced just such a document. What she has accomplished goes way beyond my expectations of a "diary". She has looked at the greenhouse operation from every conceivable angle and has written a document that will be an invaluable guide to our greenhouse personnel for many years to come.

The Manual was presented to the Greenhouse Committee last week and evoked the immediate praise of the group. Annette will present it to the Board of Directors this week and I have no doubts that they will also embrace it as official.

Thank you, Annette, for your time, attention to detail, and your intuition - all of which have led to this Standard Operating Procedure Manual, which will guide the greenhouse crew for many years to come.

Art in the Greenhouse

Another presentation at the Greenhouse Committee meeting deserves comment. Crystal Fisher, our previous greenhouse Production Coordinator, had noted the drabness of the surroundings in the greenhouse, especially the dull olive color of the cabinet doors. She contemplated how the ongoing education of students and master gardeners in greenhouse techniques, such as watering, propagation, disease and pest identification, could be used to improve the ambiance of the greenhouse itself.

Her creative mind saw pictures that would illustrate some of these techniques and skills that we teach

routinely, painted on the cabinet doors. The paintings would make the information more readily available to the students, at the same time making the cabinets much more attractive.

Crystal presented her project to the Greenhouse Committee last week and everyone was favorably impressed with the project. She will paint a sample panel and obtain cost information, so that this project can be presented to the Board of Directors at the September meeting..

I want everyone to know that Crystal had entered a national contest earlier this year. She submitted a design for a logo that would be used nationally by the Master Gardener Association. There were 111 entries from all over the United States. While Crystal's entry was not chosen as "the logo", she made it all the way to the last cut. She will receive a certificate from the MGA honoring her for her effort. The BCMGA also thanks you, Crystal.

Service Hours, Education Hours, and Contacts

As you probably well know by this time, I have been busy trying to document the accuracy of the hours and contacts that you, our members, had submitted (or not) for the past fiscal year. I have been able to identify several generic problems. Thanks to the replies I have received, I have been able to help several members by correcting the number of annual hours originally sent to Pat in the Extension Office.

Although we have offered double service hours for work in the greenhouse or in the vegetable demonstration beds the past 2 summers, many of you thought that someone in the Extension Office or the Master Gardener Association would magically double the service hours that you submitted at those times. Do not expect anyone to do this for you. If you want double hours during these months for working in the greenhouse or the vegetable demonstration gardens, it is up to you to multiply your service hours by 2 before you submit them. Some of you have submitted more than one month of data on one form. This has caused confusion in adding up your annual hours. You only have to submit one form and one line with your monthly total. Also, do not add 'year to date' data on the forms. If you keep this information, keep it at home.

There has been frequent confusion as to what contacts are. They are not hours - but contacts. If you work at a yard on the yard tour and you are in contact with 75 people that visited that yard, you have made 75 contacts.

I am also amazed at the number of association members who have not supplied us with hours or dues 3 months after the annual deadline. Remember that they are due on the first of June each year.

*Gy Okeson
President BCMGA*

Manual designed by Annette Ensing for Greenhouse Procedures and Protocols



Annette Ensing, greenhouse production manager, has compiled a manual detailing the procedures for work and maintenance in the greenhouse.

Karla Tomaka Prepares for Veggie Sale



Karla Tomaka, greenhouse manager, organizes tables for August 25 veggie sale.

Tune into KTEM at 6:30a.m. Wednesday

Dirk Aaron, County Extension agent, is interviewed every Wednesday at 6:30am on KTEM 1400AM .

Dr. John and Jeanine Curtis

Ilene Miller has learned from Julia Curtis, daughter of MG's, John and Jeanine Curtis that they are homebound with health problems and would like cards, visits, 11271 Hartrick Bluff Rd. or calls (982-9807.

Greenhouse Landscape Improvements



Bob Gordon goes for a refill as he and Emily Butts, Jan Anderson, Mary Ann Everett, Mary Lew Quesinberry and Gary Slanga work to improve landscaping around the greenhouse.



Mary Ann Everett and Gary Slanga spread cedar mulch around the oak trees.

Help Need: Garden Tour and Christmas Party

We are in urgent need of gardens for the Fall Garden Tour. At this time, we need at least 3 more yards. Please consider showing your yard in the Master Gardener's Fall Glory Garden Tour. You can contact Sue Morgan (698-8668) txmorgan2@earthlink.net or Rae Schmuck (933-7765) rae616@earthlink.net Without your help we can not have a fall garden tour. Sue and Rae

Christmas party committee also needs 6 more volunteers to help plan the December 13th event. Contact Ilene Miller (254 778-4369) if you are able to assist her. Mark you calendars for the party

Handicap Demonstration Garden



“Hard Hat” crew workers, Charles and Gladys Newsom work on the ramp for the handicap tables which will be on the south end of the demonstration gardens. There will be tables accessible for adults and for children.

National Master Gardener Logo Design Contest Awards BCMGA Artists

Crystal Fisher and Rowena Fengel recently submitted designs for the National Master Gardener Logo design contest.

Crystal's design of a waving flag morphing into a spade made it all the way to the final four out of 111 entries from around the country.

Both Rowena and Crystal received frameable certificates acknowledging their participation in the contest. Congratulations ladies for promoting Master Gardening with your artistic abilities!

COLD CUCUMBER SOUP WITH CHERRY TOMATO CONFETTI

½ c. chopped fresh cilantro
¼ c. chopped onion
¼ c. fresh lime juice
¼ c. fat-free buttermilk
¼ c. reduced-fat sour cream
1 t. salt
½ t. freshly ground black pepper
5 cucumbers (about 2-1/2 pounds), peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded and coarsely chopped
1 jalapeno pepper, halved and seeded
1 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
Place first 9 ingredients in a food processor, process until smooth. Top with tomatoes.
Yield: 4 servings (1 cup soup and ¼ c. tomatoes)
Calories 74, fat 2.4 g.

From Kim Pringle in Cooking Light

Large Turnout for August 25 Sale



In spite of the August heat, many shoppers came to the August 25th vegetable sale. Karla Tomaka, greenhouse manager, reported \$2,233.00 was made that day. Karla said “thanks to all who helped grow the vegetables and prepared and worked on sale day”.



Karla Tomaka needs her hat as she totals up sales list for customers.

Gardeners Listen to MG Speakers



Neil Cochran, top left, Gy Okeson, top right and Rowena Fengel, left, speak to audiences gathered under the oak trees at the August 25 vegetable sale. Topics included Fall Gardening, Worm Composting and Bug Bingo.

Jane Capen’s Article in *Texas Gardener*

The September/October issue of *Texas Gardener* has an article, “The Back Porch Garden” ,written by Jane Capen, a BCMGA freelance writer. Jane frequently contributes to *The Blooming Bell*.

Cool August Patio of Bill and Barbara Beebe



Bell County Teachers Receive Training for Junior Master Program

Thirteen teachers began training July 24 to achieve Master Gardener/JMG intern training, which enabled them to begin JMG programs in their schools. They



received 40 hours of intense training in all aspects of gardening with lectures by many BCMGA members. The classes were presented in ways that children would enjoy, including

“Fruit Toss”, pictured above.

Graduates of MG/JMG



September Program by June Ritterbush

The BCMGA will meet Sept. 12 for a program on “Growing Grapes in Texas” and “The Grape Man of Texas”, presented by Jane Ritterbush, president of the Salado Garden Club. She and her husband, Sheldon Vickers, own the Salado Wine Cellar. Joyce Pack will do the opening and introduction. The meeting will be held at 11:00 at the Expo Center Special Events room. Coffee and visiting time will be at 10:30.

Rowena Fengel, '07, Receives Rainwater Harvesting Specialist Certification

Rowena Fengel completed training in July at Hood County as a rainwater harvesting specialist. The class made birdbath/wildlife waterers. Rowena will teach a workshop to BCMGA on making these. Look for a notification later for this class.



Bush Morning Glory in the garden of 2007 BCMG Bernadette Hutka. The plant was purchased at the Fall 2006 plant sale.

**BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
ARE SPONSORED BY THE
TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF
TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY**

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