



# *The Blooming Bell*

**September 2010  
BCMGA Newsletter**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1 Work Day 8 am</b> <b>Hamburger Wed.</b> <b>Herb Study Group</b> <b>Meeting 8:45 am</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8 Work Day 8 am</b> <b>Monthly MG Meeting</b> <b>11 am</b> <b>Arthur Johnson, Park</b> <b>Ranger speaks on</b> <b>Miller Springs flora</b> <b>and fauna</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15 Work Day 8 am</b> <b>Greenhouse</b> <b>Committee Meeting</b> <b>9 am</b> <b>Grounds Committee</b> <b>Meeting 10 am</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <b>Fall</b> <b>Garden</b> <b>Tour</b> <b>9 am -</b> <b>4 pm</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20 Garden</b> <b>Tour</b> <b>volunteers</b> <b>tour and</b> <b>lunch</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22 Work Day 8 am</b> <b>Board of</b> <b>Directors</b> <b>Meeting 9 am</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Plant Sale</b> <b>Seminar *</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Plant</b> <b>Sale *</b> <b>Seminars</b> <b>2:00 pm</b> <b>4:00 pm</b> <b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Fall Plant</b> <b>Sale</b>  <b>Seminars *</b> <b>9:00 am</b> <b>10:00 am</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		

**Important upcoming dates:      Fall Plant Swap - October 13th, 10 am**

**\* See page seven for Seminar Topics**

**Banner photo by Ron Bird of [www.freedigitalphotos.net](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net)**



# The President's Corner

## Back to School Time

Remember the days when we started school on the Tuesday after Labor Day? You can be sure that the students of today wish that policy was still in effect! I made the mistake of driving down South 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the first day of school, not realizing that there is an elementary school on that street. Had I been in the inside lane, it would have taken hours to navigate the school zone.

September is the time for going to school. So we Master Gardeners are going to step right up. We will have seminars on Thursday night, Friday afternoon and evening and Saturday morning on September 23rd, 24th and 25th. These seminars are free and open to the public. Of course the plant sale is on the 25th, and I hope you will sign up to work before and during the sale. The previous Saturday (Sept. 18) we will have our fall garden tour. Please support our efforts by helping those who have agreed to show their gardens to the public. To all of you.....thank you!!!

Our seminar on August 10th was well attended. Forty two people were present as David and I discussed "Fall Gardening in Central Texas." Every seat in the classroom was taken and I saw one man sitting on a table. Apparently the public is hungry for the information we can provide. I hope we will continue to provide programs for the people of Bell County.

By the way, I attended a seminar in Austin on August 7th, as preparation for our seminar. The Master Gardeners there got the City of Austin to provide some "goodies" to give away.....things like a water gauge to audit the sprinkler system and water hose repair kits. Considering that the population of Travis County is several times larger than Bell County, the turn out in Austin wasn't as large as ours.

September is also the time to appreciate the change in the weather. We won't have to worry about a frost any time soon, but maybe we can get a little relief from the 100 degree days of August.

Happy Gardening! - Mel Myers



## Unexpected Visitor Cooling His Feet

I heard a huge raucous from Blue Jays outside the door the other day. I assumed they were dive bombing my cats, but lo and behold, look at what I saw sitting in my birdbath not 20 feet from the door! This hawk sat there on that very hot day cooling his feet for 10 minutes with the Jays squawking at him and two squirrels frozen on the tree. He then took off with the blue jays right behind him. I'm hoping he doesn't make a habit of this since one of my cats likes to lie around on the nearby bench!

- Terrie Hahn

# Compost Tea

## Submitted by David Fitch

Whether or not you are knowledgeable or experienced in composting, you can enjoy the benefits of Compost Tea. That is, of course, after you make some. This article will help you to do just that. This is a fairly simple and inexpensive process that will yield substantial benefits to you and your plants.

First let us take a moment to learn exactly what those benefits are to you and to your plants. Compost tea helps to restore the beneficial microbes to your soil. This process, if done correctly will multiply the beneficial bacteria in your starter compost by a factor of 1,000. Doing so protects your plants by improving nutrient uptake. The improved health and vitality of the microbial life in your soil will also improve your soil tilth. Hence you will have more attractive and more productive plants, which is the benefit to you.

## The Tea Pot

All of the components are readily available and affordable at your local Wal-Mart store or for that matter, at any pet store. The list of components is:

1 - Plastic Bucket – preferably a 5 gallon bucket

1 - Air Pump –one with dual outlets

Airstones

2- five inch

2 - one inch

2 - Plastic T's

1 - package Aquarium Tubing

1 - Paint Strainer bag – available in the paint department – you can substitute panty hose if you like.

Cut the tubing into 2 pieces approximately 30 inches and 4 pieces of approximately 9 inches. Connect each of the two long pieces to each port on the air pump. Insert a T into each piece of tubing. Attach the shorter pieces to each of the Ts. Then attach the

5 inch Airstones to one set of tubes and the 1 inch Airstones to the other set of tubes.

## The Process

Fill the strainer bag with one to one and a half pounds of compost. That is about the size of a large cantaloupe. If you do not have compost you can buy some at any lawn and garden center or feed store. What you don't use to make tea you can spread in your planting areas. Next, insert the two 1 inch Airstones into the bag with the compost. Place the 5 inch Airstones in the bucket with 4 gallons of water. Treated tap water is not so good because of the chlorine used in the treatment. Try using some rainwater or pond water. Place 1 tablespoon (no more and no less) of molasses (you can substitute honey but molasses is better) into the water. Suspend the tea bag into the water. You will need some sort of stick or pipe across the top of the bucket. The bag needs to be suspended in the water, not sitting on the bottom. Turn on the air pump and let it run for 6 to 8 hours. Then, remove the tea bag from the water. Remove the 1 inch Airstones from the bag and place in the water. You will notice the water now has a brown frothy head on it with a sweet yeasty smell. As enticing as it may appear, do not drink from the bucket. Let the pump run for 16 to 18 hours. Turn off the air pump. Pour the tea into a sprinkler can and sprinkle the tea on your planting area, directly onto the soil. Use the tea immediately after it is made. It begins to break down quickly if left in the water solution. Clean all of the equipment after each batch with a solution of hydrogen peroxide (1 part peroxide to 5 parts water).

Happy Gardening!

# Savory Tomatoes Slow-Roasted with Herbs from My Garden

By **Connie Watts**

I wondered what to do with the tomatoes that are ripening faster than we can eat them. I saw a posting on Facebook called "Homegrown.org". One of their bloggers, Brea Crumbly, had written about the same issue. She recommended roasting the tomatoes in a slow oven with fresh herbs, garlic and olive oil. I eagerly read the blog and I began having visions of savory, succulent tomatoes, full of flavor, roasted and put up in vacuum pack freezer bags for use this winter.

I had two baskets of ripe tomatoes on my counter. There were grape tomatoes, beef steak tomatoes, patio tomatoes, and a few small slicing tomatoes waiting for my use. I trimmed several sprigs of leaves from a nice, large oregano plant and a bedraggled, heat-damaged, but surviving sweet basil plant in my self-watering herb pots and took them inside to be washed and coarsely chopped. I ended up with about ½ cup of chopped herbs. I mixed about 3 tablespoons of olive oil with the herbs and turned to the tomatoes.

I cut the grape tomatoes and smaller round tomatoes in half and the larger tomatoes into quarters or smaller so the pieces were about a ½ inch or a little thicker. The tomato pieces were put into the bowl with the oil and herbs and stirred lightly to coat them. I laid the tomatoes on a sheet of aluminum foil in a single layer in a shallow cake pan with the skin side down. I put the smallest pieces together in the pan so I could take them out of the pan easily without disturbing the larger pieces of tomato which I expected to take longer to roast. I sprinkled them with garlic powder. The blogger recommended minced fresh garlic or whole cloves of

garlic in their skins placed among the tomato pieces. I didn't have any fresh garlic and in the end I think the garlic powder was just fine.

The oven was set for 225 degrees. I put the pan in the oven and set the timer for an hour. The blogger said it would take 3 to 6 hours to roast the tomatoes. The idea is to brown the outsides and slowly roast the pieces until they are caramelized and still slightly moist on the inside. I checked the oven every hour for the first 2 hours and then a half hour later. The grape tomatoes were not quite done. They were still watery on the inside. I checked them a half hour later and some of them were crisp. They tasted good but were definitely overcooked. The thicker grape tomatoes were done to perfection. I removed them from the pan and continued to roast the large tomato pieces. None of the grape tomatoes were left on the plate by the time the rest of the tomatoes were cooked.

I continued to check the oven every half hour and decided the large pieces were done after roasting for 4 hours. I let them cool and decided to wrap them and keep them in the fridge for a salad. The next batch will be frozen in the baking pan so they don't stick together and then vacuum packed with my Food Saver and frozen for use later this winter.

The roasted tomatoes have a sweet/savory/herb tomato flavor that melts in your mouth. They would be delicious on toasted bread, with crackers and cheese, bagel and cream cheese, pizza, pasta, cooked shell beans, or chopped in a salad. They are also delicious by themselves as a snack. They are hard to leave alone if they are out where you can see them.

I think I can roast other vegetables besides tomatoes - peppers of all kinds and maybe some of the other vegetables in my garden. I might try a slow roasting batch of vegetables on the gas barbecue grill outside in the hot weather to keep from heating up the kitchen. I would put them in the grill on a very low setting on a pan covered with aluminum foil. I have so many ideas, thanks to the Homegrown.org Facebook posting and the blog written by Brea Crumbly called "Preserving in Small Batches – Roasted Tomatoes."



Photo by Suat Eman of [www.freedigitalphotos.net](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net)



## *What's happening in your garden?*

Clockwise from top, Annette Ensing's orange cosmos. She bought the seed from Judy Barrett, planted some the first year and none came up. Her granddaughter planted this seed in a pot last March and she now has a 6 foot monster. It's 4-5 feet wide with dark green foliage, not as fine as the regular cosmos. It is a very attractive plant, with most of the branches thick and upright. She hopes to harvest seed and share; below it is the Hahn's Oleander; Dee Coffeen's Bottle Tree garden area; Hahn's Garlic Chives.







Cartoon by Crystal Fisher

## Upcoming Events...

### Fall Plant Sale and Seminars

Submitted by David Fitch

In case you have not already heard, the Fall Plant Sale is scheduled for September 25th. As in years past we will need a strong member turnout to support the event. Not just to show up and buy plants but also to help with the unloading, stocking, labeling, pricing and selling. There will be a signup sheet at Burger Wednesday on Sept 1st and another at the general membership meeting on the 7th.

This year we are expanding the event to include seven free seminars for the general public as well as for the members. The classes will be; Trees and Perennials, Culinary Herbs, Rainwater Harvesting, Herb Garden Tour, Composting, Roses and Butterfly Gardening.

In addition to all this, we are going to offer a program on Saturday morning for children. Kids Kamp will offer some hands-on learning experiences for children. They will be able to take home one of their experiments.

With strong support and some favorable weather we should have a great event!

### Fun Service Hours with Fall Garden Tour

Submitted by Beth Buhl

The Fall 2010 Garden Tour is coming up fast! It will be on September 18 from 9 am to 4 pm. This year's tour combines neighborhood and country gardens, as well as the demonstration gardens at the Extension Office and at the Killeen Municipal Court.

We will need volunteers to help get these gardens ready for the tour, as well as helpers at each garden on the day of the tour. The gardens are those of Louann Hight, Diane Calderwood, Mary Ann Everett, Gy and Violet Okeson, and Ursula Nanna.

Please contact me by email at [bill4beth@embarqmail.com](mailto:bill4beth@embarqmail.com) or by phone at 254-986-2658. This is a great way to accumulate your service hours in addition to the fun of working with other Master Gardeners. All those who volunteer on the day of the tour are invited to tour all of the gardens and have lunch together on Monday, Sept 20.

## Fall Plant Swap

**Submitted by Bernie Hurta**

A Fall Plant Swap will be held at 10 am, October 13th, prior to the October Association meeting. If you have potted perennials, potted houseplants, bulbs, tubers, or seeds you would like to swap, this will be a great time to do so. Please label them and deliver them by 9:30 am on that Wednesday, October 13th. If you have any questions, contact Bernie Hurta at [bhurta@gmail.com](mailto:bhurta@gmail.com).

## Thank you!

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the food during the JMG training. It was definitely a group effort and I think everyone enjoyed the items you cooked and donated. Thanks for helping me during my 1st time to do this. I had a lot of fun. Ya'll are awesome! - **Darla Menking**



## Announcements...

### Seed donations needed

**Submitted by Laura Murphy**

My husband has a special request of our group. He will be going to Haiti in October to help with rebuilding. One of the requests from the group he is going with is to bring Vegetable seeds to give out to the locals for planting. These seeds will help them rebuild their crops and gardens in order to feed their families. This would be a great opportunity for our group to pull together our resources and donate to those who need.

If you have vegetable seeds that you would like to donate, please bring them to one of the September meetings (September 8th at 11 am or 22nd at 9 am) at the Extension Office. Or you can email Laura to arrange a drop off. Her email is

[lwmurphy@embarqmail.com](mailto:lwmurphy@embarqmail.com) or her phone number is 254-947-0601.

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## Wanted:

Person to make copies of The Blooming Bell and mail them to members without access to internet.

### Qualifications:

Must be able to put stamp on envelope.

Must be able to press copier button on copy machine.

Must be a Master Gardener.

Hours: flexible

Pay: none

Benefits: thanks from members receiving copies and from Jan Anderson who has done this for 4 years

Contact: Jan Anderson, 939-7370

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## Fall Field Trip

**Submitted by Mary Ann Everett**

Ellison's Nursery at Brenham will be hosting The 20th Annual Poinsettia Celebration, November 20 & 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cost is \$4 which goes to local charities. There will be over 8,000 poinsettias. I hear it is really beautiful. If interested in this field trip, please let me know by email, [pma4514@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pma4514@sbcglobal.net).

Stay tuned for another trip to Fort Hood this fall. I will let you know when plans are finalized.



## ***For Your Information:***

### **4th Central Texas Gardeners Conference “Urban Farming-the Ultimate Backyard Experience”**

**Saturday, October 9, 2010 8:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.  
1400 Schertz Pkwy, Building 5, Schertz Civic Center  
Schertz, Texas**

Urban farming, edible landscapes, whatever you call it, is “growing” in popularity; converts flock to talks and demonstrations given by Agri-Life Extension and Master Gardeners!

Now it's your turn, join us for an educational fun filled day learning about the concept of Urban Farming from the microbes in the soil to the fruit, flowers and vegetables perfect for your home grown edible landscapes.

Our esteemed speakers are: Dr. Larry Stein, Dr. Diane Boellstorff, Dr. David Reed and Dr. Joe Novak. Please note: 6 CEU credits will be granted to Certified Master Gardeners for attending!

In addition to our educational talks, vendors will offer books, plants, fruit trees, and goodies for your gardening pleasure. Visit our educational displays on honey bees, backyard poultry, beneficial nematodes, compost tea and more!

Registration is \$45 and includes lunch.

Please go to [www.tcmastergardeners.org](http://www.tcmastergardeners.org) for more information. September 20th is the deadline for registration.



The Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter is hosting a Wildscapes Workshop: Better Basics: Backyards, Birds & Butterflies on Saturday, September 11 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The fee is \$35.00 if you're not a member of the NPSOT and includes lunch. This workshop includes a tour of three local gardens, educational programs, silent auction, plant sale, book sale and raffle.

For more information, contact Lyn Sample at 830-889-1331 or go to [www.npsot.org/fredericksburg/wildscapes](http://www.npsot.org/fredericksburg/wildscapes)

Illustration by Charles Bell reprinted from the Travis County Master Gardener's Website



## Herb Group Meets Again September 1

The Herb Study Group will meet on Wednesday, September 1st at 9 a.m. Anyone who would like to help clean up the herb beds in preparation for the Garden Tour, please come at 8 a.m. The topic for September's meeting will be Lemon and Lime herbs. Future topics to be announced.

Anyone wishing to facilitate a future meeting, please contact Kim Pringle with your idea at [kimberpringle@earthlink.net](mailto:kimberpringle@earthlink.net).

There are quite a few opportunities for volunteer hours coming up including answering questions from people touring the herb demo beds at the Extension Center during the Garden Tour on the 25th and help with herb seminar and demo bed tour on Friday, the 17th in conjunction with the Fall Plant Sale. And, of course, help with selling the herbs at the Plant Sale.

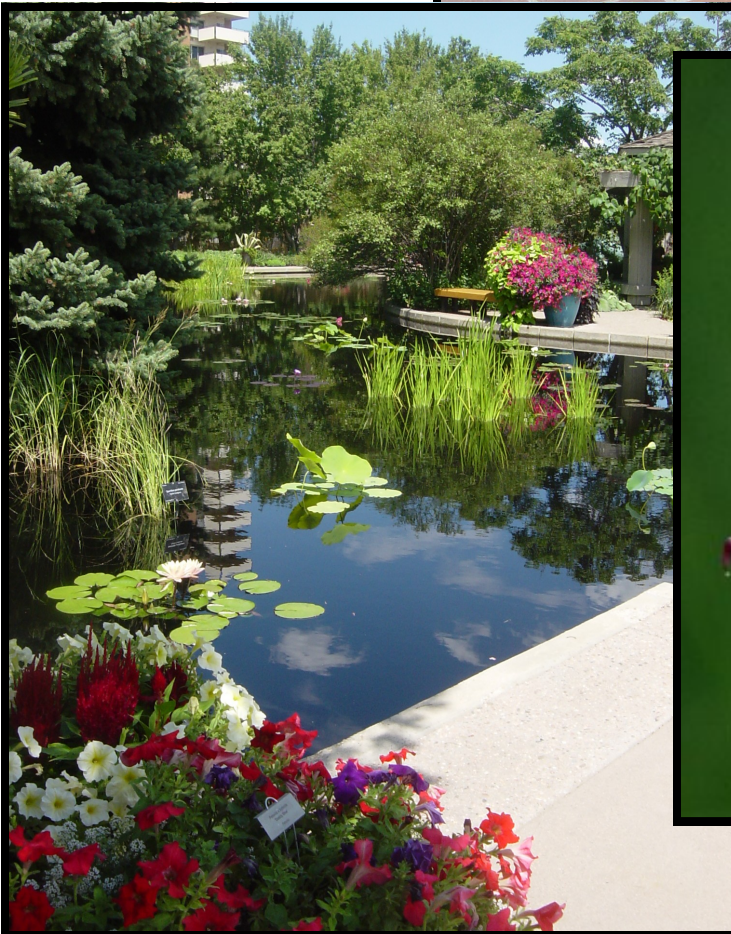
## Vacation Garden Photos...



Photo of parsley, fennel and basil border at Denver Botanical Gardens in August- Terrie Hahn

Bottom left photo from Denver Botanical Gardens- Terrie Hahn

Bottom right is a photo of Pink Elephant (*Pedicularis groenlandica*) taken in the San Juan Mountains outside Ouray, Colorado. The Quesinberrys vacationed there in July and took around 200 photos. There were acres of beautiful alpine wildflowers. - Mary Lou Quesinberry





## ***Pictures***

I'd like to do another spread of vacation garden photos and another spread of what's going on in your garden in the coming months. If anyone has any to share, please send them by email or snail mail to me at the address on the bottom of this page. Or if anyone has an article they'd like to write pertaining to MG's, or information to pass along, please send it along. Thank you.

- Terrie Hahn

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**Cover Photo: Dragonfly in Diane Calderwood's garden**

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