

Bell County Master Gardener
Tip of the Week
By Mary Lew Quesinberry
“Yellow Butterfly Vine”

Every time I admire my Yellow Butterfly Vine I am reminded of my visit to the International-Festival Institute in Round Top. It has a 200-acre campus with a concert hall, museum, historical homes, chapel, and gardens. Mainly known for its music festivals, it is worth a trip there to enjoy the McAshan Herb Gardens. These extensive gardens are called the McAshan Herb Gardens after Houston benefactors Maurice and Gwen McAshan.

The late Madalene Hill created the gardens in 1994 with plants from her Hilltop Herb Farm. Hill and daughter, Gwen Barkley, authored *Southern Herb Growing*. Together they have given many presentations on growing and cooking with herbs. Although there are gardens all over the campus, the most special is one is at the residence of Madalen Hill. Her Festival Hill Garden showcases a Mediterranean Garden built with raised beds, stones and decomposed granite. This garden features lavender, rosemary, salvia and other plants suited for dry, arid conditions. It is near a folly built from construction rubble and resembles ancient ruins. There is a Pharmacy Garden containing medicinal plants grown around the world.

Here you will see the Beethoven's Wood, a Sun-Shade Garden, a Terrace Garden, and a Bottle Tree Garden. Near the rear of the wall garden is where I discovered the Yellow Butterfly Vine. It was growing on a wire support near a building used for plant propagation. This vine is so cheerful with its brilliant yellow blooms. This is an easy to grow evergreen vine. It is covered in blooms most of the time. It is a moderate grower, reaching to ten feet. Keeping it as a pot plant restricts its growth and you will have a bushy, blooming plant. I have placed my butterfly vine in a bed planted with bulbine, basil, sedum, and lamb's ear.

The blooms produce seedpods that dry into the shape of a butterfly.

Temple artist, Crystal Fisher, paints them, and then they look like the real Butterflies! Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact

ask.bcmga@gmail.com



Photo #1 The seedpods of the Yellow Butterfly Vine dry into the form of a butterfly. This butterfly was painted by Temple artist Crystal Fisher.



Photo #2 The Yellow Butterfly Vine is an evergreen, small vine with cheerful clusters of yellow blooms. The resulting seedpods resemble Butterflies.