



The Blooming Bell

Bell County Master Gardeners Association

May 2006, Newsletter

**There will be No Monthly Meeting in May due to the
Installation/Graduation Party, May 17th, 2006**

11:30 a.m.

Bell County Expo Center

COMMENTS FROM YOUR COORDINATOR

By: Dirk Aaron – CEA Bell County

Change is inevitable, hard, emotional, yet can be positive if we keep everything in prospective.

Bell County Master Gardeners are under change as we speak, with a New Board of Directors and New Leadership at the helm by Guy Okeson.

I firmly believe that in the past week during the observance of National Volunteer Week (April 23-29), we must stop and reflect on the good things accomplished by such a great organization, as the Bell County Master Gardeners and the things you have accomplished over the past ten years.

We will be graduating a great class of students on May 17, 2006 at the Bell County Expo Center in Belton. This will be the tenth class since the very first group went through in 1997.

Ten years in the making has provided (just this year) more than 15,000 hours of volunteer service and efforts for the citizens of Bell County.

Each of you volunteers are worth \$17.72 per hour, thus, your organization has given in 2005 \$265,800.00 of your time to the educational needs of our community.

WOW, what a great contribution to a very large and diverse population.

Please support your elected leadership in this new transition time. Provide them ideas and options to improve your organization.

Remember the great words of Erma Bombeck
“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this Nation’s compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one other.

CONTRATULATIONS to our New Graduates.

PLANT YOUR GARDEN TODAY

Plant your garden today.
First, plant 3 rows of peas;
Patience, Promptness, Prayer

Next Plant 3 rows of squash;
Squash gossip, Squash indifference, Squash Criticism

Then, plant 3 rows of lettuce;
Let us be Loyal, Let us be true to our Obligations, Let us be unselfish

Finish with 4 rows of turnip;
Turn up when Needed, Turn up with a Smile, Turn up with a Vision, Turn up with Determination

Author unknown



EVENTS SCHEDULE

- Belton Greenhouse Workdays,
Wed. & Thurs., 9 am, Belton
- Burger Wednesday, 1st Wednesday
- Salado Garden Tour, May 5th & 6th
- Greenhouse Committee Meeting,
May 10th , at 11:00 a.m.
- Temple College Garden Tour,
May 11th, 9:00 a.m.
- Graduation Class of '06, May 17th

- Fall Vegetable Sale 8-10am, Aug 5th
- Fall Garden Tour, Oct 14, 2006
- Fall Seminar & Plant Sale,
9am-3pm, Oct 21, 2006

BCMGA DUES

Annual Membership Dues are due by June 1st, 2006. The statements have been mailed and you should be receiving it from the treasurer, Jan Anderson. If you do not receive one by May 10th, please contact Jan at 939-7370.



Seniors Recycling

Laverne Adams has been conducting a gardening class with 14 senior citizen students down at Sammons Park. The first week they talked about using proper soil for planting in containers. Laverne brought seeds she had saved, so referred to them as "recycled seeds". They further recycled newspapers (which are biodegradable) by making their own containers. The pattern they used is printed below. The second week they learned about propagation. Laverne also shared

the formula for washing pots, explaining the reason behind it and again about recycling. She even took some plants she wanted to rid from her yard, to use as cuttings. The third week she plans to help them plant Begonias into pots at the Senior Center to beautify it, and then host a field trip to her garden. What fun! Way to go Laverne. You are making a difference in your community!

2006 BCMG Class

Graduation

Come congratulate and celebrate with the new class of graduating Master Gardeners! The festivities will be held in the upstairs room of the Expo Center May 17th beginning at 11:30, lunch is at 12:00 and Graduation and Installation of Officers follows. Lunch is being catered by Classic Catering and the cost is \$10 per person. Please send your check to Jan Anderson, Treasurer, by Friday May 12th. Her address is 3114 River Place Drive, Belton, TX 76513. *This is also the monthly association meeting.*

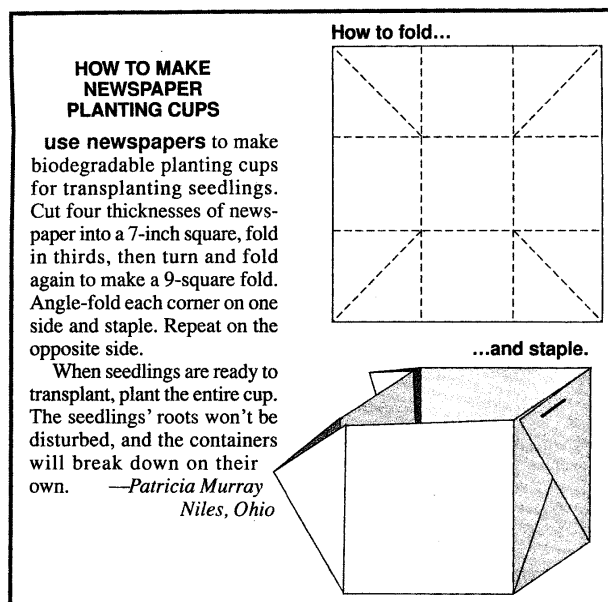
New Class/Mentor

Committee Responsibilities

Believe it or not, but June is the month that the New Class/Mentor Committee forms and begins work for the next year! As June is fast approaching I thought it would be beneficial to print the new class committee responsibilities. Please consider earning your required hours through one of these opportunities!

All members assist in Xeroxing and filing appropriate handouts, homework and homework answer materials by class date.

The Committee Chairman Responsible for calling committee meetings and ensuring that all committee activities are completed on time. The committee chair should also be the person who contacts speakers and schedules when they are to present their class. He/she



should also get copies of handouts that the speakers want to use and a short autobiography if one is not already in the mentor handbook for that person. Speakers should be contacted the month before their class is to be presented to ensure that their audio-visual requirements are known in advance. The committee chair should also update the Board of Directors monthly on progress of the committee.

Field Trip Planner

This person should contact the places to be visited and make arrangements at all locations, to include the Brazos River Authority. Person should also schedule the bus transportation and go on all bus trips to ensure they run smoothly. There may be a need for a backup person; more than one individual should know all the bus/trip information.

Mentor Coordinator

Responsible to schedule mentor volunteers and to train them. The coordinator needs to coordinate closely with the class Mom and/or Dad, preferably should be one of them. Mentor coordinator ensures that the mentors are contacted the week prior to remind them of their commitment. Also should update the Mentor Handbook with mentor instructions and provide copies to all mentor volunteers. Copy of book and computer disk with documents provided.

Administrative Person

Someone who schedules the classroom and is in charge of getting letters sent out to students. He/she should know the status of the class, and if more people need to be recruited to fill the class. This person should also be responsible for producing a roster, file folders, and name tags for the new class. Should be the person who coordinates with the Extension staff. This person should be the one who keeps track of the budget. If name tags, stamps, books, or landscape kits need to be purchased he/she should coordinate with the Treasurer.

Class Mom and/or Dad

Should attend all committee meetings and assist committee as requested by chairman. Attend all classes and field trips. Assist new students as needed in understanding of hours requirements. Introduce speakers and help keep classes running smoothly. The interface between the association and the new class. Keep track of student volunteer hours. Monitor class attendance and homework submission of class members as collected by mentors.

Temple College Garden Tour

Thursday, May 11th, at 9:00 a.m. there will be a tour of Temple College. We will meet at the Student Union. Wear comfortable shoes. Temple College is a treasure within our own backyards! Reid Lewis is the horticulturist for the college and he has been planting away with many natives. The nursing building has many curative plants in the bed close to it. It will be a most interesting tour, and you will be amazed at what is in store for you on this walk. Be prepared to be dazzled at the wealth of knowledge that only Reid can impart. You will not be sorry you came. Hope to see you there! If you have not signed the sheet to come on this tour, please email me at pma4514@sbcglobal.net

Driving Directions:

To get to the student union building, coming from the loop, cross over the viaduct, proceed North on 5th St. Turn right at the first entrance into the college; follow the street around, the Student Union building is the second building on your left as you turn the corner. You may proceed directly to the large parking lot at the South end of the campus, which you can see if you come over the viaduct.
Submitted by Mary Ann Everett

Salado Garden Tour

Yolanda Mares has the list for all working the Salado Garden Tour with the times and gardens they will work. The tour is May 5th from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and May 6th, from Noon until 4:00 p.m. If

you have any questions, e-mail her at:
ymares@earthlink.net



Plant each seed about ¼" into loose soil, a foot apart. Keep moist until they sprout (this will take about 7-10 days, provided the soil gets warm enough). Plant in full sun, against a trellis, fence or other structure that they can cling to. They will grow on anything (provided it is sturdy), even the ground. It is best however, to train them up on something so when the gourds begin to grow they will not rot on the ground (you can place straw under them and turn them, but it is easier to grow them vertically). I grow mine up a trellis that connects to a slatted patio cover, so I have gourds hanging down from the patio cover, but this keeps the blooms from within reach of deer, who really like to eat the blooms! Give them plenty of water. You do not need to fertilize them. **When the vine reaches about 4 feet tall you will need to cut the vine off beneath a leaf node.** This will force the vine to begin to grow lateral vines, which produces the blooms, which, when fertilized by the bees, will produce the gourds! If you don't do this, the main stem

will just grow long, not producing blooms (or gourds). As they grow they will become quite heavy (like a melon). Let them stay on the vine (even when the vines look dead) until you harvest them at the end of the growing season (about September/October). Then you'll need to place them in a dry area (like an attic or garage) until they cure (as they dry they will become light and you'll hear the seeds rattle inside when you shake them). This will take at least 3-4 months, depending on the temperature where they are placed to cure (that's why an attic is so good, especially here in Texas). After they have cured, soak them in a solution of 1 part bleach, 3 parts water for about ½ hour, then scrape off the mold that has formed with steel wool, or any type of scrubbie that works well for you. Then you are ready to make birdhouses, bird feeders, bowls, lamps, or craft them into snowmen, santa's, indians, angels, the possibilities are endless! There are lots of craft books with patterns and ideas. Growing them, curing them and crafting them is a lengthy process, but a lot of fun! It is also a great little fundraiser. The cost of the raw materials is practically nothing. Give them as gifts, or sell them in craft shows. *Submitted by Jeanne Richard*



Out is In ... Garden Rooms

A garden is the place for lying in the grass, swinging, growing flowers, playing with the kids and dog. But there is another way of being outdoors and its needs are not met by the garden at all. A garden room fills the void. A place to eat, to sit, to talk together, to be still, and yet connect with the outdoors.

Personal preferences for architecture and decorating styles vary, but four elements can be considered essential in every garden room.

- Intimate spaces
- Natural materials
- Comfort
- Character

Intimate spaces

The name ‘garden room’ suggests a cozy feeling despite the room’s purpose. Relaxation and renewal are key here. Treat it as such. This is the place to blur the boundaries between outdoors and in. Select a room where you can let the sights and sounds of nature flow through. Birds singing, the sounds of water, rustling leaves and the muffled sounds of neighborhood children playing all add to a feeling of familiarity.

Use texture, curves and irregular or organic lines, materials that age well and improve with the years. Seating areas that cocoon. Dining areas that invite interaction. Variable lighting that sets mood. Luxurious fabrics that comfort. Colors that excite and calm. Form a place to gather, ponder or create; alone or together.



Repetition creates harmony. Feel free to create a room that is different from the others, but use a color palate that compliments the rest of the home. Accessorize to fit your mood. Have two or more furniture groupings in the room, the more intimate the better. To paraphrase Virginia Woolf, everyone needs a room of their own, a place where they can think their thoughts in comfort. Expand on this philosophy, a place where they can *share* their thoughts in comfort.

Natural materials

Natural materials work by allowing and enhancing so many different styles. In country settings, where homespun materials tie together the indoors and out, the natural look makes perfect sense. These same materials are elegantly understated in traditional period

rooms, while fresh and positive in more contemporary surroundings. Natural decorating seamlessly blends chic and country, period and modern, exotic and commonplace.

Learn from nature and its character. Respond by changing displays and furnishings to reflect the seasons to keep interiors fresh in the garden room and throughout the home.

The color of your garden room is up to you.

White is an easy way to tie furnishings together and create a background where accent colors shine. Warm shades of white are welcoming. Blue-tinted cool whites can end up looking antiseptic and unfriendly. Green is a garden's neutral. Whether chartreuse, emerald, forest, khaki or lime, layering greens make any garden, indoors or out, come alive.

Comfort

Loosely determine how you’ll use of the room. Versatility will follow. Your needs today will not be the same a few years from now. Tastes and purpose change. Regardless of the style, in reality, what you’re trying to achieve is a sense of timelessness and charm. For 2006, one predominant theme influencing the landscape of interior design is an interest in decorating using earthly tones and homey, comfortable looks. Abundance with thought. More than anything else, abundance is a sense of well being. It doesn’t mean simply having a lot or having more. One way to achieve a sense of abundance and well-being is by shedding what is no longer needed or desired; letting go of that which is no longer useful to our purpose. Position yourself to receive the newly acquired and more desirable. Organized meaningful ‘clutter’ is enjoyable and comforting.

Develop a room – don’t instantly decorate. Thoughtfully fill the room with happiness. Fabrics, colors and accessories will invite, motivate and calm.

Character

Take advantage of the opportunity to reflect your personality with utter abandon. Keeping similar textures and colors found throughout the home will bring continuity. Adding memorabilia will show your individuality. A room of this type brings the most pleasure when developed over time. Decorate passionately. Little touches as you go along will bring the greatest satisfaction. Express yourself honestly and intimately. A garden room, in particular, should tell of the character, interests and spirit of the people who live there. Follow your intuition and your heart.

Designer Alexandra Stoddard calls for ‘creative puttering’. Straighten up, move around and make the room feel spontaneous. She encourages a blending of simplicity, appropriateness and beauty into a home as a natural extension of your personality.

And make the most of the one element sure to make your space more pleasant ... guests!

A recent visit to a dear neighbor allowed us to revel on her garden rooms. One is a charming book-filled room open to the rafters, a ‘barn-let’. Its purpose? A craft room. A reading room. A reflecting room. The other is a work in progress. A deck turned pergola turned railed porch turned screened porch. Its purpose? A family room. A dining room. A relaxing room. Both rooms make you forget about the rest of the house. I asked what she enjoys most about her rooms. Her eyes twinkled when she answered, ‘Life is short, I make memories here.

Resources:

Natural Decorating, by Elizabeth Wilhide and Joanna Copestick

Decorating Style, by Kitty Bartholomew

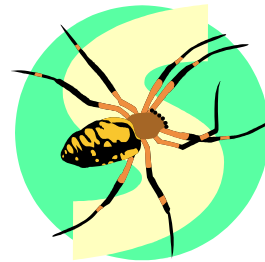
Creating a Beautiful Home, by Alexandra Stoddard

Submitted by Susan Firth



Mix modern style and old world charm!

Brown Recluse Spiders



Summertime is approaching & cleanup is going on. Be careful where you put your hands and your feet! Brown recluse spiders like dark spaces & woodpiles--also cooler areas such as in sheds, attics, basements and under rocks. Spider bites can have permanent and highly negative consequences. When bitten by a brown recluse spider, the affected skin actually dies. It is the most dangerous spider that we have in the USA. Its bite can be fatal. So be aware while digging around in storage sheds and in your garden. They like the darkness and tend to live in storage sheds, attics, or other areas that might not be frequented by people or light. If you have a need to be in a dark storage space, turn on a light or open the door and let sun light hit the area for about 30 minutes before you go in and start digging around.

Submitted by Carol Holcombe

E-mail Changes

Jane Capen Janebc@hughes.net

Sandy Street Sandystreet@clearwire.net

Texas Master Gardener website.

TMGA has 2 domains

<http://www.texasmastergardeners.com/>
and <http://www.texasmastergardeners.org/>

These 2 domains mirror each other so you automatically see the same information regardless of which site you visit. Our hosting company recently moved the TMGA domains to a new server. As a result, the mirror effect is currently not working so you may see different information on each site. When I update the web only the .ORG site is updating. I have refreshed a lot of information on the .org site in an effort to make sure everything is current. However, let me know if you see anything that needs attention.

Bottom line without going into a lot of technical detail, use only

<http://www.texasmastergardeners.org> . I feel very confident that this site is working properly and that it contains up to date information.

I hope that this problem will be corrected in the near future. However, I recommend that you always use the **.ORG** site

Doug Richards

Webmaster TMGA

<http://www.texasmastergardeners.org>
dougrichards@peoplepc.com

Special Topics & Speakers

Do you have a special topic or speaker you'd like to submit for an association meeting? If you know a name and phone number, please pass this along to Mary Ann Everett at pma4514@sbcglobal.net. She is preparing the speaker schedule for the upcoming year.

Greenhouse News

Greenhouse Reorganization

The greenhouse committee meeting on April 19th focused on restructuring greenhouse leadership responsibilities into smaller areas of responsibility in an effort to share the wealth of knowledge and expertise of our members and to lessen the burden of responsibility on any individual member. The new structure is still evolving, but will include positions for an overall Greenhouse Manager, Greenhouse Production Manager, Hardhat Crew, various plant specialists and more. If you would like to participate in the shaping of the new greenhouse organization put your suggestions in writing and attend the next Greenhouse Committee meeting on May 10th at 11:00 am. The date of this meeting has been changed to the second Wednesday of the month, due to the new class graduation on May 17th.

Submitted by Karla Tomaka



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TURN IN YOUR HOURS NOW!
to Pat Pomykal – CE office

**MAKE SURE ALL HOURS ARE
ON THE NEW FORM**