

TheBloomingBell

Bell County Master Gardeners Association

October 2006, Newsletter



Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, October 11th, 2006 11:00 a.m.

Bell County Extension Office

BCMGA Events Schedule

Wed. & Thurs., 7 am, Belton

- Belton Greenhouse Workdays,
- Burger Wednesday, 1st Wednesday

- Herb Study Mtg, Oct 11th – 8:25 a.m.
- **Christmas Committee Meeting**, Oct 11th, immediately following regular meeting
- Fall Garden Tour, Oct 14, 2006
- Fall Seminar & Plant Sale, 8am-1pm, Oct 21, 2006

Greenhouse News

Would someone like to volunteer to help us in the greenhouse to greet everyone who comes in to work? They can help direct the volunteers and assist in guiding that day's efforts. This would allow me some more time to focus on planning in some other areas. You'd really be a big help. The greenhouse is really coming along so well. We are developing a very cohesive group and all our work is beginning to show.

Contact Crystal Fisher

THANK YOU GINGER JONES!

The Greenhouse Management team wants to thank Ginger Jones for taking on the first volunteer position as Greeter this past Wednesday. Her presence helped to direct volunteers as she also benefited from learning some additional aspects of how the greenhouse works. We welcome anyone interested in that position for a morning.

Greenhouse Management Team

Favorite Website!

I have really been enjoying it and learning so much from it. Try it, but allow yourself a lot of time. “cityofaustin.org/watercon/edfault.htm” click on---outdoor programs click on green gardening then program then grow green scroll down to brown part and click on plant guide, in Landscape plants scroll down to common name search, select, submit, click detail and enjoy.

Submitted by Laverne Adams

“Burger Wednesday” Recipe Request

KING RANCH CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

One bag of frozen chicken breast tenders
One large package of fresh chicken thighs
One can of chicken soup
One can of golden mushroom soup
One can cream of celery soup
One large can of green chili enchilada sauce
One can diced green chili peppers
1 tbsp cumin
2 cups fresh cilantro
2 celery stalks
Flour tortillas (10) pack
Corn tortillas
Olive oil spray
Two packs Monterey Jack grated cheese
One large aluminum baking dish

Combine chicken, cumin, cilantro, celery in a large pot and boil until done, let cool. Combine all soups, enchilada sauce and peppers together in a large bowl and mix well. (Add any additional peppers here) Clean the casserole dish and dry it. Then lightly spray with olive oil spray. Now Line the dish with FLOUR tortillas up the sides of the dish. With that finished, you can add first level of chicken. Cover the entire dish with a mixture of white and dark chicken. (Hint: Cook the chicken the day before you combine the casserole. It is easier to cut and handle.) After you have covered the dish with chicken now cover the chicken with the soup mixture. Sprinkle this layer lightly with cheese and left over cilantro. Now cover this with corn tortillas and repeat. On the top layer tear the corn tortillas into strips for easier spooning. Bake for one hour at 375° Just before serving cover the entire casserole with remaining cheese. Melt and serve. This will serve a large group. Total cost is between 20 and 25 dollars.

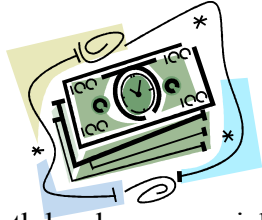
Submitted by Neil Cochran

Mark Your Calendars!

The annual BCMGA Christmas Party is set for Wednesday, December 13th, 2006. Be thinking about your contribution to the Silent Auction!

President's Corner

Money Makes the World Go Around



This last month has been especially interesting to me. As you probably already know, Violet and I took the rainwater harvesting specialty course last June, given by Mr. Billy Kniffen at Menard, Texas. This experience peaked our interest in water as a national resource and taught us some of the ways we can best conserve this precious commodity.

In late August and early September, Violet and I were privileged to visit two areas of our country, where water is even more precious than here in Central Texas - New Mexico and Nevada. We learned some interesting things that I would like to share with you. I will say at the start that we - and by we I mean especially those living in the Hill Country and West Texas - are more advanced in our thinking about water conservation than either of those areas where I thought water conservation would be a top priority and very sophisticated. The first trip was to Santa Fe, New Mexico. I was looking forward to seeing in person what Santa Fe was doing in this regard. I knew that Santa Fe had passed an ordinance making it mandatory for every new structure over 2500 square feet in area to have rainwater collection. I was sure that I would see homes with unique above and/or below ground collection systems to conserve this natural resource. At the time we visited there, it was raining almost every day. This had caused flooding in Albuquerque and Hatch, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. It seemed to be an ideal time to see their systems in action. After driving about the city, my enthusiasm turned to dismay. I saw no significant outward evidence of rainwater harvesting. When I inquired of the natives about the city ordinance mandating collection, I was informed that this only referred to rainwater diversion to minimize erosion. Then I saw it. In areas where every-

thing was paved, most of the roofs drained directly onto the street. The only downspouts that I saw directed water into the storm sewers. In that area of the world, water tends to run off rather than soaking in. The obvious purpose of the ordinance was to save the city money by minimizing erosion damage due to water runoff - it had little to do with water conservation.

Well, so much for learning about water conservation in Santa Fe. My next trip was to Las Vegas, Nevada. As you all know, two things made it possible for Las Vegas to grow and thrive in the high desert - the Hoover Dam across the Colorado River and its reservoir, Lake Mead. The lake provided abundant water and the dam provided abundant, cheap electricity. In the beginning Las Vegas was a small, sleepy desert town. This is no longer the case. Especially the last three decades have been marked by excessive growth fostered by the climate, but made possible by the abundant water and electricity. This is obvious in the size and gaudiness of the hotel-casinos (now called resorts), and an unprecedented increase in population, all on land that, even without a current 8 year drought, was never meant to support that many people or that much decadence. On the Las Vegas strip, water flows as if there will be no tomorrow. Almost every hotel has fountains and/or waterfalls, and/or rainforest areas. There is a replica of the Grand Canal in Venice in the second story of the Venetian Hotel. Every 30 minutes through the afternoon and evening, the Bellagio Hotel has a dancing water fountain display emanating from a man-made lake that is at least as long and wide as a football field. Hundreds of water jets sway, shooting water as high as the top floor of the hotel. Even Lake Mead itself is not posh enough for the affluent Las Vegas clientele. They have made their own artificial lake, Lake Las Vegas, between the city and Lake Mead, surrounded by green golf courses.

At least Sodom and Gomorrah had the Dead Sea in which to disappear. Poor Las Vegas, landlocked as she is, can only turn into a pillar of salt. Yes, like the springs of West Texas, Lake Mead is drying up. The Las Vegas natives like

to talk about an "underground river" that sustains them, but that is also drying up. If the water level in Lake Mead gets too low, the cheap electricity may also dry up - but no one I spoke to seemed concerned about this. What is their solution to their problem? The first step is **Money Makes the World Go Round, Contd.** conservation; strict regulations are imposed upon the citizens of Las Vegas, but not upon the largest abusers - the strip casino-resorts and their tourists (who are bringing in the dollars). Las Vegas has what they call the "water police". I was told that, if they catch you washing your car in your driveway (or on the street), you are fined \$200 the first time. The second offense is \$400 and the third is near \$1000. They are allowed to water their yards 4 minutes 4 times a day, 3 days a week. More also results in fines. The second step is to pipe in more water. While I was there, one of the local news channels aired a story about how the South Nevada Water Authority was suing the North Nevada Water Authority for their water rights. If successful, they planned to construct a \$3 billion pipeline from a mountain valley in Elko County in northeast Nevada. This valley has well water that is used to irrigate crops and raise cattle. The farmers have been fighting this takeover for some years, stating that if their water is diverted to Las Vegas, they might as well close up shop and quit. There is not enough water for both places. Of course, Las Vegas feels that the water is mandatory because of all the people living there! If they don't get the water, maybe some of the people will have to go somewhere else (which wouldn't be all that bad). I have read about how, in the future, wars may be fought over water rights rather than oil rights. Is this the start? How about the desires of San Antonio on the Belton Reservoir? I might feel some compassion for Las Vegas were it not for the fact that they allow the strip to continue to go unbridled as if there were no shortage. What did I learn from this? Although 2/3 of our planet is covered by water, for those of us who live on land, it is our most vital resource. We all need to learn to harvest our rainwater, store it, and use it wisely, just as our ancestors did. By

the time you read this, our Association will have adopted a plan to add a homeowner rainwater collection demonstration attached to our greenhouse. Ursula Nanna and D.J. Campbell have just concluded a demonstration, installing a home rainwater collection system at Ursula's home in Killeen. November 8th, we will have displays at the upcoming Expo Seminars on rainwater harvesting. Our Speakers Bureau is anxious to go out to evangelize the community on this important topic, and the new interns will have an afternoon of training by our specialists in their spring classes. If any of you wish to talk to me about this important topic, or if you need help in designing a home system, feel free to let me know. Our Rainwater Harvesters are ready to help.

Gy Okeson
President BCMGA

Membership Handbooks

A special thanks to Maureen Montgomery for getting the new 2006-2007 membership handbooks published. Many of you have picked your copy up at the monthly meeting. Those of you who have not received your copy, they are in the cabinet in the meeting room. Of course there will constantly be changes. Please notify Jan Anderson, treasurer, when you have an update to make. ***Please make the following additions/changes to your handbook.***

Add:

Larry Robison
410 Robison Drive, Harker Heights, Tx 76548
254-698-1133 LWROBISON1@aol.com

Robin Noel
8714 CR 1255, Lampasas, Tx 76550
512-556-4068 tallgrasstx@yahoo.com

Thanks. Let me know how I can do better.

Jan Andersen

ACE HARDWARE HERB EVENT

Congrats to Kim Pringle and the Herb table ladies for the good job they did at the Ace

Hardware event this past Thursday. There was a good turnout by the public. They were asked to do another program on "Decorating with Herbs" again at Ace Hardware in November. Why not spend a few minutes and turn out in support of that group? Help to kick off the holiday! I'm sure that more information will follow about it. We need to support our group's activities when we can. Thanks also to Linda Young for having arranged it.

Submitted by Crystal Fisher

FALL GARDEN TOUR



Bell County Master Gardeners are busy manicuring their gardens for their third annual fall garden tour. Each garden is distinctively different. One is high on a cliff with a panoramic view of Lake Belton; another has a large Koi pond, a pet Tortoise and beautiful roses. One garden is hidden in the woods, preserving the native plants already growing there. You will see water features, interesting garden architecture and xeriscaping with lots of berms, grasses and native plants. Please come and visit our gardens on October 14th. The hours are 9 am to 4 pm. Eight gardens are participating in the Master Gardener tour. In Temple the gardens of Ilene and Michael Miller on Olympia Drive, Ginger and Alan Jones on Marlandwood Road, Jane and Charles Capen on Poison Oak Road and Mary Lew and David Quesinberry on Lake Whitney Drive are featured. Belton gardens on the tour are Louise Oldham on Terra Alta Drive and Deanna Rankin on Eagle Point Main. Ursula Nanna on Woodlawn Drive, Harker Heights and Cassandra Phillips on Colorado Drive, Killeen will welcome visitors to their gardens. Sue Morgan and Rae Schmuck are co-chairwomen of the event. Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Schmuck will distribute brochures detailing the gardens and directions to each garden to area nurseries. A fee of five dollars will be charged. Money collected from the tour will be used to fund

Master Gardener greenhouse projects.

Submitted by Mary Lew Quesinberry



FALL PLANT SALE

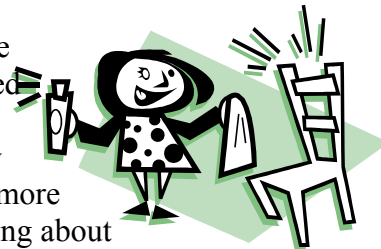
Crystal Fisher, Production/Sales Manager for the Bell County Master Gardeners Association, has announced a fall plant and herb sale and seminar. Crystal and her crew have been busy repotting plants with an improved soil mixture consisting of soil, sand, fertilizer and copperas resulting in healthy, happy plants. The sale will offer a wide variety of plants.

Texas Vitex, Desert Willow, Oaks, Roses, Herbs, Texas native perennials, tropical and plants adapted for Texas will be available. Also, plan to attend the seminar on Oak Wilt. The event will be held at the Master Gardener Greenhouse located at 1605 North Main, Belton, Texas on October 21st, 8 am to 1 pm. Contact Bell County Extension Office, 254- 933-53-5 or Crystal Fisher, 254-899-9900

Submitted by Mary Lew Quesinberry

Dusting A house becomes a home when you can write "I love you" on the furniture. I can't tell you how many countless hours that I have spent CLEANING! I used to spend at least 8 hours every weekend making sure things were just perfect -- "in case someone came over." Then I realized one day that no-one came over; they were all out living life and having fun!

Now, when people visit, I find no need to explain the "condition" of my home. They are more interested in hearing about the things I've been doing while I was away living life and having fun. If you haven't



figured this out yet, please heed this advice. Life is short. Enjoy it! Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better to paint a picture or write a letter, bake a cake or **plant a seed**, ponder the difference between want and need? Dust if you must, but there's not much time, with rivers to swim and mountains to climb, music to hear and books to read, friends to cherish and life to lead. Dust if you must, but the worlds out there with the sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair, a flutter of snow, a shower of rain. This day will not come around again. Dust if you must, but bear in mind, old age will come and it's not kind. And when you go -- and go you must -- you, yourself will make more dust! It's not what you gather, but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived.

Submitted by Jeanne Richard

August BCMGA Board Mtg. Minutes

VP Mary Ann Everett ran the meeting in Gy Okeson's absence. Minutes of July meeting were approved and the 9 Aug. called meeting regarding the budget were approved as corrected. Also, at the Aug. 9th monthly meeting, the BCMGA by-laws changes were put before the members. Motion by Ursula Nanna and 2nd by Deb Martin to accept the changes. Motion passed by raising of hands.

Jan Anderson read the treasurer's report stating that as of July 31st we had \$12,022.83 in the bank. The budget is a work in process, and we're looking at about \$4,400.00 in capital expenses which will include wrought iron fencing and a new gate at the greenhouse.

Lawrence Cox gave the greenhouse report stating that they are working on making the vegetable demo gardens handicap accessible. The vegetable sale went well but we need to look at the timing of it. Possibly combine the Aug. & Oct. sales to Sept.

Mary Ann presented the Yard Tour committee report stating there will be 8 people

volunteering their yards. They are; Jane Capen, Deanna Rankin, Mary Lew Quesinberry, Ginger Jones, Ursula Nanna, Ilene Miller, Cassandra Phillips and Louise Oldham.

We need to decide the mechanism to specify Blooming Bell by snail or e-mail. There will be a form in the next newsletter to this end. Deb Martin will also put it on our website. We are also in need of an active webmaster for our site.

D.J. Campbell requests a fan for the greenhouse to be put in the louvre overhead at the cost of \$200.00. Motion carried to accomplish this. Two for one service hours at the greenhouse will be in place through October, 2006.

Dirk Aaron reminded the group of the plant sale 21 Oct with seminars. The Home & Garden show will be Feb. 24 & 25, 2007. We voted to We will have an "Ask a Master Gardener" table.

Recording Secretary, Marty Portmann

Volunteer Needed: Database Manager

With today's business being conducted so easily through electronic mail, it makes a world of sense that we consider doing the same and taking the Greenhouse to the next level of success. So, we have begun collecting e-mail addresses for our own database. We need someone who is computer savvy to give us a hand in setting this up for our email distribution of invitations to our Yard Tours, Plant Sales, Herb events, Seminars, etc. Maybe you are physically unable to come into the greenhouse for your hours. Why not give a thought to volunteering for this position. Marge Croninger has been great in delivering all the communications for our MG's. However, she feels that this new database might be something better taken on by someone else. Marge will be glad to give you some assistance about how she does it.

Mary Lew Quesinberry has been taking photos of the yards which will be featured in the **Yard Tour** on October 14th. I'm planning to use

those photos to send out as teasers in hopes of getting more people to attend. It would probably be 2-3 e-mails to go out... depending upon how many houses are highlighted in each note. Another upcoming "e-mail out" would be regarding our Fall Plant Sale on October 21st. That should be only one e-mail. At this point, it's a relatively small database... with hopes of growing it up. So, why not collect your hours handling this? Get in touch with me in the greenhouse and let's put our heads together. I'll help you in any way that I can. There may be an outside chance of another Herb event in November at Ace Hardware. We sure could use your help and get your hours at the same time!

Submitted by Crystal Fisher - Greenhouse

*The old Imperial measure of
one acre originated from
the area of land that could be
plowed by a pair of oxen in a day.*



The BCMGA "Blooming Bell" Newsletter will be sent out via e-mail. The October, 2006 Issue of the *Blooming Bell will be the last issue mailed out by regular mail.* Effective November 1, 2006 it will be sent out each month via e-mail. If you would like to continue receiving it by regular mail, please fill out the information requested below and mail it to;

Mary Lew Quesinberry
C/O The Bell County Extension Agency,
1605 N. Main Street, Belton, TX 76513

***I WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE IT BY
REGULAR MAIL***

Name: _____

Physical
Address: _____

If we do not hear from you, the Blooming Bell will be sent to you via your most current e-mail address.

RESCUED BY JOAN HINSHAW

Recently, our MG's participated in locating a patient who had wandered off from the Scott & White Clinic while awaiting a ride home from another MG. We sprang into action and dropped everything which averted a potential disaster. Thank you Joan for your doggedness in pursuing your search to find this lady. As Joan said herself: *"All I could think of was my parents and what I would want for them. I am a firm believer in "what goes around comes around."*

If ever you lose a family member or even a dog, you know how relieved you are when someone takes it to heart to not give up the search. A big thumbs up to Joan!

Submitted by Crystal Fisher



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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY
1605 N. MAIN ST, BELTON, TEXAS 76513
254-933-5305**

Newsletter Staff

Reporting & Production:

Jean Kitchens
(254) 771-2942
Jeankitchens1@aol.com

Laverne Adams
(254) 791-3808
L16Adams@sbcglobal.com

Jane Capen
(254) 939-3835
Janec1@clearwire.net

Editor
Jeanne Richard
(254) 931-7228
Jeannerichard@hughes.net

