



The Blooming Bell

January, 2012

BCMGA Newsletter

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January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Work Day 9 am Grounds Committee Meeting First day of class for 2012 MG Class	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Work Day 9 am General Meeting <i>Early start time</i> 10:30 am, Social at 10 am	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Board of Directors meeting 9 am	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming dates to remember: New Class Field Trip, April 18th
 March General Meeting on March 21st instead of March 14th.

"2012" Illustration by Kookkai_nak from freedigitalphotos.net

The President's Corner

Happy New Year Master Gardeners! I hope you all had a joyous holiday. I traveled during the holidays and was truly joyful when I returned home and found that we had received 4 inches of rain. Could there be a better gift after the dry year we have suffered? While traveling the southern hemisphere, I visited a town known as the city of roses, but it wasn't Tyler. I saw fields of blue lupines, but it wasn't Central Texas. Hydrangeas, Roses, Oleander, Poppies, Day Lilies, Crepe Myrtles, Lantanas and other familiar blossoms were numerous and many plants were blooming that we seldom see locally. Seeing new flowers is always fun, but recognizing familiar favorites is even better. No matter where you travel, the world loves flowers and appreciates their beauty and the pleasure they bring.

With flowers on my mind, I was pleased to find numerous plant and seed catalogues in my mail. Knowing that we have finally had some moisture, I am ready to begin my spring garden. There are a few items to attend to this month in your garden. The garden magazines are reminding us to clean up our tools and prepare our garden plans. Planting cool season vegetables, woody plants and trees, and early spring annuals, such as pansies, are also on the list.

After you have finished your gardening tasks, make time to attend our January meeting. Tomato grafting is the topic. Also, our new students

will have started classes and you will have the opportunity to meet a few and welcome them into our membership.

The Home and Garden Show is on the horizon. Please lend a hand during this annual February event. Signup sheets will be available at the monthly meeting. We have an interesting year ahead of us with many events on the calendar. Please make a New Year's Resolution to attend our monthly meetings and enjoy the educational opportunities and company of your fellow gardeners.

- Laura



Photo from Google images: walworthseelyprograms.blogspot.com

Norfolk Island Pine

- Jann Dworsky

When I was a kid I loved decorating Mama's Norfolk Island Pine for Christmas so,

last year when I tried to buy one I received a lesson in futility. There were none to be found! They were everywhere before Christmas and I thought I would wait until the holidays calmed down to buy a new large plant. So much for logic. After Christmas I could not find one anywhere!

This year I was not going to let my opportunity escape and bought a lovely three foot tall Norfolk Island Pine sapling a few weeks before Thanksgiving. They were not slipping away from me this year. My husband helped me wag it home safely and it is resting comfortably by 3 large living room windows. It will get about 2 hours of early morning sun and then bright light the remainder of the day.

These charming trees do come from Norfolk Island, as you would have guessed, and I was surprised to learn that this island is located between New Caledonia and New Zealand. I had always imagined Norfolk Island to be in eastern Canada, and I was a mere 8,000 miles off. Florida.com tells us that this little island, only 3 by 5 miles long, was first inhabited by descendants of mutineers from the H.M.S. Bounty. It is a lovely sub-tropical island and the seamen chose wisely.

On Norfolk Island, in full sun, they sometimes reach 200 feet tall and have 15 pound pine cones! We are able to keep ours indoors and small for years because this imitates the environment of their native forest floor, where saplings sprout, have low light and grow very slowly for many years.

Norfolk Island Pine, or *araucaria heterophylla* is not a true pine, but a southern hemisphere conifer. It is hardy in the USA only in California and the southern tip of Florida (Zone 11). It should be kept indoors in Central Texas at a temperature between 45 degrees

and 90 degrees. Keep your conifer in a pot that drains well, with a tray under it and water it thoroughly every week. Temperatures out of this range, or standing in water causes terminal leaf death and they do not re-sprout.

These little trees have become very popular as live indoor Christmas trees and tiny ornaments or bows do not damage the limbs. The University of Florida (Poole, Osborne and Chase) advises to put the tree by a window with full sun for a strong trunk and light

to medium green color, but a plant grown in shade will have a weaker trunk and gracefully drooping dark green foliage. Your location choice will determine its growth patterns.

According to Steve Nix's website (forestry.about.com) some lower branches may turn brown and need to be removed as the pine grows, otherwise any other pruning will cause death of that tip or branch with no new regrowth. They only require mild fertilization every few months and like to be kept root bound. Repotting is necessary only every 3-4 years.



Once you have chosen a good bright location for your Norfolk Island Pine you will have a small tree that needs little care and provides a beautiful living addition to your home. Merry Christmas and enjoy!

Photo from www.metaefficient.com

Working the Whistle Stop

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Bernard McDevitt and Ursula Nanna recondition the bridge at Whistle Stop Park. BCMGA has adopted the Whistle Stop Park. Kathy White organizes a crew several times a year to pick up trash and inspect the playground and perform minor repairs.

November's crew included Bernard and Ursula, Kathy, Mel Myers, Ray Machovsky, Jann Dworsky, Mary Lew Quesinberry, Mary Ann Everett, Gail Christian, Karen Colwick and Sidney VanLoh. The sand box was reconditioned with fresh sand, trash and leaves picked up, wood structures conditioned and the train was repainted.

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Photos by Gail Christian and Mary Lew Quesinberry.

Working the Whistle Stop...continued



Tree Labeling at the Whistle Stop

- Kathy White

Laura Murphy and I met with the City of Temple's Tree Advisory Board to ask if there was a way to identify/label some of the trees in the park and discussed different options available. I was informed recently the Tree Board has decided to act on our suggestion of labeling the trees. I don't know what method of labeling has been decided on, but they wanted to know if the Master Gardeners would be willing to help with the labeling. This will in-

volve several of the parks in the city of Temple, not just Whistle Stop Park.. This will be an excellent opportunity to get some volunteer hours. I will keep everyone updated as I receive more information.



Photos by Gail Christian and Mary Lew Quesinberry.

WISE GIFTS HAVE MEANING

By Darla Horner Menking

During this CHRISTmas season, gift-giving seems to be first and foremost, regardless of a person's beliefs or convictions. Friends, co-workers, and families make up those who are the recipients of our choices and selections. Even total strangers benefit from our generosity, whether it is the coins we put in a kettle, a toy donated to a local charity, or needed items shipped overseas to a soldier or a child in an impoverished, developing country.

No matter whom the receiver, wise gifts- those with meaning and purpose- are definitely best. Recently, I pondered some special gifts given to a perfect stranger over 2,000 years ago. I wanted to look into their meaning, being somewhat unfamiliar with them, as well as delve into the wisdom behind the gift choices. I am speaking of the "wise" gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Gold, the most understood of the three gifts, was definitely given with the inspired understanding of who this stranger, yet a child, was to be- a King. But the next two gifts, considered herbs, are a bit more puzzling until a more in-depth study was done.

Frankincense, seldom heard of in this country, was quite an extraordinary, yet well-thought out



Flowers and branches of the *Boswellia sacra* tree.

gift. Though a resin extracted from the *Boswellia* tree, growing on the Arabian peninsula, it has a specific meaning and purpose for its beneficiary. Hebrew for "white," frankincense symbolized purity, and was burned as aromatic incense. It is thought to have wound-healing properties, relieve pain and inflammation, and promote health in the heart and lung region as well as used topically on joints and muscles. These are but a few of its healing properties.

Myrrh is also a natural resin, tapped from an unattractive, shrubby tree

(*Commiphora*)

found in Oman, Yemen, and Somalia. Myrrh means "bitterness" and symbolized suffering. It was used as a perfume, incense, and for holy and burial ointments. Today it is thought to be an antiseptic and to relieve clots, swelling and pain, among other things.

I have always known that herbs are used as supplements and in medicines, but in researching frankincense and myrrh, I see they made wise and thoughtful gifts. I love that nature played such an important role in establishing gift-giving during the CHRISTmas season and, although the spiritual messages of these herbs are vast and space limits me, my deeper understanding of their significance leads me to consider gifts found in nature perfectly wise and meaningful offerings of love. Merry CHRISTmas blessings to you all!

*My sources for some of this information are:

www.itmonline.org/arts/myrrh.htm

www.whispersofthespirit.com/goldfrankincensemmyrrh.aspx

www.magi-gifts.com/significance.html

Photos from <http://majikphil.blogspot> (Philips Natural World)



Commiphora myrrha

And Introducing...

For any of you who haven't been to the Extension Office in the last few months, you may not have met the new Bell County Extension Agent, **Randall Rakowitz**. So if you see the man pictured to the right, make sure to say "Hi."



What's happening in Your Garden?

- Jerry Lewis

Pictures from my winter garden taken Dec.

25. Broccoli, Chinese cabbage and Swiss chard. Tomatoes are in my greenhouse.



2011 Master Gardener Awards

- Gary Slanga

The 2011 Master Gardener Awards were presented at the annual Christmas Party held at the Expo Center on the 1st of December. I would like to congratulate all the winners and thank them for their service to the community and the master gardener organization.

And the Winners Are:

Golden Trowel Awards

Edith Campbell -Edith has become a leader in working with the kids of the Killeen Municipal Court Garden. She is the contact person for Court Personnel, updates the BOD on Saturday work and checks on mid-week watering and harvesting schedules. She keeps records of garden planting dates and harvest results as well as delivering the harvest to various food kitchens. She also participates in JMG, Safety training Day, Bell Co. Youth Fair and other Master Gardener events.



Gail Christian – Gail is the major source of photo documentation for the Master Gardeners. These photos are used to enhance the Blooming Bell Newspaper so that it is a more interesting publication for the general public to access on our web site. Gail is also a major player in keeping this web site up to date with information that Bell Co. residents may find useful as well as compiling the plant information that we use to educate the customers at our twice annual plant sales.



Pat Maskunas – Pat has been an active member of the Master Gardeners since her membership began. She has taken a leadership roll in keeping the grounds and Earthkind demonstration beds, which are on prominent display for the general public, in tip top shape. Our plant sales, which are a major source of contact with the local populace, have been a success thanks to her dedication to their planning and execution.

Continued on next page...

MG Awards...continued

Green Thumb Awards

Fran Sheppard – For her untiring work with the Master Gardener intern classes. Her efforts have helped make the classes informative and entertaining for aspiring new Master Gardeners. It takes a great deal of coordination and attention to detail to put this five month program together and Fran was right there in the thick of everything.



Terrie Hahn – Terrie has been active with the herb group, providing insights into growing and cooking with herbs. She has added this expertise to our plant sales providing in-depth information to customers on herb gardening. Terrie also took on the responsibility of publishing the Blooming Bell newsletter, which won third prize at the last State Conference.



Louise Crowell – Louise (right) is the person that ensures that those Master Gardeners that are not able to get the Blooming Bell by computer still get their copy by mail. She is also very active in all our activities like the plant sales, grooming the plants in the demonstration beds, and any other activity that requires attention. She is always available and volunteers whenever there is a need.



Kim Pringle – Kim (left) was the leader of the herb study group for many years. She was a very active public speaker presenting many seminars on herbs and in particular on the Colonial Herb Gardens. Her presentations on cooking with herbs were very popular. Along with educating all of us on herbs she actively maintained the herb demonstration beds for our organization.



Mary Lou Edmundson - Mary Lou has been a mainstay of plant information for the Master Gardeners. She was an enthusiastic volunteer at all our plant sales and provided our customers and our Master Gardener members with a wealth of knowledge on all the plants we had for sale. She is always a ready volunteer for any task facing the organization.

Mel Myers - Mel has been past president of the MG. Oversees the committee on Greenhouse reconstruction. He has as done several speaking engagements for the Speakers Bureau and the spring Home and Garden Show. Many do not know that he tends a vegetable garden for his church which gives the produce to the churches food pantry. But most of all, he is a model of leadership for the Master Gardener organization.



Continued on next page...

New Master Gardener of the Year

Karen Colwick - Karen has been very active in the organization from the very beginning, volunteering for numerous projects. She has completed the Earthkind specialist course, the rainwater harvesting specialist course and has agreed to be a member of the Speakers Bureau. She was elected to the State Board of Directors as the Recording Secretary for the State Master Gardener organization.



Sophia Gomez - Sophia is another new Master Gardener who started volunteering for events even before she completed her MG training. You will find her at almost every project the MG have going. She is a member of the grounds committee, and works with the plant sale committee. She has worked with the grounds crew tirelessly throughout this long hot summer to keep the demonstrations beds in order.



We also recognized several individuals for their many years of dedicated service. The years of service awards were:



Lifetime Award

Johnny Buck was the hardscape expert for the Master Gardeners. He was single handedly responsible for installing all of the hardscaping around the Agrilife Office including the Earthkind demonstration garden along Main St., the handicap garden, and the hardscaping in the back of the greenhouse. Most do not know that he is also responsible for the raised bed hardscaping at Leon Heights Elementary School where he mentored one of the most successful JMG programs in Bell county. Johnny could be seen working on his hardscape projects even in our recent 100 degree temperatures days. We are very happy to present Johnny Buck with this well deserved Lifetime Award.

Continued on next page...

MG Awards...continued

For 15 years of service, Clyde White, Bob Gordon and Charles Newsom.



For 10 years of service, Marge Croninger, Frances Idoux, Harriet Jackson, Miriam Jordan, Ursula Nanna and (pictured left) Violet Okeson.



And for 5 years of service, from left to right, Beverly Wickersham, Don Wyatt, Fran Sheppard, Mel Myers, Louise Crowell, Suzanne Boyer, Bernie Hurta, Gary Slanga. Not pictured, Annette Ensing, Berneta Culp and Louann Hight.



(Above) Diane Calderwood and Margaret Leigh entertain everyone as they shop at the Silent Auction (right).

Thanks again to all for the work that you do.

Photos by Gail Christian.

MY TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS



By Darla Horner Menking

I decided to have some fun and re-write the Twelve Days of Christmas from my "outdoor enthusiast" way of thinking. I looked around at what I have, what I like, what I need, and so on. I do not intend to make light of the original Twelve Days of Christmas, a wonderfully symbolic song written, as I understand, for early Christians who were being persecuted for their beliefs. It was a way they could sing, share knowledge of their faith, and not be afraid of being arrested. My version is simply an attempt at sharing what plants and items are needed and successful during this time of the year. Please, feel free to sing along in the privacy of your home. It will make it more fun than reading it silently to yourself!



On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love sent to me three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me seven rosemary topiaries, six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me eight red poinsettias, seven rosemary topiaries, six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me nine amaryllis, eight red poinsettias, seven rosemary topiaries, six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ten Christmas cacti, nine amaryllis, eight red poinsettias, seven rosemary topiaries, six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me eleven bags of bark mulch, ten Christmas cacti, nine amaryllis, eight red poinsettias, seven rosemary topiaries, six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me twelve blooming pansies, eleven bags of bark mulch, ten Christmas cacti, nine amaryllis, eight red poinsettias, seven rosemary topiaries, six Leyland cypress, FIVE POSSUM HAWS, four winter kale, three Yule logs, two bags of winterizer, and a homemade pine cone wreath.

Meet the Master Gardener Class of 2012



Raye Virginia Allen is a cultural historian and land steward. She is a widow and grandmother of five, a published author, a volunteer civic worker and has an MA in American Studies.

Randy Brown was born in San Antonio (air force brat). He has 20 years active duty in the Army Transportation Corps, Education Certificate from UNT, 15 years at Bryan Adams H.S., Dallas ISD as JROTC Senior Army Instructor. He has been working at Grace Bible Church Gardens and is replanting trees and



flower beds at his house in Harker Heights.



Sandra Bruce was born in Houston. She moved here from Austin for affordable housing. Sandra is a licensed Clinical Social Worker trying to retire, but not quite there yet. She works part time in Waco. She's been experimenting with organic gardening for several years and is eager to learn and then to share with others, especially children.

Betty Burkett was born in Winnsboro, Texas. She worked in finance, insurance and telecommunications in Dallas. Betty wants to garden because she finally has time to do what she



wants. Her family always gardened.



Ron Casmer has a wide range of experience. He has been a blue collar worker, white collar worker, in the military, in broadcasting and has been a teacher.

Continued on next page...

Meet the Class...continued



Maritza Kincaid was born in Managua, Nicaragua and grew up in Austin. She is a HARD WORKING Pediatric Nurse and is mom to three fat cats. Maritza has 20 years gardening experience mostly in flowers and tomatoes. The last 12 months, she's been experimenting with veggies, blueberries, figs and herbs. She prefers organic methods and collects rainwater. She would

like to establish bluebonnets and other wildflowers this year. Her hobbies include quilting, photography, and cooking. She is very excited to start this program. And Maritza will be the **2012 Class Reporter**.

Stacye Parry is originally from Liberty, Missouri. She works for the Military Child Education Coalition (part time) as a research analyst and writer. She is the proud mom of two Texas A & M graduates. Stacye is a novice gardener and a professional "plant buyer."



Ron Latham is retired. He is a member of Bell County Farmers Market Association. Ron is a Vegetable Garden Producer and has been gardening all his life.



Elaine Passman is a retired Director of the First United Methodist Church's Child Development Center in Killeen. She is a military wife of Stan with three children and three grandchildren. She is a



member of the Killeen Garden Club.



Gail Pierce, originally from Mill Valley, California came to Copperas Cove via Korea and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. She started gardening as a Girl Scout and has always enjoyed gardening. She has been on the staff and worked as a volunteer for the Red Cross. She's happy to be here with her family and grandkids.

Meet the Class...continued

Pat Smith is a Williamson County native, but has lived in Bell County most her life. Retired from Temple College as Director of Workforce Development, she has taught at the college level for 27 years and is now very much retired and loving it. She has always had a love for gardening and is excited about learning to do a much better job at it and passing on what she learns to others. Pat will be **Assistant Class Reporter**.



Rob Smith is a native of New York. He grew up in Pleasantville--home of the Reader's Digest. He came to Texas in 1973 to help start American Technological University in Killeen. He retired as a professor in the MBA program from Tarleton State University-Central Texas (now Texas A & M Central Texas). He is taking the Master Gardener class because his wife, Pat, asked him to join



Janet Stein was born in Niagara Falls, N.Y. and has been in Texas for 37 years. She's taught Elementary School in Niagara Falls, Copperas Cove and Killeen.

Susan Terry is married to Gene Terry and is a retired Educator. Susan is Chair of "Keep Salado Beautiful." She is a life long struggling gardener.



Cathy Young is a Computer Tech and lifetime student. She just finished her Master's Degree. Cathy is a beginning homesteader and wants to start an herb farm.



Not pictured are Stephen Clarke and Jan George.

Herb Group Celebrates Christmas with Tea

The Herb Study Group had their annual Christmas Tea at Frances Idoux's home in early December. Herbal goodies and five different teas were served.

Those in attendance were (standing from left) Beverly Wickersham, Mary Lou Edmondson, Frances Idoux, Crystal Fisher, Carol Runyan, Joyce Richardson, Diane Calderwood, Susan Firth, Cathy Cemper, (sitting) Mary Ann Hill, Brenda Smith, Kim Pringle and not pictured, Terrie Hahn, Nancy Blansett and Rowena Fengel.

(By the way, if you came to the party and are missing a black leather glove, give Frances a call.)



Nursing Home Residents Enjoy Christmas Party

Diane Calderwood hosted a Christmas party for eleven Weston Inn residents in early December. BCMG's helped with a Santa Claus hunt and sing along for the residents at Diane's home.



Announcements

January General Meeting Change

- **Bernie Hurta**

The **January 11, 2012** monthly meeting will start 30 minutes earlier. The **social will start at 10 am** and the **meeting will start at 10:30 am**.

We'll be grafting tomatoes with Gary and Annette. The earlier start time will give more time to clean-up before the New Class starts.

Check Your Member Information!

- **Gail Christian**

Due to the changes in the County Extension Office staff, please check the **Members Contact List** on our web site to insure that all of your information is correct.

Refreshment Mentor Openings for 2012 Class

- **Peg Fleet**

We have only a few refreshment mentor slots open for the new class, which begins this week. Unless otherwise stated, we need two refreshment mentors for each Wednesday class. Dates still available for signup are March 21st (one refreshment mentor needed), March 28th, April 4th and 25th, and May 2nd (one refreshment mentor needed on May 2nd). If you would like to help but are not yet able to commit to a specific date, we do have a signup sheet for substitutes. Signup will be available until all slots are filled. If you'd like to put your name down but can't make it to a meeting or don't want to wait that long, please contact me at 254-542-1902 or fleetmm@earthlink.net.

Thank you to all of you who have already signed up. Happy New Year and Happy Gardening!

Save the Date!

Suzanne Boyer

The new class field trip will be Wednesday, April 18, 2012. Of course we will be selling tickets for those who want to go along. We are planning a wonderful day at three unique nurseries in Austin that have not been on the field trip itinerary before. You won't want to miss it! Look for details soon.

Herb Announcements

- **Kim Pringle**

Listed below are upcoming events. Because the herb email list now will be mainly for correspondence rather than education, I thought some of you might want to be removed. *If you want to be removed, please email me at kimberpringle@earthlink.net*

1. **Fri., April 6, 2012**, Herb Presentation at the Extension office. Deborah Northam is contact person 939-5323 or cell 624-5227. Let me know if you want to help with this one.

2. **17th Annual Herbal Forum at Festival Hill, Round Top, TX, March 16-17, 2012** "Roses are Herbs Too." I have reserved 4 rooms with 3 beds each. For those who haven't been, the registration fee last year was \$75 for classes and lunch on Saturday. There is an additional fee for optional workshops on Friday, usually \$25-35. I think we paid \$65 each for accommodations last year which included breakfast. And then we have to shop at the plant sale and do a self-guided garden tour. Plus "our" fabulous picnic on Friday evening beginning about 5 pm. You can drive down for the day on Saturday. I just wanted to make sure I have reserved enough beds for those who want to go - we usually send in money about the end of January. If you think you are interested, please let me know so I can get a tentative count.

Officers and Directors 2011- 2012

President	Laura Murphy
First Vice President	Bernie Hurta
Second Vice President	Jerry Lewis
Recording Secretary	Jeanette Karr
Corresponding Secretary	Ellen Majestic
Treasurer	Don Wyatt

Directors

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JMG	Pearl Fellingham
New Class	Fran Sheppard
Outreach	Don Gold
Grounds & Maintenance	Pat Maskunas
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