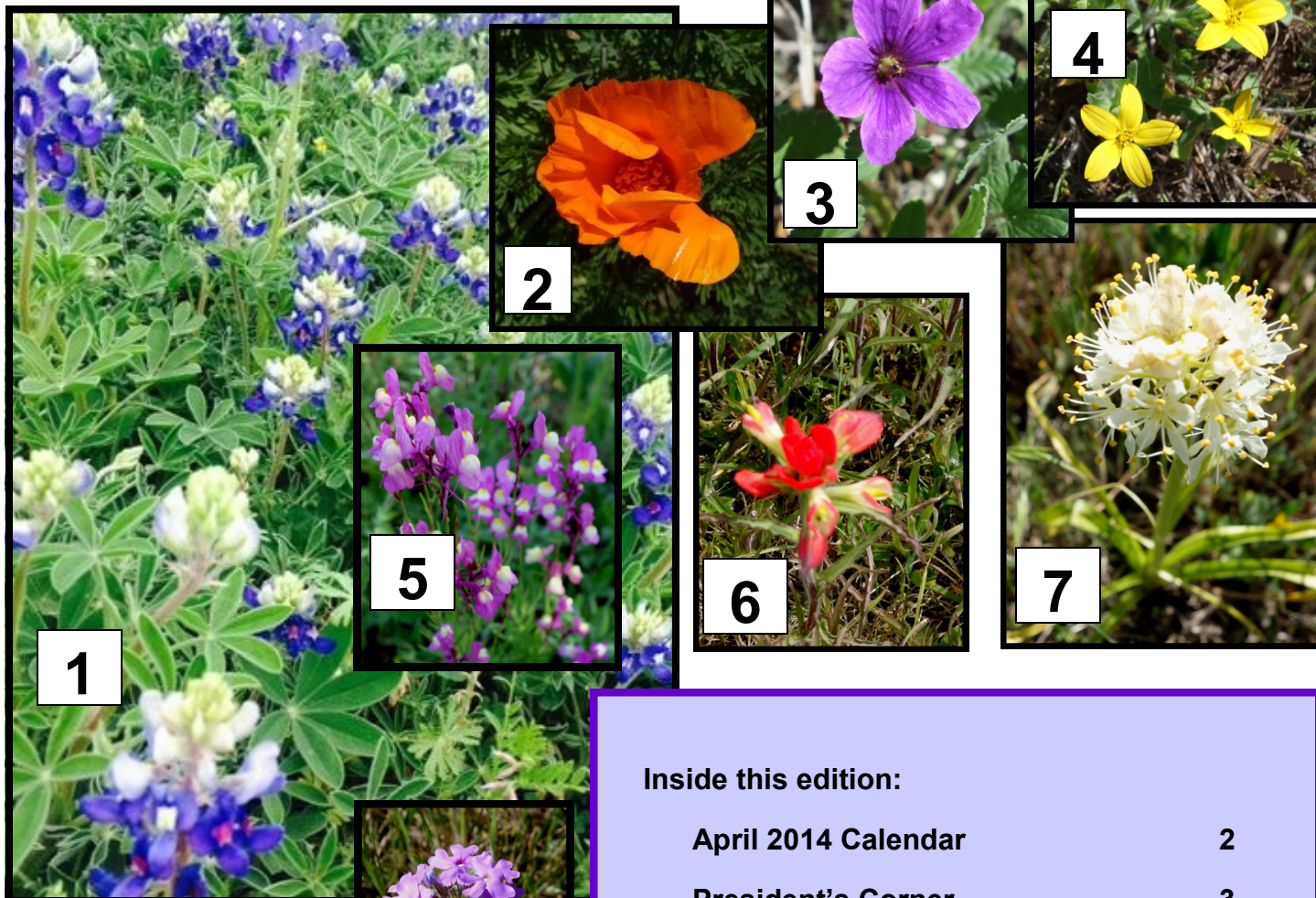
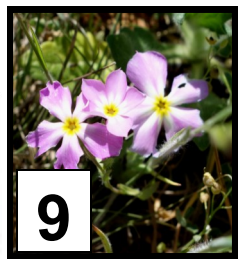


The Blooming Bell

April 2014



**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**



**Name that wild-
flower: Check
out page 11.**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Hamburger Wednesday 11 am	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 8:30 am Hospitality Committee Meeting- Everyone Welcome! Plant Swap 10 am General Meeting-Bird Migration in new building 11 am	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 	21	22	23 New Class Field Trip	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 Board Meeting 9 am			

Please turn-in your service and education hours for last month. Everyone turns in service/ education hours, that includes 2013 graduates and lifetime members.

The President's Corner

Bluebonnet and wild flower season has arrived. Central Texas has a number of roads and byways that offer good wildflower viewing. For up to date information call the Texas Department of transportation wildflower hotline (1-800-452-9292). Wildflowers of many varieties bloom throughout April and May. Cooler weather and showers help to extend the season. (We can hope we will have both.)

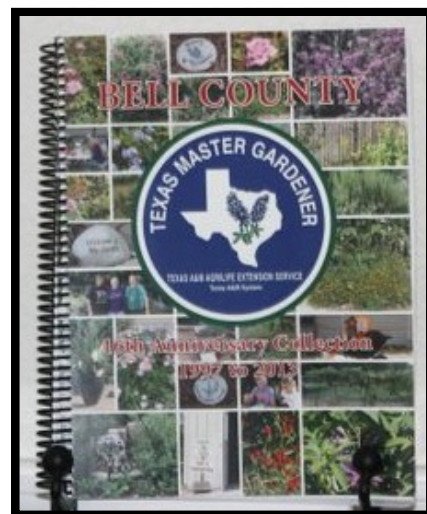
Our annual spring plant sale was held March 29th. We had many healthy and beautiful plants. The Friday evening hail, wind and rain did little damage to plants due to the preparation and efforts of those doing prep work for the sale. Thank you Carla for another good plant sale.



The nominations committee will present a slate of candidates for office in our association at the April monthly meeting. If there are no additional nominations from the floor, the election will follow. Also this month, we will have a plant swap just prior to the meeting. The program this month will be on bird migration. If you miss the April monthly meeting, you will be missing too much. Please try to attend.

There are still a number of members who have not signed the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement. If you are one of those members, please come by the office or attend a meeting to sign a form. The form is now a state requirement for membership.

Our book (The 16th Anniversary Collection) has sold out of the second printing. However, it is not too late. There is a waiting list for the 3rd printing. It is a wonderful publication and worthy of being a gift for another gardener on your list and certainly you need a copy too.



The April issue of Tex Appeal magazine featured an article by Bell county Master Gardeners Frances Idoux and Beverly Wickersham. It was a very nice article, thank you Frances and Beverly for represent-

ing us so well. Look for publication this summer in Texas Gardener magazine of an article about Bell county Master Gardeners and the Killeen municipal court garden.

April will be a busy month for our association. Thank you all for volunteering for school programs, earth day programs, the plant sale and

the ongoing preparations for our state conference.

Enjoy the beautiful weather to come and of course Texas wildflowers.....Laura

Photos by Randy Brown and Frances Idoux

Monarchs on the Decline

By Myra Crenshaw

There was a very interesting article in **Texas Parks and Wildlife** March 2014 edition by Rob McCorkle. I would like to summarize some of the interesting facts in his article. A handful of volunteers count the monarchs at Guadalupe River State Park because Texas plays a key role in the life cycle of the monarch, the official state insect of Texas. Both the fall and spring migrants funnel through the heart of the state on their way to and from central Mexico's Transvolcanic Mountains. Hard freezes in 2002 caused a huge loss of monarchs. They can tolerate temperatures down to 18 degrees if it's dry, but if it's raining and the mercury drops to below 32 degrees, they can freeze to death.

Hundreds of Texans net monarchs to attach an adhesive, dime-sized tag printed with a unique number to the butterfly's hind wing. Those who find one of the tagged monarchs (in Mexico, it brings \$5 bounty) can call an 800 number or go online to Monarch Watch. Most of us know the big problem is habitat loss. Sixty percent of the grassland ecosystem's milkweed has been wiped out because of herbicide-tolerant crops and conversion of land to biofuel crops.

Planting milkweed is considered the most important step Texans can take to help monarchs. The three most common native milkweed species found in Texas are antelope horn, green antelope horn and zizotes.

From McCorkle's interesting monarch facts, here are a few. A single monarch female can lay up to 300 to 400 eggs. An adult's lifespan ranges from one to nine months. Migrating monarchs can cover an average of 25 to 30 miles a day. Most monarchs joining fall migration are 3 to 4 generations removed from those that make the previous year's journey. Monarchs are notably promiscuous, with lifetime mating frequencies of about 8

for each sex. They contain a group of compounds known as cardiac glycosides, acquired by monarch larvae feeding on milkweed that provides protection by inducing vomiting in many vertebrates. Monarchs overwinter in dense clusters of alpine oyamel firs in a semi-dormant state, living off stored fats. To quote McCorkle, monarchs are one of the world's 20,000 butterfly species that command awe and respect.



Home and Garden Show a Success

- Louann Hight

Thanks to all the BCMGA volunteers that made our booth a great success at the 2014 Home & Garden Show. Our seminars were well attended and were presented by:

Drip Irrigation - Gary Slanga

Vegetable Gardening - Jerry Lewis

Herbs - Terrie Hahn and Betty Nejteck

Butterflies and Humming Birds - Mary Ann Everett



Photos by
Louann
Hight

Spring Plant Sale Prep



- Randy Brown

Busy days before the Plant Sale include plant delivery and unloading, set up of the Ask the Master Gardener booth and outdoor informational booths, delivery of much needed lighting, clean up of demo beds and even some resting.



Photos by Randy Brown



Crowds at the Spring Plant Sale



Photos by Randy Brown

Crowds...continued



Photos by Randy Brown



Fun and Education at the Herbal Forum

- Carol Runyan

Though the hard winter had set back the arrival of spring, several car loads of enthusiastic Bell County Master Gardeners went to the 19th Annual Herbal Forum at Round Top, Texas. The forum is held at Festival Hill, the gardens developed by Madalene Hill. Mrs. Hill with her daughter Gwen Barclay have written a definitive book on herbs called "Southern Herb Growing". The Herb of the Year 2014 is Artemisia. We learned that there are around 300 species of Artemisia. Common names are wormwood, sagebrushes, and mugwort. One species is used to make the liqueur absinthe.

The most popular Artemisia found in Central Texas gardens is Powis Castle which is 1-2 feet tall, has lacey silver leaves and thrives in poor soil with little water. The forum included lectures, workshops, and a

fantastic plant sale. We were like kids in a candy store and took great advantage of all the many varieties of plants that were available. The hardest thing was finding space to pack them in our cars for our return trip.

Top left: Former BCMG, Nancy Blansett with MG's Suzanne Boyer, Brenda Smith, Carol Runyan, Dee Coffeen, Frances Idoux, Nancy Kozusko; Festival Hill Horticulturist, Henry Flowers, shows off his favorite plants in his annual talk at the beginning of the 2 day plant sale. Left: Dee Coffeen and Suzanne Boyer; Brenda Smith and Kim Pringle; Terrie Hahn, Dee Coffeen, Frances Idoux and Nancy Kozusko at the Plant Sale. Below: the Chapel at Festival Hill with Indian Paint Brushes in the field.

Photos by Carol Runyan and Terrie Hahn



Big Thanks to all 2015 Conference Committees

I would like to thank all the 2015 conference committees for all the hard work and time they have devoted to planning next years conference. I have attended several of the meetings and have heard many exciting plans and ideas for this event.

There is still plenty of time (and work) for anyone who has not yet volunteered for a committee to do so and get in on the ground floor of this enormous undertaking. A special thanks to the committee chairs who spend so much time and effort in putting together these meetings. The coordination of meetings alone is a big task. If anyone has a special interest in helping a particular committee please contact one of the following committee chairs:

Banquet and Hospitality, Ilene Miller

Registration, Jan George

Vendor/Sponsor, Karen Colwick

Speakers, Mary Ann Everett

Workshops, Wayne Baker

Public Relations/Web Master, Luann Hight

Budget/Treasurer, Gail Christian

Audio-Visual, Jerry Lewis

Tours and Conference Coordination, Laura Murphy

Once again a big thanks to all Master Gardeners who have been working so hard to put this conference on the path to success.

Gary Slang,

Conference Chair

Q & A

Last month's Question from:

- Terrie Hahn

What does the "hardy to" temperature on a plant tag really mean? I have a Red Tide Echeveria that says it's hardy to 25 degrees. Now, does that mean it won't totally die at 25 degrees, just lose its outer leaves? Does it mean if its in the ground, it will be completely safe at 25 degrees? My echeveria is in a pot, but was covered when it got under 25 degrees, and still all of the outer leaves died. It is still alive (I finally brought it inside). So, does "hardy" mean it will live, but look horrible?! By the way, the same thing happened to my Ghost plant (*Graptopetalum paraguayense*), which is supposed to be good to zero degrees. It's alive, but doesn't look so good. It's been unprotected in pots for years and never had this happen before. It's been a very cold winter!

Could someone please translate the plant tag for me?

And the Answer is:

Eric Pedley of East Austin Succulents was on KLRU's Central Texas Gardener the other day and he was talking about cold hardy succulents. He said that a succulent is less likely to make it in freezing conditions if it's fairly young or if it's in a pot even if it's rated cold hardy. One that's two or three years old will have an easier time of it. Cold hardy also often means root hardy. The roots survive as with many perennials, but the leaves don't.

Name That Wildflower

- Terrie Hahn

Let's see who's paying attention! On the front cover of this month's Blooming Bell are photos of wildflowers in bloom right now. Can you name them all? Send me an email with the names of each one identifying it by the number on the photo. Send your guesses to: moompie45@hotmail.com or snail mail them to me at Terrie Hahn, 321 Logan Ranch Rd., Georgetown

78628. I'll publish the names of the Wildflower experts who get all 9 correct.

Send me photos of wildflowers that aren't pictured here for others to guess for next month.

This month's wildflower photos are from Mary Lew Quesinberry, Jerry Lewis' daughter, Karla McGinnis and Terrie Hahn.

Announcements

April Plant/Seed Swap, April 9th

Bernie Hurta and Randy Brown

We will have a plant/seed swap in the classroom before the April 9th monthly meeting. Please bring your plants and seeds to the classroom between 9:30 and 10 am. Label the plants and seeds with their names and growing information. The swap will begin at 10 am for persons who brought plants to swap. After the monthly meeting, anyone can choose plants whether they brought some or not. Please bring a box or tray to take your plants home. If you have any questions, contact Bernie Hurta or Randy Brown.

MG Conference Hospitality Committee to Meet April 9th

- Ilene Miller

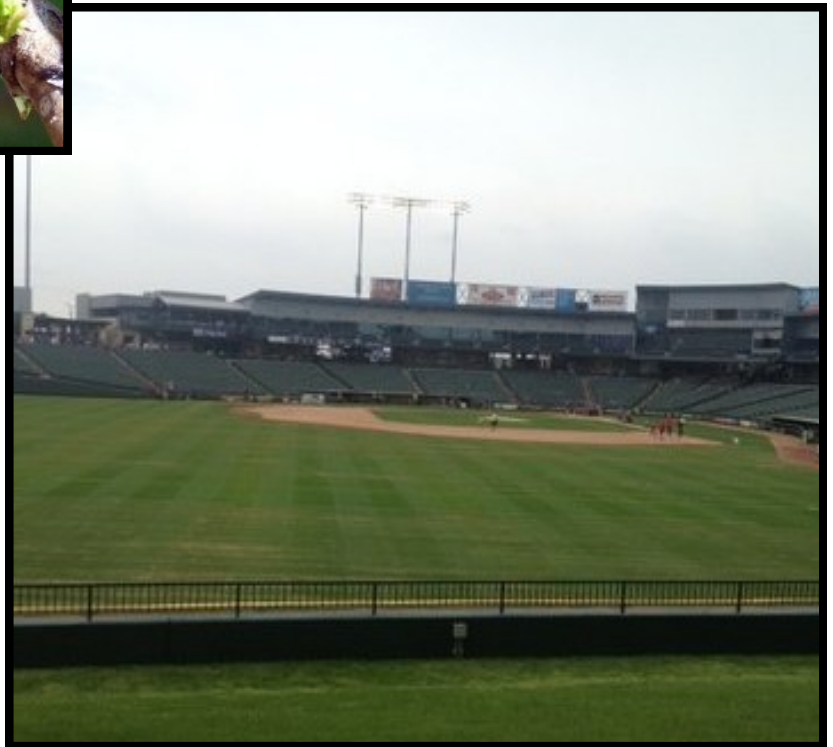
Attention all BCMGA!!!!!! The 2015 State MG Conference Hospitality Committee is now organized and starting monthly meetings. If you are not part of a Conference committee yet, there is a place for you on Hospitality. If you are interested in joining us, the next meeting is at 8:30am on Wednesday, April 9th in the Extension Office Class Room. We will be meeting briefly as a total committee before breaking into these sub committees: Housing, Hospitality for Vendors, Hospitality for Participants and Speakers, Banquet and Meals, Decorations, Wine Social, Silent Auction, and Arts and Entertainment. The meetings will conclude in time for the plant swap. For questions, contact Ilene Miller at: mmiller007@hotmail.com

What's Happening in Your Yard

Signs of Spring!

- Jerry Lewis

Spring is here. These photos were taken by my daughter, Karla McGinnis. Yes, Spring includes the Dell Diamond!



What's Happening in Your Yard

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

Kerria Japonica (Japanese Rose) and California Poppy blooming in my garden.



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Please submit articles for the Blooming Bell as Word Documents with photos separate as jpg files to Terrie Hahn at:

moompie45@hotmail.com

Please do not send PDF documents.

A publication of the Bell County Master Gardener
Association sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension of
Texas A & M University

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