

The Blooming Bell

August 2015



**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**



Duranta in
Werner and
Terrie Hahn's
yard.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 Work Day 7 am* Special BOD meeting 10:30 am Burger Wednesday 11 am	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Work Day 7 am* General meeting - DVD of Peter Hatch, "Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden" 10:30 am Social time 10 am	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Work Day 7 am*	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Work Day 7 am* BOD Meeting 9 am	27	28	29
30	31					

* in the event of rain, there will be No Workdays. Remember to record volunteer/education hours.
Banner photo by Terrie Hahn, Moon illustration by Nuttakit on www.freedigitalphotos.net

The President's Corner

It's turning out to be a very HOT and dry July. This weather, as you all know is hard on us gardeners. Gardening in the morning, sipping lemonade on the patio in the afternoon. Best way I've found to spend these type of days.

In Master Gardener news, we bought a new printer for the MG office. This one has copying capability as well as a scanner for documents and does color printing. We also purchased a portable speaker system for the education building. It is similar to the one we tried out at the May general membership meeting. We hope this will help eliminate the problem of hearing a speaker because of echoes off the metal walls.

While on the subject of metal walls. We are holding a **special Board of Directors meeting on Burger Wed. Aug 5th**, to discuss the bids we received for insulation in the building. With four big doors, there is not much insulation will do to change the temperatures that occur in the building. So the purpose of the project is to help reduce the echo effect of the walls. I hope many of you can attend since it will determine how we spend the money you worked so hard for.

Thanks for all of your participation in our great organization. Your time and help with all our projects is greatly appreciated.

- Gary

Photo by Gail Koontz



Aquaponics:

Growing Plants and Fish Together

- Gail Koontz

This is part two of a two part series.

The Nonprofit

Aquaponics and Earth Sustainable Living is a non-profit organization based in DeSoto, just south of Dallas, that uses aquaponics to aid people in need all over the world. John and Teresa Musser began building what they call their "cycle of life micro-farm" in their backyard three years ago. Their farm sits on an eighth of an acre of land and houses several chickens, goats and rabbits along with their media-based aquaponic systems.

Their mission is to go into parts of the world where people are hungry and teach them to emulate their cycle-of-life system.

They have developed a container with a pump that runs on 33 watts of power. Fish go in the bottom of the container, and a gravel grow-bed sits on top. The system produces vegetables from the grow bed and uses a portion of the water to create the fertilizer. "We tell people it's not going to grow enough fish for a whole tribe of people, but the fertilizer that you can get from it can feed an entire village," John Musser said.

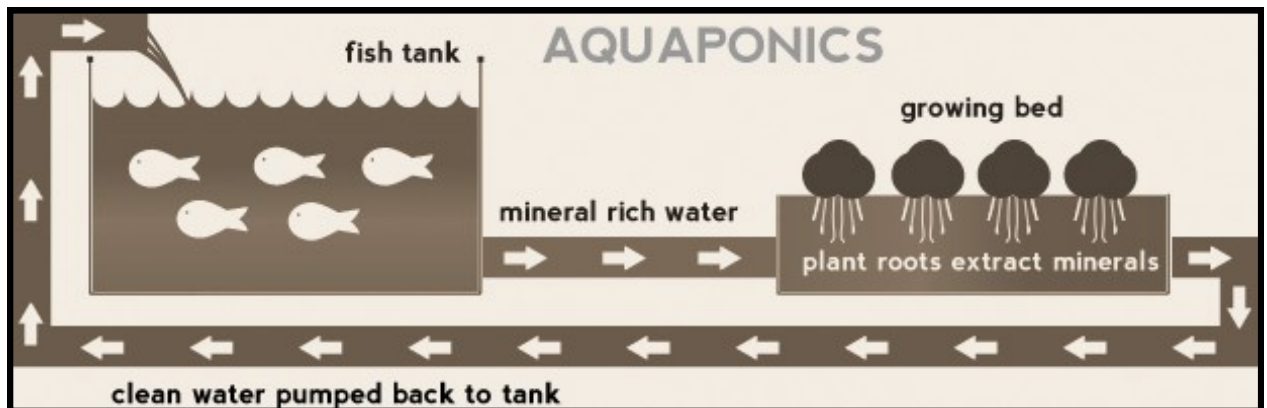
The Mussers divert about 10 percent of the water from their aquaponic systems into underground tanks. They then gather together the shredded paper from their office, the contents of their chicken, goat and rabbit enclosures, old plants, leaves and other trash and put it in a compost heap. Using the stored wastewater, they drench the compost two times, which speeds up decomposition. After that, they add molas-

ses, and within three days, thousands of worms are breaking everything down.

"We can make certain types of fertilizer and mulch in 14 days, which is unheard of," Musser said. "We teach people how to make a fertilizer factory."

The Mussers say they spend from \$500 to \$700 on plants and peat moss each year; everything else they use is recycled. Domestically, many of the vegetables and fish are made into soups or canned individually and sold to volunteers and people taking canning classes from the Mussers.

The Mussers have set up cycle of life micro-farms in



Mexico, Belize and Haiti. All the money they raise in combination with donations goes toward their outreach projects and paying a full- and part-time staff of eight.

"When we go into other countries, we're thinking about what they have in that habitat, and that's the challenge because you can't just take what we have in our backyard here in Texas and go to the rain forest in Belize and replicate that exactly," Musser said. "We have to figure out what natural resources they have and use those to recreate our system."

Continued on next page...

Aquaponics...continued

I recently spent the day at Homestead Heritage near Waco with friends and had the opportunity to tour their aquaponics greenhouse. This place is also the campus for the Center for Essential Education where many have learned basic homesteading skills that have sustained traditional communities for millennia.



And meet my newest friend Sabrina Hardcastle. She lives in Temple and has become interested in aquaponics. Here she is in her backyard beside her greenhouse which has been operating about a month now. She uses goldfish in her fish tank and collects rainwater for the fish tank when she needs to add water. She is experimenting right now but her goal is to turn this into full time work and enjoyment. Right now



her greenhouse supplies all she needs for a good salad.

Q & A

- Jerry Lewis

Can anyone tell me the original use of this type of bucket?

Jerry, we had some people guess that it could be a feed bucket of some sort, but I think it's a Pickers Pail Bucket. I don't know the dimensions of this bucket, but the bottom photo shows something I found on Amazon that is called a Picker Pail Bucket. Yours, I would assume is quite old and could be used for stronger people to strap on with a harness (that would criss cross in the back) to pick fruit off lower branches of trees or berries off of bushes. Just a guess, but that's all I was able to come up with. - **Terrie Hahn**



Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Stink Bugs

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County
AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Various stink bugs can be found on landscape plants, but they are similar in the way they look and damage caused. Commonly seen stink bugs in Central Texas can be brown, green, mottled grey and black or sometimes red and black.

Stink bugs are shield shaped with adults having a triangle on their back. Adults have fully developed wings and are capable of flying. The wings are hardened at the base and membranous at the tip. Nymphs, or immature stink bugs do not have fully developed wings. They may appear a different color than the adults, but often this is because the wings cover the body color in the adult stage.



Stink bugs have piercing-sucking mouthparts that they use to puncture plant tissue and suck out plant juices. Damage on foliage can appear as yellowing or curling and may stunt plant growth. On fruit, damage will appear as pinprick spots surrounded by a discolored area. Stink bugs can also carry pathogens on their mouthparts that can cause fruit to decay after it is punctured. Stink bugs cause damage in both the adult and immature stages.

To try to avoid stink bugs, reduce the amount of weeds in landscape areas. There are predators and parasites that attack stink bugs in all life stages. Try to use management practices that help to conserve beneficials. Depending on the number of stink bugs, hand picking may be an option. Use gloves and do it early in the morning before the stink bugs get moving. Remove stink bugs from the plants and put into a bucket of soapy water. Vacuuming may be another non-chemical option. Try to choose a vacuum that is powerful enough to suck up the bugs but not so powerful that it will cause damage to the plants.

Stink bugs are usually easier to manage when they are immatures, or nymphs, due to the fact that they are smaller and do not have fully developed wings which would allow them to fly away from the treated area. For less toxic solutions, you can try insecticidal soaps or botanical products with active ingredients such as pyrethrins or azadirachtin. Synthetic active ingredients include bifenthrin or permethrin.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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EXTENSION

Name That Wildflower!

- Mary Ann Everett

Jerry Lewis and I were wandering along Salado Creek for the July 18th North America Butterfly Association's Butterfly Count looking for those elusive butterflies. Any butterfly! The wildflowers were there. Frogfruit galore, but no butterflies. Maybe the windy conditions contributed to them not being out and about. However, we stumbled upon this interesting plant. Can you guess what it is? I had heard of it, but never seen it.

Devil's claw, *Proboscidea louisianica*, is an apt name for this plant. The leaves are quite large, and are covered with a glandular nectar. The flowers are creamy-yellow, tubular, and are five-lobed. Sometimes the flowers are spotted with purple. The fruit is a fleshy, curved pod, that splits into two claws when it dries. This leaves an inner woody shell, tipped with a long, curved beak. The beak splits lengthwise, and the shell opens between the two parts of the split beak. These are easily caught on the legs of animals which spread the claws.

There are about 40 black seeds which are gradually released when the claws split apart.

The blossoms of devil's claw plants are strikingly similar to those of Catalpa and Desert Willow. Several species of bees frequent the fragrant blossoms, which often have bright yellow nectar guide lines and red-



dish-purple flecks along the inner corolla tube. (I did note this while taking a picture of the blossoms).

The fresh green pods and dried black seed capsules were important items in the cultures of many Native American tribes of the southwestern United States, and are still used to this day for food and in basketry. The fruits are collected and used in nature crafts.



Another photo of this plant is on page 12. Charles Newsom has this in his yard.

Have Some Herb Smoothies!

- Terrie Hahn

A dozen BCMG's and former BCMG's converged on my home for an herbal smoothie party. We made up and made from recipes 8 different smoothies that highlighted Lemon Balm, Lemon Verbena, Mint and Basil. We made up some savory smoothies and then tried our hands at fruit filled smoothies. Some were definitely more successful than others. The herbs were added to fruit, veggies, almond butter, almond and soy milk, spices and protein shakes. Here are three of the recipes we liked. They're great on a hot summer's day!

Pineapple Basil - Wheatsville Food Co-op

1/2 C fresh or frozen pineapple
1 C Almond milk
1 small frozen banana
3 large basil leaves

Berry Extavaganza

Handful of fresh or frozen strawberries
Handful of fresh or frozen blueberries
Handful of frozen cranberries
Handful of fresh or frozen cherries
11 oz. container of Svelte French Vanilla Organic Soy Protein Shake (HEB or Vitamin Shoppe) or milk
Handful of Lemon Balm leaves
Handful of Mint

If using fresh fruit, you'll need to add ice. If all fruit is frozen, ice won't be necessary.

Mint Chip (modified as noted) Recipe from Superfood Smoothies by Julie Morris

2 cups frozen spinach (we used fresh)
2 cups frozen banana
1/4 cup cashews (but we used almond butter)
1 tablespoon cacao nibs
1 big sprig fresh mint
1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups rice milk (but we used the almond milk)
1/2 cup coconut water (but we used regular water)



Mixing and drinking smoothies were Kim Pringle, Beverly Wickersham, Mary Lou Edmundson, Brenda Smith, Frances Idoux, Tina Mazur, Jane Van Praag, Vivian Rush, former BCMG's Susan Firth, Nancy Blansett Jeanne Richards and Werner Hahn. Photos by Susan Firth



July General Meeting

- Randy Brown

Forty-four Master Gardeners attended the Greg Grant program For the Love of Texas gardening..... and the Arcadia Dog Trot House. Wonderful eats by the Herb Society.



Memorial Bench

- Gail Christian



Joyce Richardson and her husband placed this plaque on the bench in our memorial garden at the Extension Office. We are working on a granite memorial stone for Ursula in the Killeen Garden.





- Randy Brown

Over 300 pounds of vegetables July 11 and 500 for the week. Right is the potato and tomato harvest. Below is the Blue Mist at the KMCCG.



Yummy Recipe

- Brenda Smith

A recipe to use up some of those tomatoes from your gardens. This dish was made by Brenda Smith for the July General Membership meeting.

Pico De Gallo from Emeril Lagasse

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups seeded, diced tomatoes
- 1/4 cup diced red onion
- 1 tablespoon diced jalapenos
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- Juice of 2 limes
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, plus extra for garnish
- Salt and pepper

Announcements

Special BOD Meeting Aug. 5th

A special BOD meeting will be held August 5th to discuss the insulation to be put into the new building. If you want to have any say where some Conference money is going, please attend at 10:30 a.m. It should only go 30 minutes. And then you can attend Burger Wednesday!

August General Meeting

- Randy Brown

We will be showing the DVD of Peter Hatch, "Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden." Social time is at 10 a.m. on August 12th and the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Upcoming Business

- Bernie Hurta

New Class Committee Meeting

There will be a New Class Committee meeting on Wednesday, August 12th after the monthly general meeting in the Board room.

Anyone interested in working on the committee may attend. Since this will be around lunchtime, bring a sandwich and a drink.

If you have any questions, contact Mary Ann Everett or Bernie Hurta.

2015 Awards

Nomination forms for our local awards will be available at the August Monthly Meeting. The awards that are given out at the Christmas Party are:

Three Golden Trowel Awards (for service to our community) six Green Thumb Awards (service to our organization), and the New Master Gardener of the Year Award (from the 2015 New Class). Nominees must be certified Master Gardeners and have the 50 service hours and 12 education hours recorded to be considered. The deadline is October 31st. Forms are also available on our website. Completed forms are

to be given to Bernie Hurta by mail, email (bhurta@gmail.com), or leave them with Scarlot in the Extension office. Let's honor those that have worked so hard for our organization and our community.

Grounds Work Days

- Walter Ponder

Here is the Workday schedule for August:

07:00 a.m. August 5, 2015 Workday

10:30 a.m. August 5, 2015 Burger Wednesday

07:00 a.m. August 12, 2015 Workday

07:00 a.m. August 19, 2015 Workday

07:00 a.m. August 26, 2015 Workday

FYI

Corrections to July Blooming Bell

In Werner Hahn's Garlic article, the proofreader didn't proofread his story! "*Potassium* is a good nutrient for bulb growth. But of course, any fertilization is dependent on your particular soil fertility." It should have been *Phosphorus*.

And Randy Brown didn't receive credit for his wonderful cover photo.



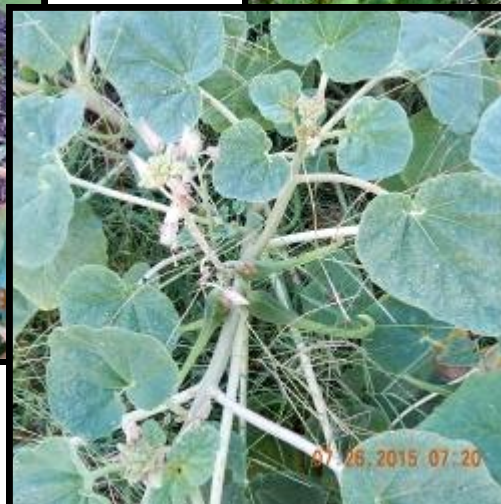
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What's Happening in Your Yard

- Charles Newsom

Below: Harvesting the condensate water from the air conditioner.
Right, clockwise: Blue Heron near our pond that did not want to move; Queen Annes's lace in bloom; Devils Claw plants. A foul smelling plant whose seed pods are used to make ornamental items; Polk berries. The birds eat them as soon as they turn dark.



What's Happening in Your Yard

Salsa!

- Melinda Woods Ariola

Made and canned 10 pints of salsa July 16th.



Corn for the Worms

- Crystal Fisher

It's my understanding that worms like corn. Corn meal and maybe even corn-on-the-cob. Recently, I bought an ear, took a few bites of the fresh corn and then buried it. Imagine my surprise when I was turning everything over to uncover it and find that so many kernels had sprouted.

After photographing it, I buried it once again.



What's Happening in Your Yard

- Randy Brown



Canna Lily, Denver Daisy, Garden Phlox, and Mexican Olive tree blooms are just a few of the July Bloomers.



What's Happening in Your Yard

- Gail Koontz



One of the nicest things about retirement is having the time to try something new – like making fig preserves. This fig tree is behind Arch's gun shop in Heidenheimer. During the 13 years we've been married, he always talks about how delicious these figs are. I have never tasted a fig until this year. And I have never made any kind of preserves. My friend Hazel Bates shared her recipe with me. Took her a bucket of figs and she made preserves, too!

Above left: Spider plant; Plumeria; ? but call it my Flop-Eared Rabbit; Passion Flower; Bolivian Jew. (second line starting at left) ? but call it my Donna Plant; Datura; 2 geckos and Forever Plant. All of these plants have been given to me by friends and family, so are very special to me. Can anyone help me with the two ?'s.



What's Happening in Your Yard

Fight for Survival

- Jerry Lewis



Praying Mantis and wasp duke-ing it out! A fight for survival! I don't know who won because the wasp flew away with the praying mantis on its back. Road



construction in front of my house. This cactus pad wound up in no man's land. Or is that no plant's land? Survival mode at its best!

Volunteers and Plumeria

- Werner and Terrie Hahn

We've had a pumpkin patch and a gourd patch volunteer in front of one of our compost bins and this Pink Crinum Lily (we think) plopped itself under a rose bush. The white flowers are from a Plumeria.



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