

The Blooming Bell

August 2013



**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Work Day 7:30 am Burger Wednesday	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Work Day 7:30 am General Meeting 11 am	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 Work Day 7:30 am Board of Directors Meeting 9 am	29	30	31

Upcoming dates:

Fall Plant Sale, October 5
 State Conference, October 17-19
 November/December Board Meeting, December 4
 Christmas Party, December 5

The President's Corner

Master Gardeners, as I write my Blooming Bell article my thoughts are with Johnny Buck. It is difficult to detail all that he gave to Master Gardeners. I think of the fondness we each have for him. I am further saddened when I think that our new class members did not have the opportunity to work with Johnny. He was very knowledgeable and very willing to volunteer. A few months ago, Johnny came to speak to me to let me know that he could not volunteer anymore due to some family responsibilities. He was genuinely apologetic and concerned that he could no longer be active. I assured him that family came first and that he would be missed. But after he left, I thought to myself, he just doesn't know how fond the membership is of him and how we will miss him, not just his volunteer time.

As we begin the month of August, our thoughts are turning toward the fall and the volunteer opportunities that will be coming our way. In September, we will begin teaching an elective course at St. Mary's School in Temple. Many of you have stepped forward to teach this class. Thank you. This is an exciting opportunity for master gardeners, not just for the Bell County chapter, but for chapters across the state.

September we will be in final preparations for our Fall Plant Sale, to be held on October 5th. Also in October, the state Master Gardener Conference will be held. The conference web site is now open and registration has begun. The Rio Grande Valley, specifically McAllen, is the conference site. This is an interesting part of our state and again I encourage you to consider attending. Our chapter continues to pursue hosting the state conference in 2015. You will receive more information about our bid for the conference as information is available. Future dates of interest are the Christmas party scheduled for Dec. 5th and a combined November/December board meeting on December 4th. Due to the holiday schedule this year, the board voted to combine the November and December board meeting.

Along with the activities listed above, we continue to have requests for programs and information from the citizens of Bell County. We need more members to

step forward to make home calls and answer questions. You don't have to have all of the answers. We have access to many experts in the extension service.

We are in need of an individual to assist Gary Slanga with awards. Gary is wearing too many hats at this time and is deeply involved in pre-conference plans for our chapter. Please contact Gary or me if you would be willing to help with awards.

Work has begun inside the fence in preparation for building the first raised bed and laying pavers. Thank you to the landscape committee and to Charles Newsom for getting the landscaping of our new building underway.

If you have not paid your dues, please mail your check for \$25.00 to our treasurer Gail Christian or the extension office.

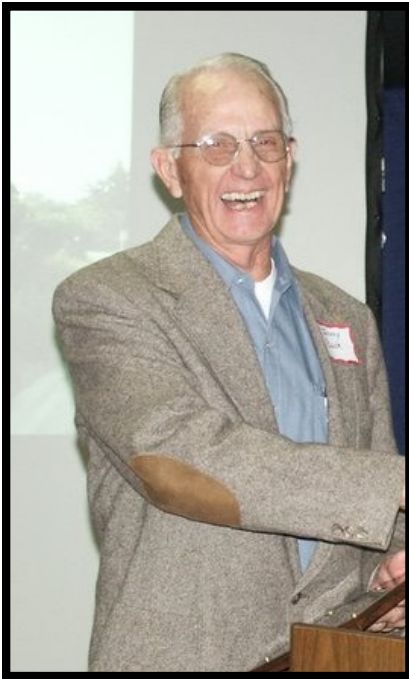
Last, but not least, our August meeting was planned to be about trees, at this time we do not have a firm commitment from the presenter. However, Randy has an interesting program planned if our presenter cannot commit. You will not be disappointed.

What a great surprise the July rains were, hopefully we will continue to see some moisture. I hope to see you at the August meeting.....Laura



Photo by Terrie Hahn

Remembering Johnny Buck



This past Saturday, July 27th, the Bell County Master Gardeners Association lost one of its beloved, long time members, Johnny Buck. Johnny was a gentle soul who was always working on the hardscape around the Extension Center and pitching in to help wherever else he was needed.

- Terrie Hahn

Johnny Buck, a gentle, humble man

When I first met Johnny, he was a quiet sort. We hit it off right at the start. I could tell he was a hard working man. What was it that pulled me towards him? Maybe his quiet mannerisms. He didn't have to say a lot; he could say what needed to be said in few words.

What talent that man had! I was enamored what he could do with stone and rock, no mortar, no cement. The elements just seemed to obey where his hands placed them in the landscape. No job was too small or large. He never complained. He would be out there working in the 100 degree heat, sweat running down his back, his brow, but onward he placed those bricks and stones. What a beautiful testament to the skills of

this gentle giant. He helped us with a retaining wall on the south side of our house, and Phil and I learned so much from his expertise. And we have a beautiful retaining wall, now that we know the right way to do dry-rock wall structures.

Working with him through the Junior Master Gardener program was a delight. We worked many a school, with different activities from the Teacher/Leader book, and had so much fun. He had as much fun as those students. He had a youthful heart.

I spoke with him about a month ago. You know how it is, when you think about someone whom you haven't seen in a while, and you have to call them and visit. I am so glad I did. He really missed coming to the monthly meetings, saying maybe he would be able to come sometime in the future. Yes, he sounded just like the Johnny I remembered on all those JMG excursions, the school interactions, the work with other master gardeners. He once remarked to me, Mary Ann, does my voice sound different to you? Well, Johnny, it sounds like it always did to me. Then the diagnosis of the disease, and taking medication, but when we visited, he sounded so good. He felt good, he said.

We have lost a wonderful friend, a noble, gentle, giant, a fellow master gardener. He wanted no accolades. He just lived life to the fullest, and gave us his example of his love for God and service to his fellow man. Johnny, may you rest in peace. The Lord must have wanted you with Him. We will miss you.

Continued on next page

- Mary Ann Everett



Johnny Remembered

"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 Earth-kind 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. We are very happy to present Johnny Buck with this well deserved Lifetime Award." - This was said about Johnny when he was awarded the Lifetime Award at the 2011 Christmas Party.

"Johnny's warm smile and kind and gentle manner brightened my day so many times. What a good man. He will be very missed." - Jane Capen



"I will always remember Johnny and his beautiful smile, his kindness to everyone, his love of animals and his dedication to the fulfilling of our Association's Mission Statement." - Mary Lew Quesinberry

"I will always remember Johnny Buck's ability to make something beautiful out of a pile of rock. His attention to detail was beyond comparison. He was so strong, yet so gentle and patient when working with young people. Johnny was faithful, loyal and hard working. The Master Gardeners lost a true friend." - Bob Gordon

"When Johnny showed our class (2011) how to cut stone, he kept telling me 'Just tap it lightly and it will break' because I wanted to bang the stone. Whenever I cut stone now, I keep saying 'Just tap it lightly, Sophia, just tap it lightly.'" - Sophia Gomez

"Johnny was a great role model - kind, soft-spoken and so very diligent. He was like hidden treasure." - Kim Pringle

Go Native, Plant Gulf Muhly

- Darla Horner Menking

I just love Gulf Muhly, or *Muhlenbergia capillaris*. This Texas native is a stand-out ornamental grass that is sure to catch the eye of any passerby. It has more than a few great features including: great texture, a constant impact in your landscaping, and the beautiful pink seed heads that burst forth each fall.

Plan on this grass getting up to 2 ½ feet tall, plant it in sun to part sun, it won't need a lot of watering, and it is deer resistant. It is deciduous and some information says to cut it back in January, but I have found that mine looks good year-round. It turns to an olive green shade but greens up nicely by late winter. Gulf Muhly is well worth it when Fall comes around.



When the pink seed heads bloom, just imagine a pink fog! And if you plant a few together, it is awesome. They sway in the breeze and show off their pink feathers for all to admire. It'll get you running for your cameras, for sure. Find you one today and enjoy!

Bad Bees

- Jerry Lewis

This colony of Africanized bees decided to occupy an Owl box in front of my house. They had been there 2-3 weeks when my grandson found them (they were in his owl box that he made for boy scouts). I called Wayne Baker and Steve Gardipee, Master Gardeners and beekeepers, to remove the colony. They said that the bees were the most aggressive that they had seen in over two years and could do nothing but destroy them. My grandson is allergic to bee stings so I am glad they are gone.



Keep Temple Beautiful Workers

- Gail Christian

A group of dedicated BCMG's worked July 11 for the Keep Temple Beautiful Project planting summer annuals.

Photos by Gail Christian



Announcements

June Monthly Meeting

- Randy Brown

The program for the August 14th Monthly Meeting will be on Trees. Or if the speaker can't make it, it will be a surprise! The meeting starts at 11 am with social time starting at 10:30.



Grounds Committee Action

- Brenda Albro

August 7 – Grounds work day and Burger Wednesday

August 14 and 28 – 7:30 Grounds work day

August 21 – Not a scheduled workday but if we need it we will send out an email.

Christmas Party Committee Help

- Ilene Miller

Anyone interested in helping with the Christmas Party, please call me at 778-4369 or email me at: mmiller007@hotmail.com

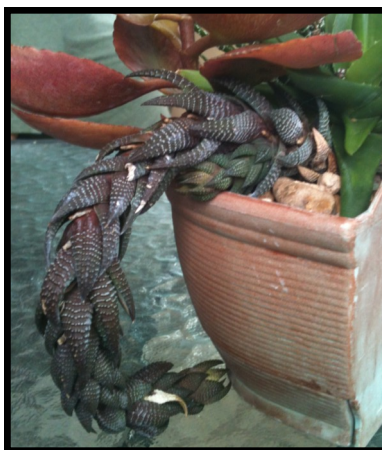
Q & A

Editor's note: Let's learn from one another. Submit your questions and answers to me at moom-pie45@hotmail.com or call me at 512-863-9837.

Last month's question from:

- Cindy Allen

What is this crazy crab-claw looking succulent I saw when I was visiting a succulent collector near Boerne? It's green when it's new, but turns purple/black with age....almost reptilian!



And the answer is:

- Terrie Hahn

I believe it's a *Haworthia coarctata*. The following is an excerpt from a 2005 article from The Wisconsin Master Gardeners about light requirements of *Haworthia* in general and in the box, they've written about its namesake. More at: <http://wimastergardener.org/?q=Haworthia>

Light. The stereotypical image of cacti and other succulent plants is as desert inhabitants, living fully exposed in the hot, bright sun. Whereas large plants can survive such harsh conditions, many smaller succulents actually are found in the shade of rocks or shrubs. Although some *Haworthia* species can be found in full, bright sun, many live in more protected spots, and therefore are adapted to thrive in partial shade (though few look their best without at least some direct sun or bright light). This makes *Haworthias* well adapted to lower light conditions found in homes. They probably do best in an east or west facing window where they get a few hours of direct light daily, and bright indirect light through the remainder of the daylight hours. A south facing window would also be acceptable, but may be too bright for some spe-

cies unless the sun is lightly filtered through sheer curtains. *Haworthias* do very well in sunrooms and greenhouses, though again many of them prefer to be located where they don't get persistent direct sunlight, especially during the warmer part of the year. *Haworthias* grow very well under artificial lights, though they prefer more light intensity than provided by the standard fluorescent "grow lights." A mixture of warm white and cool white bulbs gives both good light intensity and color balance.

The darker and more intense coloration and the very compact growth which many growers find most attractive are developed from brighter light conditions. In insufficient light, leaves will elongate and plants will lose the richness of their colors.

(*Haworthias* make good accent plants on porch, patio, or deck and can be grown outdoors during frost-free periods. Be careful when you move plants outdoors. If they have spent the winter without much direct sunlight, don't immediately put them into full sun outdoors or they may sunburn. Gradually move them into more direct light over a period of a few weeks.

What's in a name – *Haworthia*

Many genera and species of plants are named after people; succulent plants are no exception. The genus name *Haworthia* commemorates Adrian Hardy Haworth, an accomplished British botanist and entomologist, who was born in 1768 and died in the London cholera epidemic of 1833. As an entomologist, Haworth is best known for his work on Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths). As a botanist, he is best known for his studies of succulent plants of diverse families (including New World cacti in his later years) and bulbs. Haworth named many new plant genera and species, though some of his names have been lost over the years due to taxonomic refinement. Two of his genera that remain and are well known and beloved groups to cactophiles include *Mammillaria* and *Epiphyllum*. Haworth has had several plants named after him. In 1809, the new genus *Haworthia* was created by the Frenchman Henri Duval in honor of Haworth. Prior to the creation of the new genus, these plants had been considered part of the genus *Aloe*.

Q & A

This Month's Question from:

- Terrie Hahn

Does anyone know what this is? We found this on a granite pathway. It looks as if it had been dropped by a bird. It looked like a flower top with a thick stem. This critter was trying to crawl out of it. It kept getting stuck and was tucking back in and pulling back out again. The flower top was about 4 inches long and the caterpillar or borer like creature was about 1/4 wide and had legs.

When we went back to see its progress, the flower and critter were gone. It was near a bird feeder. We think a bird saw it moving around and swooped down to eat it.



What's Happening in Your Yard?

- Crystal Fisher

To the right is my Burgundy Red Okra. Below is Eagle Pass Okra. It's surprising to find that Eagle Pass Okra is edible, even at this size. Imagine frying okra that is this big around. Can't wait!



What's Happening in Your Yard?

- Jann Dworsky

The rose below is Rainbow Sorbet, and to the right are our zinnias and cactus.



What's Happening in Your Yard?

- Dee Coffeen

Datura's!!!



What's Happening in Your Yard?

- Frances Idoux

As a continuation of the story of my agave, it's in full bloom and beginning to decline, as expected. I looked up "century plant" to see if I could find out the identity of my plant. There's a really good video from Bok Tower in Florida, explaining why they bloom. There's another agave down the street that's also in bloom. I did see a difference in the leaves of the plants -- my neighbor has a century plant (agave americana) and mine is not -- so I'm going to assume that it's agave parryii -- and try to get an agave expert to take a look at it. Anyway, whatever agave it is has been spectacular this summer!



What's Happening in Your Yard?

- Terrie Hahn

This is one of my experimental succulent gardens. Most of the plants are in pots so that I can figure out how much sun each of them need. These aren't cacti and some only like bright light. About half are cold hardy, the others go into the greenhouse or garage for the winter. A couple in the ground freeze, but come back in the spring. At the bottom of the page is that bee magnet, Winter Savory in bloom and Portulaca.



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Cover photo of birds enjoying the seeds from wild sunflowers we always leave in the gardens by Terrie Hahn.

[Calendar Banner by Terrie Hahn](#)

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

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Please do not send PDF documents.