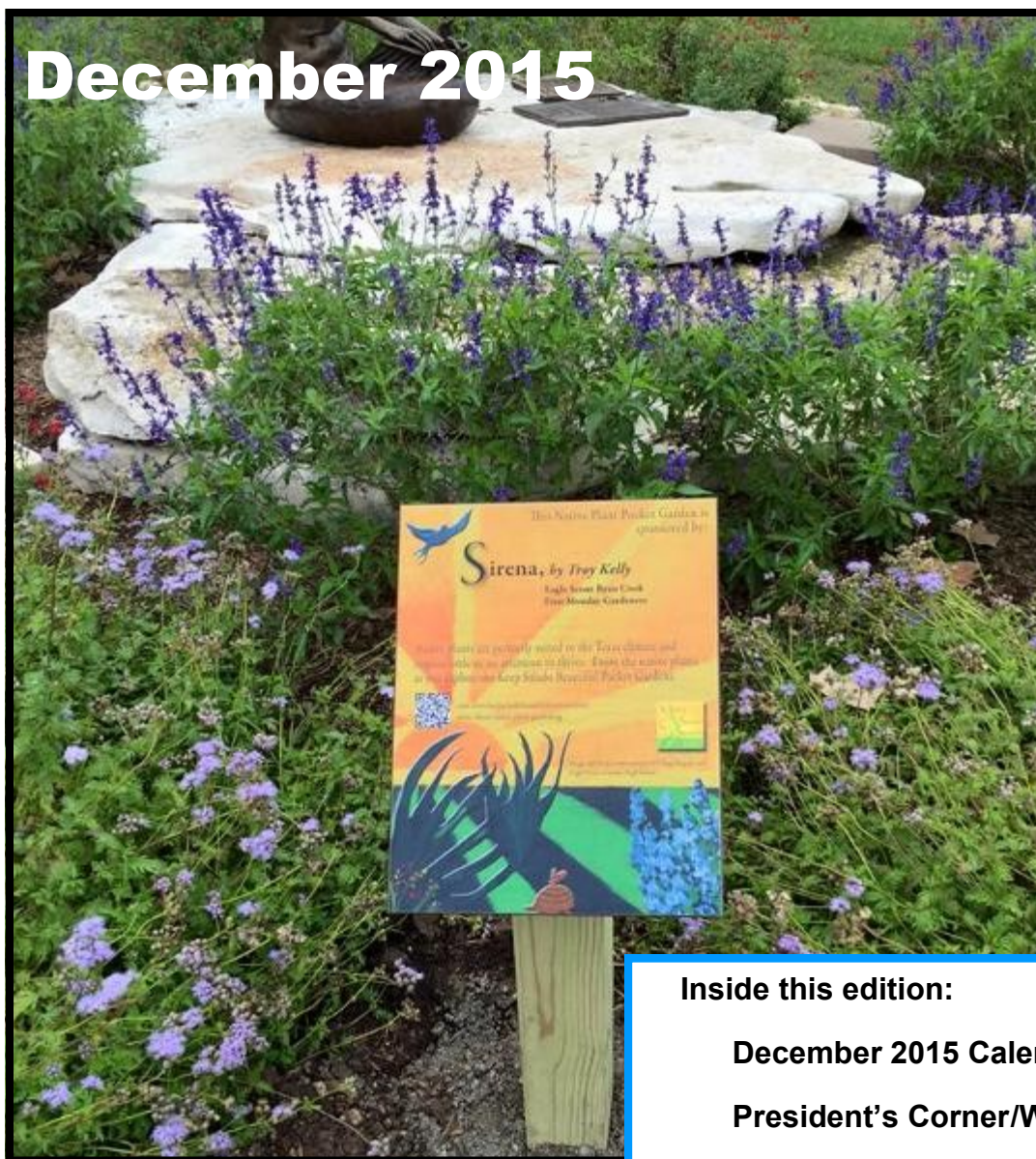


The Blooming Bell

December 2015



**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**



Keep Salado Beautiful
garden project.

Photo By Susan Terry







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Joyeux Noël

December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Work Day 8 am* Hamburger Wednesday 10 am BOD Meeting 9 am	3 MG Christmas Party 6 pm	4	5
6		8	9 Work Day 8 am*	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Work Day 8 am*	17	18	19
20	21	22	23			26
27	28	29	30	31 		

Upcoming Events: New Class Orientation, January 6th New Class Starts January 13th

Annual BCMG dues are due now.

* in the event of rain, there will be No Workdays. Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

New year image by: Anoop Krishnan. Christmas image by: [potgekibi](#) and Prawny. Menorah and snow flakes by Digitalart

The President's Corner

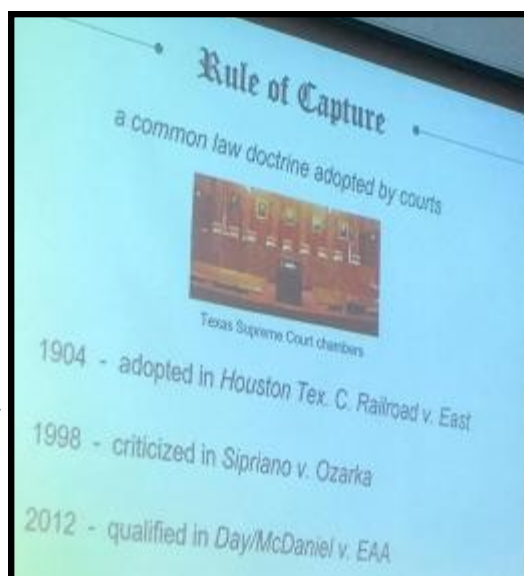
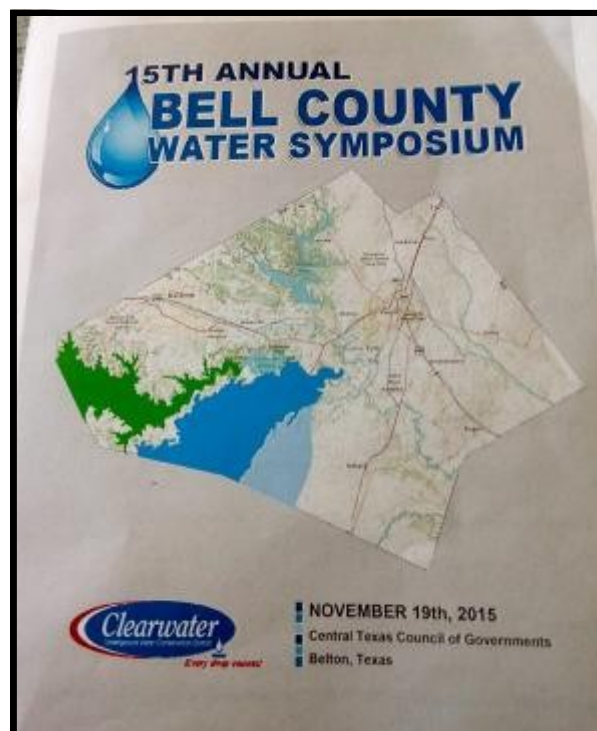
November was another quiet month. I hope everyone was able to enjoy Thanksgiving with family. When thinking about things I am thankful for, the first thing that comes to mind is the great membership of the master gardeners. It's the generous volunteering of your time and hard work that make the job of president so easy. Thanks to all for your efforts.

The water symposium went smoothly and we gave away 10 plants, most in the grass category but all drought tolerant. A big thanks to Carla and Jan for getting the plants and decorating them. The symposium attendees seem to really appreciate them. Also a thanks to everyone else who helped at this event. Your volunteer work is greatly appreciated.

The last quarter State Board of Directors meeting will be on the 5th of December. The social hour starts at 11:45 and the meeting starts at 12:30. If anyone is interested in riding down to College station with me, we will leave from the AgriLife office at 10:00. Dr. Justin Scheiner will present a program on GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).

Don't forget all the events coming up in January. I appreciate all those who signed up for these conferences. I will be sending out e-mail reminders to all just before Christmas.

Gary



Photos by Randy Brown.

Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Scorpions

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Scorpions are arachnids with eight legs and two body regions. Scorpions also have two pincers or claws, called pedipalps, which help them hold their prey as they eat. They also have a long tail with a stinger on the tip that is used for defense or to paralyze prey.

The most common scorpion in Central Texas is the striped bark scorpion. This scorpion is yellowish-tan with two dark stripes that run along the back. Striped bark scorpions get up to 2 ½" in length.

Scorpions can be found under rocks, logs or landscaping material as well as in woodpiles or in homes. When working outside, leather gloves should be worn to avoid being stung.

Striped bark scorpions are capable of stinging, but only cause moderate reactions for most people. Ice packs can be placed on the sting area to reduce pain and swelling. A person stung by a scorpion should be watched closely for several hours following the incident to ensure that an allergic reaction does not manifest. If breathing difficulties or hives occur, seek immediate medical attention.

To help keep scorpions from moving into the home, try the following:

- Remove debris (including firewood) away from the home
- Prune any trees or shrubs that touch or overhang the house
- Replace weather stripping as needed around doors or windows
- Stuff weep holes with copper mesh
- Seal cracks & crevices and/or pipe penetrations with sealant
- Treat the foundation of the home with a pesticide labeled for outside use and scorpions



For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

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KMCCG Right Before Freeze!

- Randy Brown

Edie, Kathy and I harvested ninety-two pounds of tomatoes, peppers and okra before 2 days of forecasted freezes. Many of the tomatoes were green, but will ripen or be used as fried green tomatoes. We had an added bonus of blooming Iris in November!



Let's Talk Tools!

- Terrie Hahn

Patricia Shirey of the Austin Day Spa and KLRU's Central Texas Gardener spoke to us about garden tools at the November General meeting. Many of these tools would make great Christmas gifts! Patricia gave us a list of her favorite tools and where to find them. The tool tote pictured here was filled with everything you would need while wandering around your garden. She rec-



ommends Felco Shears. Felco is a bit pricier than a lot of pruning shears, but she's had hers for 30 years. Felco sells parts to the shears when they wear out and has a set that has a swivel handle and one specifically for lefties.

She brought in a pile of little trees she pulled out with her Lawn Jaws and Puller Bear in just 30 minutes. (*I have a Lawn Jaws and it really saves your hand!*) She gets her tomato cages from www.tomatocage.com. These are made of galvanized steel and are collapsible, but are quite pricey. However, again, she's had hers for 30 years. Patricia reminded us to replace washers in hoses every year and to store insecticidal soap, ant bait, BT, etc. inside. Patricia's son gave her a reciprocating saw with a pruning blade that will cut 4-5 inch branches and a metal cutting blade that will cut rebar. This is one of her favorite tools. She suggested looking for hose couplings in the Pro watering

section of Home Depot and using old grapefruit bags to put weeds in to dip into garbage pails of water for compost tea. Paint your tool handles pink, ladies, and a contractor or husband won't walk off with them!

All in all an entertaining and informative talk.

It was an early Thanksgiving dinner thanks to Kathy Love, Amazon Roberts and Richard Carpenter. Daisy Klassy helped with setup. There was everything from juicy turkey with all the fixin's to appetizers, nuts, muffins and desserts. I don't know when I've seen so much food at the Thanksgiving table and all so delicious!



The photo of the dinner table was taken early, so only shows half of the food that we ate.

Right: the State Awards committee met early that morning!



Photos by Randy Brown and Terrie Hahn

Extension Center Looking Good!

- Terrie Hahn

The hard work of the Grounds Committee and all the MG's who help out with the grounds is paying off. These photos were taken the day of the General Meeting. Look how great everything looks!



Announcements

Christmas Party

Don't forget the Christmas party is December 3rd at the Expo Center at 6:30 p.m. Social time is 6:00. If you haven't paid yet, talk with Charlotte Jones or Ilene Miller. There will be a silent auction, BBQ, veggie and dessert tables and good fun!

BCMG Dues are Due!

- Gail Christian

The 2016 membership dues for the Bell County Master Gardener Association are payable now. Dues remain \$25.00 for each individual. Checks should be made payable to BCMGA and may be mailed or dropped off at the Agrilife Extension Office at 1605 N. Main St. Belton, TX 76513.

Payments will not be deposited until all necessary forms are completed and turned in. The State Master Gardener program requires that all members have a background check every three years. This is a requirement even if you are not an active participant in our programs.

Starting next year we will have a membership committee. It will consist of Gail Christian and Stayce Parry. Our goals are to help everyone learn the Texas Volunteer Management System program and help standardize how service and educational hours are reported.

Christmas Party Silent Auction

- Mary Ann Everett

It is that time of year again, and as it has been a while since we had a silent auction, we will once again have one at our Christmas Party. If you have an item to donate, either new or very gently used (please no garage sale items), contact me. Also we need to know the value on each item that is donated. Looking forward to having fun at the Christmas Party.

BOD Meeting

The November/December Board of Directors meeting will be held on December 2nd at 9 a.m. at the Extension Center. All are welcome to attend.

Grounds Workdays

- Walter Ponder

Here is the Workday schedule for December:

December 2 8 a.m. Workday

December 2 10 a.m. Burger Wednesday

December 9 8 a.m. Workday

December 16 8 a.m. Workday

No workdays on December 23rd or 30th.

Calendar Updated with Presentations

- Susan Terry

Our members provide educational programs to many groups around the county and you are invited to be part of this learning opportunity. Check out the calendar on the Volunteer Management website when you log in your hours. You might see a program of interest or one you'd like to help present. Click on the program and you will find the contact info.

MG presenters, you will receive an email with all of this information. Check it for accuracy and use it as a reference. Contact Susan Terry for more information.

**CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK
PAGE! GO TO**

<https://www.facebook.com/BCMGA>

Announcements

Two herbal announcements

- Kim Pringle

1. The Herb Study has for several years had a winter Herbal Tea. We decided that a Tea in January was a perfect time. Often held on a Thursday morning from about 10 to 12 in a home. The hostess usually is in charge of selecting four or five herbal teas to sample. Everyone brings an herbal dish or snack to sample. Attendance usually ranges from 12 to 20. All Master Gardeners are invited. We could probably make arrangements at the Extension Office or if anyone would like to volunteer their home for the event in January, 2016, please contact me at kimberpringle@earthlink.net.

2. The 21st Annual Herbal Forum at Round Top is scheduled for March 18th and 19th, 2016. The theme is "Some Like it Hot, Some Not" in conjunction with the herb Chili Peppers, Herb of the Year 2016. The cost of the Herbal Forum is about \$75 and there are optional workshops on Friday. Many of us book accommodations at Festival Hill for Friday evening and the cost is about \$90 including continental breakfast. I think we average about 18 people in our group. I usually collect funds for accommodations and individuals must call or register online directly with Festival Hill for the Herbal Forum and the optional workshops.

Many of us bring a sack lunch for Friday noon so we can spend more time at the plant sale and touring the grounds at Festival Hill. There is shopping in downtown Round Top and Royer's Cafe offers lunch and their famous pies if you would prefer. We arrange carpools as we get closer to the date.

I would love to continue our traditional gourmet picnic on Friday evening (each person brings a dish to share - for those who have not attended, this is really a sampling - we do not have kitchen facilities, a refrigerator or stove so if you need refrigeration, you will have to use a cooler with ice. This has not hindered us in the past! And you are welcome to bring wine or your favorite beverage.

Festival Hill opens registration shortly after the first of the year. Accommodations are somewhat limited and we have pre-reserved spaces but they want funds about mid January. If you are interested in attending the Herbal Forum or have questions about it, please email me at kimberpringle@earthlink.net or call 254-791-1564.



Upcoming Events

- Pam Dragoo

Texas Discovery Gardens

* **Butterfly House Discovery Tour December 5, 2015 at 11 am.** Join entomologist John Watts for a family friendly tour of the Rosine Smith Sammons Butterfly House and Insectarium, followed by our daily noon butterfly release! Included with admission.

* **A Natural Winter December 1-31, 2015.** Our lobby gets transformed into a natural winter wonderland as we celebrate this stunning season. Enjoy crafts and activities throughout the month. <http://www.texasdiscoverygardens.org/>

Sustainable Food Center

* **A Conversation with Forrest Pritchard**, author of "Growing Tomorrow," **December 6, 2015 4pm - 6pm** * **Seed Saving, December 8, 2015 6pm - 8pm** * **Class Preview Night January 12, 2016 5pm - 7pm**
<http://sustainablefoodcenter.org/get-involved/classes-events>

Weekend Canyon Tours

<http://www.austinmonthly.com/AM/Calendar/index.php/name/Weekend-Canyon-Tours/event/15812/>

Zilker Botanical Garden

Nov 22, 2015 - Jan 26, 2020 open at 09:45 a.m.

December 5, 2015 Santa in the Garden 2015. Please join the Austin Area Garden Center on December 5th, 2015, 10:00am - 3:00pm, as they present Santa In The Garden 2015. Skip the long lines at the mall and bring the entire family to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. There will be plenty of goodies to eat, fun crafts to make and Christmas Story telling all within the beautiful setting of Zilker Botanical Garden. Mom and Dad can do some shopping in our Chrysalis Gift Shop and enjoy 20% off the entire store. There are wonderful gifts for everyone on your list! So tell your friends about our 2nd Annual Santa in the Garden and make sure to bring your own camera to capture this special event!

Dallas Botanical Garden

Check out 12 Days of Christmas Outdoor Exhibit and the Artistry of the Nativity through January 3.
<http://www.dallasarboretum.org/visit/seasonal-festivals-events/the-12-days-of-christmas>

Continued on next page...

Upcoming Events...continued

Lady Bird Wildflower Center

December 4-6 25th Annual Wild Ideas Shopping Event. Buy your holiday gifts in our natural wonderland. Featuring 20 percent off all merchandise (members also receive their standard discount), book signings, demos, food sampling and more. Free admission.

December 12-13 Luminations. Thousands of luminaries and twinkling lights turn the center into a holiday wonderland during this Austin holiday tradition. Live music. Saturday and Sunday, 6 – 9 p.m. See web for new admission prices.

December 19-20 Pre-Christmas Clearance starts at the Store. Save up to 50 percent on holiday cards and ornaments plus selected gift items and apparel.

www.wildflower.org/holiday/

Llano Earth Art Fest

- Terrie Hahn

I was sorry to have missed the **Llano Earth Art Fest** this past year. But I'm going to mark my calendar. Next year, it's set for **March 11-13**. Looks like a fun time, especially for those of you who like rocks!!! Werner's always liked to stack rocks, so this should be fun! For more information, go to: www.llanoearthartfest.org.



Photos from www.llanoearthartfest.org



What's Happening in Your Yard

- Susan Terry

Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists helped to create and maintain these beautiful gardens in Salado as part of the Keep Salado Beautiful Project.



Photos from KSB Facebook Page.

What's Happening in Your Yard

- Gail Garner

It's the middle of November, and my Meyer lemons are starting to ripen now. They are fairly sweet for a lemon! And I harvested two bowls of Satsuma oranges today. They are small, sweet, very easy to peel and not a lot of seeds. Some of the branches were drooping heavily from the weight so I took some off.

These knockout roses needed a little cutting back today. They've grown wild from all the rain and are falling over onto the sidewalk making it hard to walk past without getting thorned!!! Made a nice bouquet!

My granddaughter, Bailey, in Alaska, loves oranges so I sent her a bowl full of them a few days ago. She got them today and is enjoying fresh picked Texas grown oranges!



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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.

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