

# THE BLOOMING BELL

**December 2016**



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**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**



Yaupon tree full of berries at Werner and Terrie Hahn's house. Every time you go near it, a mockingbird flies out. I think it's protecting its winter food source.-  
Terrie Hahn

# DECEMBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>  <b>Christmas Party</b> <b>6 pm</b> 	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7 Work Day 8 am*</b> <b>Burger</b> <b>Wednesday 10:30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14 Work Day 8 am*</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21 Work Day 8 am*</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 
<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28 Work Day 8 am*</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 

**Upcoming events:** New Student Orientation: January 4, 2017, Classes begin January 11  
Home and Garden Show, February 24-26

\* in the event of rain or 40 degree temperature or below, there will be NO Workday.  
Remember to record volunteer/education hours. 2



# The President's Corner

I want to start out by remembering Frances Idoux whom we lost the week before Thanksgiving. She was a long time member of the master gardeners and did so much for our organization. Most recently working with the McLean Children's Hospital for which she and her group received a state award at the last state conference. She and Carol Runyan were also featured in a recent article of TexAppeal magazine. Please keep Frances and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Just a reminder, that the BIG conference is going to be held at the Extraco Events Center on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December. The Center is located at 4601 Bosque Blvd. The cost is \$20 at the door and includes a lunch. No preregistration is required. Just sign in at the door. The Bell Co. Master Gardeners are sponsors for this event.

We had a good turn out for the visit to the Parrie Haynes Ranch. There is a lot of potential there, and the view over the Lampasas River is spectacular. Thanks to all who took the time to go on this trip. I hope we have a long and helpful relationship with that organization.

Keep in mind that we have two big events at the start of next year. The Bell Co. Youth Fair and the Home and Garden Show. More information on these events will be coming out shortly. Two smaller events in Jan., the Professional Grounds Keeper conference and the Irrigation conference. Only a few volunteers will be needed for those two events.

Once again, I appreciate all the hard work you volunteers have put in. Keep up the good work.

- Gary

## Family Tradition

The November issue of the Tex Appeal magazine featured a story on Tom and Master Gardener, Carol Runyan. The Runyan's have been creating their own Christmas cards for 45 years. To get the full story find a November 2016 issue of Tex Appeal or go the website, [http://kdhnews.com/texappeal/textalk/neighbor/family-tradition-couple-creates-original-christmas-cards/article\\_b325ed7e-9c68-11e6-893f-9bdaa8c197a2.html](http://kdhnews.com/texappeal/textalk/neighbor/family-tradition-couple-creates-original-christmas-cards/article_b325ed7e-9c68-11e6-893f-9bdaa8c197a2.html)



Photo by Josh Bachman of Tex Appeal

Story on website is by Catherine Hosman

## KMCCG Update

Edie Campbell reports that in November, the Killeen Municipal Court Community Gardens produced 193.5 lbs of produce. For the year, the Gardens produced 3,536 lbs! Job well done to all those Master Gardeners who work so hard out there tilling and teaching!

# Remembering Frances Idoux

## In Remembrance

Frances Idoux's accomplishments are numerous so let me shed some light on a few. She was a member of BCMG Class of 2002. She served two terms from 2007-2008 as Vice President. She was a French and English major in college and loved to write and compose. Her expertise was evident in her work compiling "The Ten Year History of BCMGA" and "The BCMGA 16th Anniversary Collection 1997-2013". Frances was a charter member of the Herb Study Group and served several years as hostess in her home for the annual Christmas Tea. She was well known for her Rose Geranium Pound Cake with Lemon Curd. She loved attending the annual Herbal Forum in



Round Top each spring, and she was the best at packing cars so we could bring home ALL the plants we had purchased.

Frances had a real soft spot in her heart for the McLane Children's Hospital Garden where she worked endlessly making sure the plants were planted, watered, and looking their best. She told me she felt real peace there and loved talking with the patients and their families. As you can tell she was always looking out for the good in others. At our Christmas party Frances will be awarded the Green Thumb Award for her work at the hospital garden, her BCMG 15

Year badge, and the Lifetime Award for her service since 2002.

The thing Frances treasured most was her family. They were the "apple of her eye". She wanted to be part of their lives. It was not uncommon for her to drive to Houston for a grandchild's baseball game, to attend soccer games in Belton, or to fly to Rhode Island for a granddaughter's birthday party. She also traveled to Boston to watch her daughter run in the Boston Marathon. She recently visited her brother who lives in Ireland and brought back wonderful pictures of flowers and landscape there. Did I mention she excelled at photography too! Frances was always interested in furthering her own knowledge and capabilities and wanted to do the same for others.

To sum it up, Frances Idoux was a true example of the Golden Rule for Christian conduct: "And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way".

We will miss her.

- Carol Runyan



Continued on next page...

## Remembrances Of Our Friend, Frances Idoux

I was saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Frances Idoux in a two car crash on Thursday in Belton. She is fondly remembered for her smile and positive enthusiasm for Master Gardeners and gardening. Frances was a wonderful photographer, often sharing her photos in the Blooming Bell. She was an accomplished writer and editor, and was the editor of our two BCMGA Histories and Collection of News Articles which I treasure. Frances was interested in so many aspects of gardening including herbs and blooming plants. She was a champion for the Children's Garden at McLane Children's Hospital Scott and White in Temple. Frances was such a special lady and will be so missed by her many friends in Bell County Master Gardeners' Association. Our deepest sympathy to her family.

- Ilene Miller, Bell County Master Gardener



## The Last Email

*This is the last email I received from Frances. Frances is referring to some lovely calendula I picked up from my friend's nursery in Grand Prairie for the Children's garden. Frances was also a participant in my Great Celery Challenge of 2016. - Kathy Love*

Dear Kathy, All of the babies got planted yesterday -- and photographed. Ran out of energy by last night, but just sent you pictures. The plants are so healthy! And, yes, the celery is in the planter in front of the wall. It will get plenty of sun -- and plans to win the contest. Expects a blue ribbon when it does! Thank you, too, for all your help. Plants are looking forward to your visit!

Love,

Frances





# The Great Celery Challenge

- Kathy Love

While in Grand Prairie at the end of September I went to my good friend Melody's nursery, *Pat's Plants*, where, as has been true for many years, I found something different to try in my garden. Peppermint Stick Celery!!! The description provided states:

*"Striped candy pink and green stalks with green leaves. Intense, full-flavored celery is perfect for any kitchen garden, with abundant yields of 1/4" stalks. Exposure = Full sun to partial shade; Height/Spacing 18-24" tall/8-10" apart; Hardiness 32°; Days to Maturity 100 Days"*

Melody is always trying new plants at her stand and she knows when I come in I'll try just about anything she puts on the shelf. So of course, I bought three plants, took them home and got on the computer to see what it takes to grow celery.

What I discovered is that celery is one of the most challenging of all garden plants to grow. Sounded like a MG Challenge to me, so I called Melody and had her hold the rest of the flat and went back to pick them up.

Just some of the reason's celery is challenging to grow is its many demands. It



wants to be constantly moist, demanding at least 1-2" of rainfall or irrigation weekly. It has a small root system and is a poor nutrient forager, so there needs to be a good supply of nutrients in the soil throughout the growing period.

Celery is also fussy about temperatures. The minimum temperature for celery is 36°F, but if exposed to cool temperatures for several weeks the plants will flower. The ideal temperature is 55-65°F. When temperatures go above 85°F, even more frequent watering is necessary to minimize stress and fiber development. So, does any of this make celery sound like something we can grow easily in Central Texas?

Therefore, at Burger Wednesday on October 5th, I issued the challenge to the following members who each took either one or two plants each: Karen Colwick, Johnny

Jones, Jo Carlsen, Tom Rennels, Jan George, Carla Harmon, Wayne Schirner, Art Carr, Walter Ponder, Gary Slanga, Ann Wagner and (sadly) Frances Idoux for the Children's Garden at McLane's Children's Hospital. The challenge is this:

*Who can grow the most successful celery plant by weight?* As everyone harvests their celery, they will bring it for a weigh in (I'll start bringing my food scales to meetings in January), with first prize (to be determined) going to the weight winner.

I think we should also compare how everyone successfully grew their celery.

For instance, to try to meet my celery's demand for moisture and nutrients, I planted my two plants (left) next to an olla and just inches from the compost bin in one of my keyhole gardens. Ann is growing her celery in a pot on her apartment patio (can move it in to avoid the cold). I look forward to finding out how everyone else is tackling the "challenge" of growing celery in Bell County!

Oh, and as just a sideline, only PEPPERMINT STICK celery will be weighed, no green celery from the grocery store!!! HA!



Above: Children's Hospital plant; below, Ann's plant



# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Pecan Weevil

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Adult pecan weevils are brownish beetles with a long snout. Larvae are a legless, creamy white grub with reddish heads.

Adults, male and female, cause damage by feeding and/or laying eggs in pecans. Adults typically emerge from the soil, where they have spent anywhere from 2 to 3 years, in early August. Cells are deep within the soil, usually from 4-12 inches below the surface. Drought or hardened/ compacted soil can delay emergence of the beetles. Adult emergence can last over several weeks.



Once emerged from the soil, adult weevils move to pecan trees where feeding and mating begin. Females do not lay eggs until 5 days after they emerge from the soil. To lay eggs, the female chews through the shuck and shell to excavate a small area in the kernel. She then lays 3-4 eggs per nut, avoiding nuts that already have eggs. Females live about 3-4 weeks and can lay up to 75 eggs in that time.

Larvae hatch and feed within the kernel. Once larvae are fully developed, they chew a hole through the shell and shuck and drop to the ground to burrow into the soil. About a year later, the majority of the burrowed larvae pupate. Adult pecan weevils emerge from the ground after another year, resulting in a two year life cycle.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is seeking your assistance in locating possible pecan weevil in-

festations in Bexar, Hays, Comal and Travis counties. Pecan weevil is a serious pest of pecan and current distribution information for the four county area is

only centered around the Wimberley area in Hays county. However, it is felt that other infestations could be within other counties.

An infestation of this year's pecan crop can be identified by having 2 to 4 legless, dirty white grubs within the pecan shell or by pecans that have a small round BB size hole in the shell.

If anyone finds a suspected infestation, pecans showing signs of an infestation can be taken to your local county Extension office or mailed to: Bill Ree, P.O. Box 2150, Bryan, TX 77806-2150 for confirmation. This distribution information is for educational purposes. Your assistance in this search is greatly appreciated.



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](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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# The Veggie Guy

- Wayne Schirner

## Get Ready for Frost

December is a slow month for planting, but with all of the holiday events, that's probably a good thing. Lettuce can still be planted, as long as you can protect it from freezing. Asian greens, cool season greens, radishes, and spinach are other crops that can be planted throughout December. A clear plastic hoop tunnel works well to protect from freezes, which may allow you to continue to grow cool weather crops. Make sure you open the ends on sunny days to prevent excessive heat buildup. I use 10 foot sections of ½" PVC arched over my 4 foot wide beds. I pounded ½" rebar into the ground on either side of my bed, spaced every 2 feet. The PVC pipe slips over the rebar and stays in place.

For below freezing weather that is expected to last more than a day, I use 6-mil plastic over the PVC hoops. I use clips made for attaching the plastic to the PVC, but there are a variety of things that can be used. For a light frost, I use fabric row covers.

If you aren't going to try to keep your garden producing through the winter, control winter weeds by covering them with a thick blanket of the mulch of your choice. Leaves work great and are plentiful this time of year. You can even layer newspaper or cardboard directly on the ground before putting the mulch in place. The other primary thing to accomplish in December is to decide what you want to start growing in January for your spring garden.

Tomato transplants can be started 8-12 weeks before you want to put them in the ground, so anytime between mid-December and mid-January is when they should be started. Now is the time to order varieties that you haven't been able to buy locally, even from our spring plant sale.

For information about lighter frosts, keep reading. The information below is adapted from the Garden.org newsletter, which is free from the National Gardening Association.

It's late fall. The sky is blue, and the sun is bright. Then your local weather forecaster ruins everything with these chilling words: "Possible frost tonight." Once the initial panic subsides, reason sets in. Frost is a local event, and it's possible to predict with considerable certainty whether it will hit the plants in your garden. So relax, walk outside, and pay attention to these six items to predict the likelihood of frost damage. Then, if necessary, spring into action.

### 1. Look Skyward

Clear, calm skies and falling afternoon temperatures are usually the perfect conditions for frost. Frost (also called white or hoarfrost) occurs when air temperatures dip below 32°F and ice crystals form on the

Continued on next page...





# Frost...continued

plant leaves; injuring and sometimes killing tender plants. However, if temperatures are falling fast under clear, windy skies -- especially when the wind is out of the northwest -- it may indicate the approach of a mass of polar air and a hard freeze. A hard, or killing, frost is based on movements of large air masses. The result is below-freezing temperatures that generally kill all but the most cold-tolerant plants.

But if you see clouds in the sky -- especially if they are lowering and thickening -- you're in luck. Here's why. During the day, the sun's radiant heat warms the earth. After sunset, the heat radiates upward, lowering temperatures near the ground. However, if the night is overcast, the clouds act like a blanket, trapping heat and keeping air temperatures warm enough to prevent frost.

## 2. Know Your Plants

The plant itself determines the likelihood of frost damage. Immature plants still sporting new growth into the fall are most susceptible -- especially the new growth. Frost tolerance tends to be higher in plants with maroon or bronze leaves, because such leaves absorb and retain heat. Downy- or hairy-leaved plants also retain heat and reduce wind drying of the leaves. Compact plants expose a smaller proportion of their leaves to cold and drying winds. By the same token, closely spaced plants protect each other.

## 3. Feel the Breeze

Wind also influences the likelihood of frost. In the absence of wind, the coldest air settles to the ground. The temperature at plant level may be freezing, even though at eye level it is above freezing. A gentle breeze, however, will prevent this settling, keep temperature higher, and save your plants. Of course, if the wind is below freezing, you'll probably have fried green tomatoes for tomorrow's supper.

## 4. Check the Moisture

Just as clouds and gentle winds are your friends, so are humidity and moisture. When moisture condenses out of humid air, it releases heat. Not much heat, true, but perhaps enough to save the cleomes. If the air is dry, though, the moisture in the soil will evaporate.

Evaporation requires heat, so this process removes warmth that could save your peppers.

## 5. Scrutinize the Soil

Your garden's soil type can affect the amount of moisture it holds and the plants' ability to withstand cold weather. Deep, loose, heavy, fertile soil releases more moisture into the surrounding air than thin, sandy, or nutrient-poor soil. The more humid the air, the higher the dew point and the less likely that frost will form on those plants. Heavily mulched plants are more likely to be frosted, since mulch prevents moisture and heat in the soil from escaping and warming the surrounding air. (Light-colored mulches such as hay or straw have the additional disadvantage of reflecting sunlight and heat during the day.)

## 6. What's a Gardener To Do?

So you've checked the weather conditions and decide that, yes, Jack Frost is coming and protecting your plants is worthwhile. You'll want to do two things: First, cover your plants, both to retain as much soil heat and moisture as possible and to protect them against strong winds, which can hasten drying and cooling. Use almost anything to cover plants: newspapers, bushel baskets, plastic tarps, straw, or pine boughs. Spun-bonded fabric row covers will protect plants down to 30°F, polyethylene row covers to 28°F. There is even one that is rated to provide 10 degrees of protection. Cover the whole plant before sunset to trap any remaining heat. Lightweight coverings such as row covers and newspaper should be anchored to prevent them from blowing away.

Second, keep the soil moist by watering your plants the day the frost is predicted. Commercial fruit and vegetable growers even leave sprinklers on all night to cover plants with water. As the water freezes, it releases heat, protecting the plants, even though they're covered in ice. To prevent damage, the sprinklers need to run continuously as long as temperatures remain below freezing.

That's it for this month. Time to go snuggle up with a cup of hot chocolate and the seed catalogs.

Photo from: <http://www.tomatodirt.com/>

# CITRUS LEAFMINER (*Phyllocnistis citrella* Stainton)

- Kathy Love

These photos show the work of citrus leaf miners on my orange tree. This leaf miner has a complete metamorphous (egg, larva, pupa & adult-moth, very small, works dusk to dawn) and affects citrus like oranges, mandarins, lemons, lime and grapefruit as well as other related plants.

**To identify the problem, some helpful bullet points on this pest are:**

- New leaves (flush) preferred for feeding
- Larvae may also feed by mining in succulent stems and sometimes fruit
- Larvae usually feed by creating mines on the underside of young leaves
- Mine patterns do not cross but create a serpentine/snake-like pattern (right)
- Severely damaged leaves (right, below) become curled and distorted
- As larvae grows the mine or tunnel becomes wider and more visible
- Larval excrement forms a thin, central thread-like trail within the mine

**Best management practices:**

- Mature citrus

Though damage is unsightly, yield and growth will not be significantly affected

Insecticide control is not generally worthwhile except in trees that produce multiple flushes during the growing season

- Young citrus

Leaf miners are likely to damage young trees as growth can be retarded

However, even when there is heavy damage, the tree is unlikely to die

- Cultural control

Avoid pruning more than once a year so cycles of flushing are uniform and short

Pests are not able to mine leaves that have hardened off

Don't remove damaged leaves as undamaged areas of leaves continue to feed the tree

Don't apply nitrogen fertilizer when leaf miner populations are high to avoid new flushes



Continued on next page...



# Leafminer...continued

- Chemical control

Insecticidal control is difficult because larvae are shielded within the leaf mines

Overuse of insecticides induces resistance and is detrimental to its natural enemies

Foliar sprays can be applied to new growth on young trees (less than 4 years old) when leaves are most vulnerable to damage

Insecticides will only confer 2-3 weeks of control and cannot be relied upon for effective control of heavy infestations

Horticultural oil sprays (including Neem Oil) applied to new growth may inhibit egg laying by mature moth but will need to be applied weekly

Insecticides with Spinosad have recently been introduced but must be applied to both top and bottom of leaf on a bi-weekly basis

Do not apply Spinosad sprays until evidence of leaf miners is evident as you are only wasting money and spray

In my case, I think this problem came up because I applied a slow release fertilizer in June when I thought the tree looked stressed. This caused a new flush and it was in the new flush that the miners appeared. I have both lemon trees and a key lime tree which have not been affected by the pest. My plan is to let the pests run their course (my tree is potted and 3 years old) as there are still plenty of unaffected leaves.

## Q & A

### - Carol Runyan

*Can someone help identify the white flowers? They are bulbs that bloom at this time of year (Sept-Oct). During the hot summer, they disappear. Years ago a member brought some bulbs to class to give away and I took some.*



### - Terrie Hahn, Mary Ann Everett

I must admit, that I thought these were white wild asters, but **Mary Ann Everett** answered the query. She thinks they are *Zephyranthes candida*. The common name for them is "Rain Lily."

According to the Denton County Master Gardener Association website, "Zephyranthes are commonly called rain lilies, because they often bloom after it rains. According to the Pacific bulb society, the White Rain Lily may be grown more than any other species of Zephyranthes. Native to the southeastern United States, Central and South America, the plant's foliage resembles sedge or monkey grass. They work well in borders and small garden spaces. The White Rain Lily tolerates drought, heat and clay soils forming clumps about 12 inches tall and wide. In the early fall, it is covered with large white flowers. Plants are evergreen in winter. Heat stressed plants recover from underground bulbs when water is applied or temperatures cool off." For more information, Mary Ann suggests this site: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=c747>

# Southern Region Master Gardener Conference

**By Ann Wagner with Kathy Love**

Kathy Love and I attended the 2016 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference November 1-4 in Arlington, Texas. The Southern Region Master Gardener Association is made up of 13 states, from Florida and Georgia to the east to Oklahoma and Texas to the West. Hosted by the Tarrant County Master Gardener Association, the conference featured numerous outstanding keynote speakers, garden tours, breakout session training classes, a Southern Conference Marketplace with many vendors offering everything from plants to garden art and books from the Texas A&M Bookstore. There was also a very well attended silent auction fundraiser.

Opening day registration started at noon on November 1<sup>st</sup> and we were a little confused at first. The conference was scheduled for the Arlington Convention Center but after wandering the huge building for a bit, we didn't see any evidence of a conference. Shortly thereafter, we ran into a fellow Master Gardener from Tennessee coming out of the center's offices where she was told the convention had been moved to the attached Sheraton Hotel due to smaller than expected attendance.

So, after moving over to the hotel, we found the registration tables and got our registration packets and the t-shirts we had ordered. We spent the rest of the afternoon checking out the vendors and silent auction items and planning the rest of our day. Clearly Kathy's favorite vendor was the Dallas County Master Gardener's new cookbook sale since she ended up purchasing three of the excellent cookbooks for herself and for gifts and winning a fourth in the silent auction! I too enjoyed the books being offered by various vendors, purchasing children's gardening books for my niece and nephew in New York.

The conference officially opened on November 2<sup>nd</sup> with a welcoming speech by Dr. Douglas Steele, Director of Texas A&M Agrilife Ext. Service. Dr. Steele spoke in glowing terms of the Texas Mas-

ter Gardener Association as the largest in the nation. He pointed out that in 2015, Texas trained 1,085 new volunteers. In 2015 new and tenured volunteers provided the greatest number of educational hours in the history of the program, a total of 556,180 hours. These hours equate to 300 full time employees and an economic impact of \$12 million dollars. He also spoke of the importance of agriculture in Texas, pointing out that 97% of farms in the state are still family owned. He closed his remarks with the issue of organic vs. commercial farming in the state, saying there is plenty of room for both techniques in our agriculture.

Then, the conference's first Keynote speaker, Mark Hirsch, Photojournalist, Artist, and Naturalist took the stage. While recovering from a serious car accident in 2012, he used his iPhone to document a year long photo-a-day project focusing on an old burr oak tree on a neighbor's farm near his home in Dubuque, Iowa. Using a Power Point presentation, he shared photos of this old historic burr oak from a daily photo shoot that included all times and seasons throughout the year. He used an incredible variety of creative ways to photograph the tree and to share his own healing and self-discovery through the photos of this one burr oak which he called "That Tree." His book of the same title with all 365 days of photos was offered for sale at the Conference. His speech was very inspirational and showed a different side of Master Gardener/Horticulture since we know it to be getting our hands dirty growing and planting things. Mr. Hirsch's

Continued on next page...





## Southern Region Conference...continued

presentation reflected the beauty of nature which we so often take for granted and was an inspirational speech on perseverance, resilience and outreach through social media. His "That Tree" project started out with a handful of followers and now has thousands of followers on his Facebook page.

There was a Master Gardener State Coordinator Panel discussion with coordinators from Mississippi, Georgia, Texas, and Arkansas. They each talked about requirements for getting certified in their state as a Master Gardener. This was interesting as we learned of both differences and similarities between each Master Gardener program. There was a considerable difference in the number of volunteer and education hours required between the states. Our question to the panel was "How do you get your members to enter their hours?" and guess what? There was no good answer from any of the panelists to our question. Bottom line, "an issue we must keep working on!"

In the afternoon breakout session, we attended The Art of Diagnosis by Dr. Kevin Ong, Professor and Director of the Texas A&M Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab. Dr. Ong spoke about diagnosing plant diseases and how to identify the symptoms that make up certain specific diseases. He showed many slides of different plant and fruit tree diseases and as is always true of Dr. Ong, the session was very instructive. Kathy took the time to sit with Dr. Ong for a photo as her proof to Mary Ann Everett that she told Dr. Ong hello from Mary Ann!



The next breakout session was unfortunately a disappointment as the conference did not provide adequate space or seating for the session "Join the Herbin League" so we missed the session as latecomers (Kathy spent too much time visiting with Dr. Ong!).

We attended Thursday morning's Keynote session by Neil Sperry whose professional recognition includes induction into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2003. He is a featured columnist with the Ft. Worth Star Telegram and 15 other newspapers across Texas. He has won top awards for his radio and television broadcasts. His presentation was entertaining with many stories and anecdotes, and educational with his knowledge of horticulture in Texas.

In the afternoon breakout sessions, we attended the Dynamic Soils class by Dr. Sam Feagley, Professor and State Soil Environment Specialist, Dept. of Soil and Crop Sciences, Texas A&M University. Dr. Feagley discussed different soil types with their properties and what that meant for nutrient absorption or building a stable house foundation. It was quite interesting. He discussed how to read a soil survey map and where to find them online. We learned that when diagnosing specific problems in site visits, like an iron chlorosis problem Kathy and I identified in one of our visits, we should add micronutrient testing to the basic macronutrient soil sample we would recommend in such a situation.

I took the class on antique roses titled "Texas Rose Rustlers" in the next breakout session while Kathy took the session on "Great Garden Ideas" instructed by Steven Chamblee. The antique roses session was instructed by Dr. William Welch. We watched slides on different roses, mainly the Tea Rose variety as it developed over time. The last 15 minutes of class were spent on rose propagation using a real rose cutting.

We wrapped up our time at the Southern Region Conference with a very nice banquet Thursday evening.

Friday featured an entertainment only capstone speech by actor Barry Corbin which we opted to skip as well as the tours offered that afternoon. We spent our Friday working on the grounds of Loven' Pet Sit-ting', Kathy's former home in Grand Prairie, where we stayed for the convention, and Friday evening out on the town in Arlington!

We both rate the conference a great success and were sure to thank our Tarrant County hosts for a fun and educational event!

## MASTER GARDENERS MAKE THE CUT IN TEX APPEAL

# A Peaceful Garden

Story by Catherine Hosman, Photos by Julie Nabours

*Editor's Note: For those of us who didn't get the Tex Appeal Magazine in April, we've reprinted their article on the McLane Children's Hospital Garden that the BCMG's have been instrumental in setting up.*

Master Gardeners Frances Idoux and Carol Runyan meet in the meditation garden at McLane Children's Hospital in Temple. It's Tuesday, and it's their day to pull weeds where needed, remove last season's flowers and get ready to plant the new spring crop. On this warm, but windy March day, the garden was still in bloom with winter pansies, snapdragons, lantana and calendula. The fragrance of rosemary floated across the garden on the wind.

"We like plants that bloom all year," Idoux said.

Today they will remove the winter bulbs in preparation for heat-tolerant plants like verbena and zinnias that can survive in Texas' summer. Most of the herbs in the garden are perennials and only need to be

trimmed to continue to grow. An annual, like basil, needs to be replanted each year.

The idea for the garden was conceived in 2012. Bell County Master Gardeners volunteered and planned the garden to provide a place of tranquility where patients, families and staff can escape their daily routine, if only for a few minutes.

"We wanted to add color, fragrance and touchability to the garden," Idoux said. "The garden is very valuable for children and adults. It's a connection to the natural world and some of nature's gifts come in small packages."

In season, butterflies are attracted to the colorful flowers that bloom throughout the garden.

"We want the children to use all their senses, see nature, colors, be able to touch things and walk up to the

Continued on next page...





## Tex Appeal Story...continued

plants that are kid friendly,” said hospital representative Dr. Chanin Wright, Pediatric Clinical Pharmacy Specialist.

Both Idoux and Runyan are quick to point out that the garden is a team effort. It became a reality with the support of Bell County Master Gardeners President Gary Slanga, other members of the group who donated their time to keep the garden maintained, and hospital staff volunteers. It began when Slanga made a site visit and had the soil tested. He suggested raised plant beds for drainage and also recommended using self-watering planters that would help with maintenance.

“Frances is in charge of the garden with Carol Runyan and some other folks. They just wanted us to help them get it started,” Slanga said. “Most of the garden was established but the plants were not doing well because the soil was poor, which is why we did soil testing on it. Now that the garden is doing well and the plants are good, we are going to do some periodic programs with the kids up there.”

This seasonal garden grows only kid-friendly, non-toxic plants. Most of the plants are in-ground, but raised planters of flowers and herbs are just the right height for the kids in wheelchairs to pull up to the boxes to touch the plants, smell the herbs, and rub the scent on their fingers. “One of the things the hospital was asking for were herbs to use and things kids can touch, smell and even take a bite of something,” Idoux said, adding that the herbs are clipped regularly for use in the hospital’s kitchen.

Above the herb planter that sits against a brick wall in the garden, window boxes filled with succulents create a thorn-free textural display.

The garden pathway is paved with donated bricks that were the result of a fundraiser for the garden. Some are engraved in memory of a loved one, some have the name of the donor, and others remain blank. “There is a story behind every brick,” Idoux said.

Also in the garden are the centerpiece rock water fountain and the historical archway that pays homage to the King’s Daughters Hospital created in 1896 and the original occupant of the site.

Sculptures depicting children and animals are placed throughout the garden and are at ground level so children can touch and imagine. Tall, abstract pinwheels offer a calming form of meditation. As you stare at the wind-driven, spherical designs they seem to expand and contract as they spin in the wind.

“The garden provides color, movement, happiness and charm,” Idoux said.

In addition to the garden being a peaceful environment, it also offers a gentle form of exercise for children as they go on a scavenger hunt with a map created by Runyan’s son, Mark. The children are led to some of the surprises placed throughout the garden. As they follow along the pathway, they check off their finds that include sculptures that depict a snail family, an alligator, a rosemary plant they can touch and smell, and several other carefully placed sculpture, plants and even Ronald McDonald.

Idoux joined Master Gardeners in 2001, after her family relocated to Central Texas when her husband, Dr. John P. Idoux, an academic chemist and administrator, accepted a position in Temple.

“I had read an article about the Master Gardeners Club, filled out an application and graduated in 2002,” Idoux said. “Being in Master Gardeners involves both being educated in gardening and providing service for educational and horticulture projects.”

Runyan, whose husband, Thomas, is a retired physician, has always loved to garden and she joined Master Gardeners in 2008. Classes were four hours every Wednesday for six months. Each week a lecturer from Texas A&M taught classes on gardening including horticulture, propagation, soil and etymology.

“We learned what bugs were good,” Runyan said. “Many bugs are called beneficials, like the lady bug.”

Idoux said the garden also benefits hospital staff as another place they can take their lunch or break.

“It’s a stressful occupation and to get a little relief — that’s important,” Runyan added.

“The garden is a place for families and patients to come and get away from the hospital and get outside,” Wright added. “We want children to use all their senses, see nature and colors, touch things.”

# This and That

## Parrie Haynes Ranch Project



- Randy Brown

A group of MGs went for a site visit and discussions with representatives from The Boys and Girls Clubs at Parrie Haynes Ranch to determine the feasibility of putting in a vegetable garden.

## BCMG's Help Out With Water Symposium

- Randy Brown



Left: Jan George and Gail Christian man a table for Master Gardeners at the Bell County Water Symposium on November 16th.



# Announcements

## Grounds Workdays

- **Walter Ponder**

Here is the Workday schedule for October:

8 a.m. December 7, 2016 Workday  
10:30 a.m. December 7, 2016 Burger Wednesday  
8 a.m. December 14, 2016 Workday  
8 a.m. December 21, 2016 Workday  
8 a.m. December 28, 2016 Workday

In the event of rain or 40 degree temperature or below, there will be No Workday.

## Christmas Party Info

Christmas Party...Friday, December 2...in the Special Events Room...Bell County Expo Center. We'll begin gathering at 6:00 pm; dinner will be served at 6:30 pm.

We will be collecting items for The Friends in Crisis Homeless Shelter, Families in Crisis, and KISD Community Clothes

Closet – the tubs are at the Extension Center, but will also be in the Special Events Room the night of our Christmas Party. Be generous, Master Gardeners, and let's fill up those tubs! See the October Blooming Bell for a list of needed items.

There will also be a jar/box if you would like to donate something towards the purchase of a bench or some sort of memorial plaque at the Children's Hospital Garden in memory of Frances Idoux.

## Dues are Due!

- **Gail Christian**

It is time to start collecting dues. We need 2017 dues by January 31. We will start accepting dues in December. We have very few members needing background checks this next year. I will send the form to you by e-mail if you need a background check.

## Herbal Forum

- **Kim Pringle**

The 22nd Annual Herbal Forum at Round Top is scheduled for March 17th and 18th, 2017. The theme is "Love it or Leave it" in conjunction with the herb Coriander/Cilantro, Herb of the Year 2017. The cost of the Herbal Forum is about \$75 and there are optional workshops on Friday. Many of us book accommodations at Festival Hill Friday evening, the cost is about \$90 including continental breakfast. We average about 18 people in our group. I usually collect funds for accommodations but individuals must call or register on-line directly with Festival Hill for the Herbal Forum and the optional workshops when registration opens after the first of the year.

Many of us leave early Friday morning and bring a sack lunch for Friday noon so we can spend 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.

We have a gourmet picnic on Friday evening (each attendee 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). You are welcome to bring wine or your favorite beverage.

I pre-reserve rooms (3 twin beds per room) and payment is due about mid January. Please contact me if you have questions or wish to reserve a space at [kimberpringle@earthlink.net](mailto:kimberpringle@earthlink.net) or call or text my cell 254-421-2593.



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

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

# FYI

## Mother Earth News Fair


Feb. 18-19, 2017  
Bell County Expo Center  
301 W Loop 121  
Belton, Texas 76513

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

With more than 150 workshops, there is no shortage of informative demonstrations and lectures to educate and entertain you over the weekend.

This is a great way to earn Education Hours. Fun, Informative workshops and demo's!

Go to: <http://www.motherearthnewsfair.com/texas/>



# Salado

## CHRISTMAS STROLL

**LATE NIGHT**  
**SHOPPING, DINING & ENTERTAINMENT**

**PARADE**  
**DEC. 1**  
THURSDAY 5 PM

**CHRISTMAS STROLL**  
**DEC. 2-4 & 9-11**

**"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"**  
**DEC. 2-3 & 9-10**  
**AT TABLE ROCK**

**SALADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**TOUR OF HOMES**  
**DEC. 2-4**  
FRIDAY 5 PM - 8 PM  
SATURDAY 10 AM - 3 PM  
SUNDAY 1 PM - 4 PM

**LIVE NATIVITY**  
**DEC. 2-3 & 9-10**

**THE SALADO**  
**CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE**  
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A NEW CHRISTMAS SCENIC GAME  
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online at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FromTheGroundUp>

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## From the Ground Up Connecting Agriculture and Health

*Tuesday, December 13, 2016*

*9:00 am - 4:30 pm (registration 8:30 am)*

*Extraco Events Center ~ 4601 Bosque BLVD, Waco, TX*

**with keynote speaker - Julie Borlaug from the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, on the topic of domestic and global hunger**

### ***Other Topics:***

- ***Food Waste and Initiatives Addressing Food Waste***
- ***New Dietary Guidelines***
- ***Path to the Plate & Culinary Demonstration***

<http://agrilife.org/fromthegroundup/>

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

# Blackland Income Growth Conference Horticulture Program

Tuesday, December 13



Extracto Events Center, 4601 Bosque Blvd., Waco

8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Soil Health; Willie Durham; USDA

9:45 a.m. – 10 a.m. - Break

10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Grapes; Justin Scheiner; TAMU

11 a.m. – 12 noon

Safer Salads; Sujata Sirsat;

12 noon – 1:30 p.m.—Lunch

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Irrigation; Charles Swanson;

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.—Break

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Plant Pathology; Dr. Ong;

3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Organics vs. traditional fertilizer; Tim Hartmann;

5:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.—Light hors d'oeuvre

6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Capstone Speaker

Protecting Pollinators; Jerry Hayes, Monsanto

The Horticulture Program is only \$20 and includes lunch. You simply show up and register. No pre-registering. Each seminar counts for Education Hours.

## Willie Durham



**What We Know about Soil Health**  
Durham is the Regional Soil Health Specialist for USDA and will address the new paradigms research has found in soil health.

## Justin Scheiner



**Grapes in North Texas**  
Dr. Scheiner is the Extension Viticulture Specialist and is conducting applied research on best management practices for vineyards in areas of Texas affected by Pierce's Disease.

## Sujata Sirsat



**Farmers Market Food Safety**  
Dr. Sujata Sirsat is an assistant professor at the University of Houston's Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. Dr. Sirsat will present her research on farmers market food safety conducted at the University of Houston. She will speak about foodborne illness and ways to prevent illness, specifically from a farmers' market standpoint. She will also cover her work on innovative technologies to improve

## Capstone Speaker



Jerry Hayes, is Monsanto's Bio-Direct business unit lead. Before joining Monsanto he was the Chief of the Apiary Section for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. For the past 30 years Jerry has written a monthly column in the American Bee Journal called The Classroom. He will highlight the importance of honey bees in particular to pollinator dependent ag, all ag, the environment and how 'we' being more aware of this importance can craft our business decisions to incorporate pollinators into the decision making process.

More information and registration details will be available after September 1 at:

<http://stephenville.tamu.edu/blackland-income-growth>

## Charles Swanson

**Trouble Shooting Irrigation Systems**  
Swanson will share years of experience on trouble shooting issues that home owners can do before they call an irrigation specialist.



## Kevin Ong Plant Pathology

Dr. Ong will share what he is seeing at the plant lab that can help gardeners prepare for issues this spring plus highlight how the plant lab can help diagnose plant and soil issues.



## Tim Hartmann

**Organic vs Traditional Fertilizer**  
Hartmann is an Earth-Kind program specialist at AgriLife Extension. He will share the "science" from each camp in the fertilizer business so gardeners can make their own decision on what products to use based on science.





# What's Happening in Your Yard

- Kathy Love

Right Clockwise: A Monarch butterfly mining nectar from a viola. Photos of the dew in my gardens the morning of November 11th: Dew on a leaf of Swiss Chard; Dew on a Green Goddess cauliflower leaf; Leaves of my daylilies covered with morning dew; Kohlrabi leaf with dew droplets; Dew on this baby pineapple that, along with it's designer pot, will be in the silent auction at the December 2nd Christmas Party.



# What's Happening in Your Yard

## - Crystal Fisher

Funny thing, when I pulled my watermelon vine up and found those tiny watermelons, I wondered what they looked like inside. I didn't really expect to see it actually developed as it had. But, I guess I should have because they had been left on the vine long enough to have matured. I just didn't water them after I pulled the larger ones off. Now, I see that I should have. So, I'm thinking that it was the lack of water that stunted them. Next year, I'd like to try a red watermelon. I only planted one of the yellow and got 4 large melons and a couple more small ones to pick. These were just the smallest. So, I thought they were worthy of a photo for show-n-tell, if nothing more. Does anyone know the name of a good red variety?

I grew the watermelons in composted wood chips. No additional soil other than that. I just wish I had brought in twice as much now.





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## Editor:

Terrie Hahn

## Proofreader:

Werner Hahn

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

**moompie45@hotmail.com**  
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1605 N. Main St.  
Belton, Texas 76513  
(254) 933-5305

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