

The Blooming Bell

February 2015



**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**




Above: Winter
Honeysuckle always covered
with bees in late
January and February.

Photo by Terrie Hahn

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Ground Hog Day	3	4 Work Day 8 am Soup and Salad Wednesday	5	6	7
8	9 Youth Fair Starts	10	11 NO Work Day General meeting 10:30 am Lee Harris speaks on Lavender History/Use	12	13	14 
15	16 Presidents Day	17 Mardi Gras	18 Work Day 8 am	19 Chinese New Year	20 Home and Garden Show	21 Home and Garden Show
22 Home and Garden Show	23	24	25 Work Day 8 am Board of Directors Meeting 9 am	26	27	28

Upcoming Dates: April 22, New Class Field Trip; April 29, BOD meeting; May 13, plant/seed swap 9:30 a.m.

Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

The President's Corner

I want to say a few words about Ursula Nana whom we lost this last month. Ursula was a major presence in our organization for as long as I have been a member. She was a Master Gardener since 2000 and one of the original members who organized the Killeen Municipal Court Gardens. She was deeply involved in the landscaping efforts in front of the AgriLife Office. I worked with her in laying out the design of those EarthKind beds. Ursula was an avid rainwater harvester. Her home was a model of good gardening practices and was a certified wildlife habitat by Texas A&M. She often allowed people to tour her yard and would explain her rainwater harvesting setup. Ursula was also involved with the Texas Parks and Wildlife water safety program. She volunteered many hours demonstrating water safety to school kids in Bell Co. I could always count on her to assist in the Ft. Hood Earth Day program. Ursula was very active in selecting plants for our twice a year plant sales, and was always at work with the grounds committee to help keep the grounds around the AgriLife office looking great. I hope all of you will keep her in your prayers. She leaves a big void in our organization.

Life moves on, and so we continue our planning for the April conference. We are getting numerous inquiries from other counties about the conference. Still looking for vendors to present their wares in Garth arena. I really appreciate all the hard work going into the conference planning. I can't say "thanks" often enough.

And we have several other projects going on. Those of you who were able to attend the Board of Directors meeting on the 28th of last month know just how busy we have been. Several outside organizations are asking for our expertise in gardening. I am sorry that we are unable to accommodate all the requests. It does show that we are getting some recognition throughout the county and that is a good thing.

Lets keep the momentum going, our organization is getting better every day.

- Gary

Conference Updates

Tee-Shirt & Apron Order

Please order Conference Tee-Shirts/ Aprons following the General Membership Meeting on February 11, 2015. The Tee-Shirt/Apron order will be placed on Thursday, February 12, 2015. I will be available after the general membership meeting to take orders or you can drop it off at the front desk as long as the envelope contains your check with your size included on it.

Your order will not be placed without payment in full. I may or may not order additional tee-shirts or aprons. That will depend upon the demand.

Tee-shirts are the same size as the ones we already sell, unisex, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, green with Conference Logo on the back and Texas Master Gardener Logo on the front. Cost for the Tee-shirts is \$8.00. We will only order what is paid for.

The Aprons cost \$12.00 and are the same blue as our MG T-shirts and will have three pockets in the front. The Texas Master Gardener logo will be on the front. We will order approximately 25 extra which will be used for BCMGA events such as the plant sales and conference. The extra aprons will be checked out at forthcoming events.

Thanks,

Terry Bradburn
254.681.5373
254.698.7260

Remembering Dr. Ursula Nanna

Ursula Nanna epitomized our master gardener mission statement. She loved learning and she loved sharing her gardening knowledge with the community and fellow master gardeners. Always the scientist, Ursula insisted on identifying plants by their scientific name. Her knowledge of native plants, herbs, composting and rain-water harvesting was vast. She wrote many newspaper articles about cacti, succulents, trees, birds and butterflies and she opened her garden many times to the community. She enjoyed showing others the benefits of EarthKind gardening, composting, water conservation and rain-water harvesting. A member of the speakers bureau she loved teaching about cacti and succulents, composting and rainwater harvesting.

Ursula was instrumental in the planning, planting and maintenance of the EarthKind garden on Main Street, the landscaping around the learning center and the special needs garden. She enjoyed hard work and would be the first one of the landscape committee at work on Wednesday workdays, no matter the



weather. Ursula worked at Whistle Stop Park and many other community projects. She was honored by the Golden



Trowel Award and several times received the Green Thumb Award. She served on the Board of Directors 2008 and 2009. Many years her service hours totaled over 700. She became a Bell County Master

Gardener Lifetime Member in 2013.

Her beautiful smile, her enthusiasm, her knowledge, her dedication to learning, her love of helping others, her no-nonsense approach to life, her sense of humor will not be forgotten by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

- Mary Lew Quesinberry



From the time that I met her in the Master Gardener class of 2002, she always gave her whole heart to whatever needed to be done. I was fortunate to know her -- and our organization was fortunate to have her commitment.

- Frances Idoux



Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Black Soldier Flies

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County
AgriLife Extension Entomologist

If you have backyard chickens, then you may be familiar with black soldier flies, but what about everyone else? These flies may also be found in compost. The fly larvae are not something to worry about as they will help break down organic matter.

Black soldier fly adults are mostly black with two dusky wings. Females have a reddish to black abdomen with two translucent spots near the front of the abdomen. Males tend to have a bronze abdomen. Larvae are plump, legless, somewhat flattened and shift from a creamy white color to reddish-brown. Larvae have a tough, leathery exoskeleton and a tiny head.

The larvae are scavengers and feed on decaying organic matter including plant refuse (compost), carrion and manure. Adults do not bite or carry disease organisms and die within a few days of emergence from the pupal case.

Female soldier flies lay their eggs on exposed nitrogen-rich items. If you want them to stay out of your compost pile, cover nitrogen-rich food sources by at least 2-4 inches of brown material (leaves, grass clippings, etc.). The larvae may also be found in vermicomposting bins and may outcompete the worms for food. They are not predaceous on the earthworms, but will cause problems by using the majority of the resources.

There are people turning to black soldier flies for composting food scraps as they can eat large amounts of scraps in a short time period. Also, the larvae make a good food item for birds, including chickens.



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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My Favorite Veggie

- Don Latham

It's onion planting time, if you haven't planted already. I have gained some knowledge over the years about my favorite veggie, the onion.

There are three planting regions in the country, the southern area which we live in is the short day area. Plants for our region differ from our northern neighbors. The middle states fall in the intermediate



day region, and the northern region falls in the long day region. The regions are determined by the hours of sunlight plants need to do well. All onion plants have two growth phases. At first they focus on growing roots and

leaves. This is important, because the size of the mature onion is determined by the size of the tops. Each leaf corresponds to a ring of onion. The second growth phase is bulb formation, which is triggered by a combination of daylight, darkness and temperature. Choosing varieties that are adapted to your growing region ensures bulb formation will happen at the proper time and give the best possible results. Short Day onions require 10-12 daylight hours. Intermediate Day 12-14, and Long Day 14-16. My favorite variety is the Yellow Granex. It is a hybrid and seldom bolts. It is semi-flat and sugar sweet. It also stores well. Another favorite is the Texas Super Sweet 1015Y. A good onion; however, it is an open pollinated variety and will bolt. This onion is the most popular in our region. As far as harvesting you can tell when your onions are ready when the tops turn brown and start

falling over. When the majority have reached this point they can all be harvested. Curing will determine how long they will keep. They should dry thoroughly to avoid problems with rot. If left outside when the weather is dry it should take two to three days. The skin should take on a uniform texture and color. Once the onions are thoroughly dry clip the roots and cut back the tops to one inch. Now they are ready to eat. Store onions in a cool, dry, and well-ventilated place. Onions will always be my favorite because onions are

used almost every day. Good luck.



January General Meeting

Sixty-one BCMGA members attended the January General Meeting. Dr. Karen Clary from the Wildflower Center spoke about the 12 most invasive species of plants in the Blackland Prairie.



2014 awards were also given out to the members who were absent from the Christmas Party.



Mary Ann Everett received her 700+ hours of service award; Larry Moehnke and Terrie Hahn received their 200-299 hours award; Louann Hight, Betty Nejtek (and 10 year pin) Laura Murphy and Pat Smith received their 100-199 hours awards.



Barbara Salys and Ray Machovsky received their 5 year pins.

Photos by Randy Brown

Devil's Trumpet

- Walter Ponder

Datura Metel or "Devil's Trumpet" is a genus of nine species of poisonous vespertine flowering plants belonging to the family Solanaceae. They are known as angel's trumpets, sometimes sharing that name with the closely related genus Brugmansia, and commonly known as daturas. All species of Datura are poisonous, especially their seeds and flowers (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datura>).



I bought the parent plant from a local nursery. It died during the cold weather. This plant I grew from seed and it reached a height of four feet within one season. The size apparently is greatly influenced by where it is grown and the amount of water it receives. I find that it does better with east sun, and protected from the west sun. The growth is upright with black stems. The flowers are also upright, attractive with dark purple neck and white throat. When brushed against, it releases a not so pleasing fragrance. The pods contain many seeds, so I would suggest limiting where the seeds fall and germinate. Because it is poisonous it is best that children

not handle any of the plant, flowers or seeds.



Photos by Walter Ponder

This and That

The KMCCG committee getting on track with the new year; Below: The Herb Group's Winter Tea. Savory was discussed, nesting balls were created and lots of good food filled with herbs was eaten! See page 15 for one of the recipes using Savory, this year's Herb of the Year.



Photos by Randy Brown and Terrie Hahn

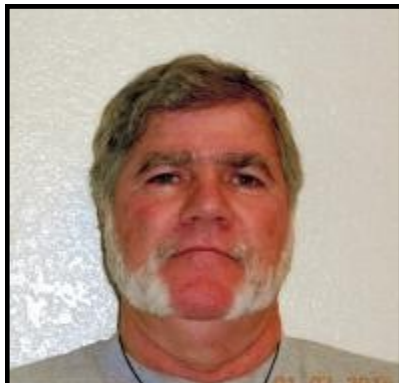


Introducing the Class of 2015

Nina Archambeault

Dennis K. Biggs

I grew up in Killeen. My father was career Army, and I am one of sixteen children. I went to Killeen High. I live in Nolanville now. I drive the Special Transit Bus and am Mayor of Nolanville.



My mom loved to garden, so I guess I get it from her. I also love working in the soil.

I always wanted to become a Master Gardener since I first met someone who was in the program some 30 years ago in South Carolina. I found out about this class 4 years ago, but wasn't able to start until now.

Debbie Brumleve

I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, but I have lived my adult life in Northern Ohio, Kentucky, Washington State and Massachusetts before moving to Texas in 2006.

I am a homemaker at heart and have been married to my husband for almost 40 years. We have two wonderful sons who married their beautiful wives and blessed us with three adorable grandchildren.

Outside the home I have sold real estate, worked in retail and also in the medical field. I have also been involved in many philanthropic activities.

I have always loved to garden no matter where I have lived. I am excited to be a part of the 2015 Master Gardener class so that I can learn how to be a successful gardener in the great State of Texas, share my knowledge with others and spread the joy of gardening!



Lorraine Brown



I was born in New York City, New York and have lived in Texas since 1987. I worked for the Federal Government for 30 years and retired on October 31, 2014.

Once I purchased my home in 1993,

I started planting things in the garden and haven't stopped. I knew about the program in 2011 and waited patiently until I retired to sign up. I'm sure I'll enjoy it.

Mechelle Davies

I grew up in Decatur, Illinois, and I now live in the Killeen area.

Being in a military family, I have lived all over the world. I have had various careers and I have a degree in cosmetology and culinary arts. I have my BA from UT Arlington for Broadcast Management.



I began my love for gardening as a small child and would help my grandmother in her garden. I loved to see everything growing.

Class of 2015

Georgio Graf

I was born in the Philippines and raised in Germany. I was schooled in German schools and finished my education in the U.S. I graduated from Killeen High School and attended the Technical Institute in New London, Connecticut and College at Wesleyan. I was a General Manager in Hospitality in Mystic, Connecticut and Manager for Nordstrom in Rhode Island, New York and Austin, Texas.



My Motto: "Have Plants Will Travel."

I've always loved nature and environments.

Rebecca Garrett



Daisy Klassy

I live in Belton and have lived in the same house all my life.

For a short time, I worked out at a horse ranch and thoroughly enjoyed it.



I have always enjoyed gardening and am currently taking courses on herbology from an online school. I am especially interested in the medicinal uses of herbs.

Linda Knight



I was born in Oklahoma City. I graduated from the University of Oklahoma in Nursing. I've had a career in Nursing -Camp Nursing, School Nursing, Pediatric Cancer Nursing at M.D. Anderson, Surgical Technology Instructor and Teen Parent and

Baby Program for TISD.

My father had a horticulture degree and was a fantastic gardener.

Now I have a new home that needs to be landscaped and a new vegetable garden to develop.

Class of 2015

Sandi Lenehan

I grew up in Houston and live in Temple now.

I'm a Physician (Sandra McMahan, M.D.). I was an Allergist-Immunologist at Scott and White from 1981 until I retired in October of 2014.



I previously took Master Gardener classes here in 2000 with a special interest in perennial plants and native Texas plants.

Kathy Love

I grew up on the family farm west of the Bell County community of Sparks. I have lived in various areas of Texas, but am now returning to the family farm where I grew up to help my 86 year old mom. My careers



have included magazine feature writer, legal assistant, court coordinator, executive assistant and clerk and am now retired!

I grew up with gardening-there has never been a time when I was not interested in gardening. I've wanted to join Master Gardeners since the program started, but just couldn't commit the time until I retired.

Photos by Carol Runyan

Dawn Orange

I moved to Temple in the fall of 1980 from West Texas. I still reside in Temple with my husband and son.

I am the Recycling Coordinator for the City of Temple Solid Waste Department. I ensure that residents are properly recycling and work to teach recycling to students.

Growing up, my grandparents and parents always had a garden. Its been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I am interested in this class not only to be a better gardener myself, but to also be able to help students with their gardening efforts at school.



Amazon Muldrow Roberts



I was born in Oakland California, but from the age of 10 years old to adulthood grew up in Anchorage, Alaska. I am blissfully married and reside in Harker Heights.

I have been wanting to garden since I moved to Texas but am terrified of bugs! My concern about genetically modified grown food has inspired me to grow my own.

Anthony Widerstrom



From my point of view . . .

The Class of 2015 ... so far

- **Gail Koontz, Class Reporter**

January has flown by. I thought it would be different in retirement. But, no, it's just as my retired friends have told me: I am busier now than I ever was when working in a full time, paying job, but now doing the things I have wanted to do but didn't have time. For some 10 years I have wanted to become a Master Gardener. Now, I am so thankful for the opportunity to be class reporter because it allows – actually forces - me to sit down and pull my notes together and just see what I have learned in the 17 education hours I have logged this month.

All 25 of us eagerly came together on January 7 for our first class. Our own Master Gardeners Bob Gordon and Jerry Lewis taught and shared their personal experiences in Vegetable Gardening. Interesting information I noted:

When reading newspaper articles, note where the article originated (location) because the plant might not grow well in Central Texas.

Why garden? Fresh vegetables taste better, and we have control over pesticides.

They covered planning guidelines for the garden, locating the garden, preparing the soil, watering/irrigating, seeds vs. transplants, how to fertilize the plants, mulching to preserve water and control weeds.

Bob and Jerry talked a lot about planting onions (now), potatoes (February), and tomatoes (March) and shared their favorite varieties. When purchasing plants, they strongly recommend removing the plant from the pot to check for a healthy root system.

With a small yard, I especially enjoyed the information they shared on raised bed and container gardening. I

am looking forward to planting one or two of their recommended tomatoes in a container in March. The most important thing to remember in gardening: *Have Fun!*



Our second class began with two presentations by Kayla Fry with TAMU who works with Master Gardener programs throughout Texas.

First, she gave us an overview of the Texas Master Gardener Program. The mission of Texas AgriLife Extension is to provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to the



people of Texas. Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and is designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects. The Master Gardener program began in 1972 in the state of Washington. In Texas it began in the early 1980s. The first county to train Master Gardeners was Montgomery. Today there are programs in over 100 counties and over 6,000 Texas Master Gardeners who have been trained to be educators.

In the Orientation Class, we were encouraged to become a "specialist." These are some of the Specialist Programs offered: Junior Master Gardener, Green

Continued on next page...

My Point of View...continued

house Management, Entomology, Plant Propagation, Earth Kind, Rainwater Harvesting, Irrigation Efficiency, Vegetable, Compost, Citriculture. Jayla shared many websites, including the AgriLife Bookstore. There is also a Texas Master Gardener License Plate available.

Second, she led us through Fun with Botany. Terms I need to learn: gymnosperms, angiosperms, monocots, dicots, cotyledon, venation, herbaceous, annuals, biennials, perennials, xylem, phloem, cambium, epidermis, cortex, pitch, bark, zone of elongation/maturation, node, internode, bud, crown, spur, rhizomes, stolons, tuber, bulb, corm, veins, lobe, midrib, petiole, blade or lamina, stipules, margin, waxy/palisade/spongy layer, pinnate, palmate, parallel. Then she covered Sex in the Garden. Terms are petals, sepals, pistils, stamens, complete and incomplete flowers, pollinators, seedcoat, endosperm, embryo, scarification, stratification, photosynthesis, respiration. I'm working on it!

is naturally occurring materials allowing for anchoring of plants, moisture and nutrient storage for plants. He spoke of the formation of soil and the five soil forming factors: parent material, climate, vegetation, topography, and time. Soil components include the mineral, organic and void phases or spaces. Under mineral we have sand, silt, clay, coarse materials, and other. Under organic there are plant tissues and humic substances. In the void spaces are air and water.

I was most interested in his explanation of primary macronutrients, specifically nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and what low and high levels can do to vegetation, specifically my lawn.

All this led up to talking about our soil tests which we had submitted in December and received on this day. Soil testing is a gardener's best friend. It's the only tool available to determine required fertilizer, salinity problems, or other nutrient problems. I could see in my soil test some of the problem with grass not growing well in our yard. After an explanation of fertilizers, I believe I will be a better informed shopper when I buy fertilizer soon. John shared some websites for

further research on these topics. I am anxious for spring to arrive so I can get to work on my yard!

The last class in January this week featured speaker Judy Herrmann who also spoke on Botany. Judy is also one of our own Master Gardeners and a Chemistry Professor at UMHB. Repetition is good; on this subject we all need it. She encouraged the use of professional rooting hormone and good potting soil. She likes and recommends Belinda's Dream Rose (Earth Kind) as good for this area.

She showed a slide with a glove, a shovel, a watering can, and wind chimes. She asked each to identify with one. The glove people are leaders; they take charge. Shovels are the workers. Watering cans are the cheerleaders and encouragers. Wind chimes are creative and work outside the box. BTW I'm a wind chime. Haven't figured that one out yet.

John Pitt, Laboratory Manager for the Soil, Water and Forage Testing Lab at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, was the speaker at our January 21 class, covering the topic of Basic Soils.

We learned the difference between dirt and soil. Dirt is undesirable materials and/or manmade materials out of place. A four letter word that we don't use. Soil

Following her presentation, Judy led us through an Introduction to Propagation Lab, beginning next Wednesday, by showing us how to make a mini greenhouse out of a gallon milk jug. We left with seeds planted and ready for spring.

Throughout January we have had opportunities to volunteer in many different areas. I will be volunteering at the Bell County Youth Fair, the Home and Garden Show, the school we are assisting on March 10, and of course, the 2015 TMGA Conference in April.

Looking forward to February, even though my brain is on overload!

Photos by Randy Brown



Savory Cheese Biscuits

- Jane Van Praag

I brought these to the Herb Group's Winter Tea. They are published on page 162 of Lucinda Hutson's The Herb Garden Cook Book: The Complete Gardening and Gourmet Guide, or as y'all already refer to it, 'her purple book'.

Savory Cheese Biscuits

In the English tradition, these resemble cookies rather than American biscuits and are tasty with tea, sherry, or wine. Richard Cilley of Austin shared his recipe and Lucinda Hutson added some fun variations.

Master Recipe Ingredients

1/2 pound (2 sticks) salted butter

1 pound Double Gloucester or Sharp Cheddar, grated and at room temperature

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives

3 tablespoons chopped fresh savory

1 teaspoon cayenne or dried/crushed chili pepper (or less)

2-1/2 cups white flour

2 cups walnut or pecan pieces (optional)

Blend the butter and cheese together. (A food processor or hand mixer works well for this.) Add the garlic, chives, savory, and pepper, mixing thoroughly. Slowly add the flour until you have a stiff dough.

Divide the dough into portions and roll it out, one portion at a time, to 1/4-inch thickness on a lightly floured board. Cut into rounds, or use decorative cookie cutters; with a fork, make a criss-cross pattern on each. Place on baking sheet in a pre-heated 375F oven for approximately 10-12 minutes until slightly golden.

Cool. Store in airtight tin in refrigerator for several weeks, or freeze. Makes approximately 6 dozen biscuits.

Note: These biscuits are best when served warm. Simply reheat in a low oven for a few minutes before serving. Variations can be found in Lucinda's Cookbook.

Jane's additional notes: I used extra-sharp cheddar plus a little regular white cheddar (around 2 or so ounces) to make the full two pounds required and opted for my own pecans, ground in my food processor, rather than simply using nut pieces. I had no fresh herbs so used dried/powdered and did not make allowances for the maxim that usually dried herbs wind up more intense than fresh. Having made the dough on a cold day, in this old farm house getting the butter to room temperature didn't mean much; hence I softened the butter by microwave until almost liquid. As good as the results proved, I think the full 1/2 pound of salted butter might be a tad too much, so will experiment next time by removing 1 tablespoon, just to see. Finally, I used a round cutter 1-3/4 inch in diameter.

Reprinted with Lucinda Hutson's permission.

Announcements

February General Meeting

- Randy Brown

Lee Harris will give a presentation on History/Use of Lavender for the February General meeting.

Upcoming dates: **April 22nd** is the New Class Field Trip and **April 29th** is the BOD meeting

Grounds Work Days

- Walter Ponder

Here are the planned work days for the grounds:

Feb 4	8 a.m. Rose pruning, Soup and Salad for Burger day
Feb 11	NO scheduled workday
Feb 18	8 a.m.
Feb 25	8 a.m.

There will be no workday for grounds in the event of rain or temperatures less than 40 degrees.

Thank you.

Updates from the BOD

- Bernie Hurta

Updated Mission Statement

The Bell County Master Gardeners Association assists the Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service in providing high quality, relevant, research based horticultural education and service to the residents of Bell County and the state of Texas through outreach, teaching and demonstration projects.

We will approve the above mission statement at the **February 11th** monthly meeting.

Plant & Seed Swap

We will have a plant and seed swap before the **May 13th** monthly meeting. More details to follow at a later date.

Documenting Your Work

- Bernie Hurta

Bell County Master Gardeners:

Please take at least one picture of all the presentations you do and prepare a short write-up and send it to Terrie Hahn for the Blooming Bell at moompie45@hotmail.com. This includes teaching classes for the New Class. Please do not use PDF files.

On projects, we need to take several pictures of the process and do a write-up on it also.

When we get ready to write the entries for the State Awards, we need documentation of all the work we are doing.

Also, all service hour opportunity dates should be sent to Terrie Hahn for the Blooming Bell calendar. The BCMGA is involved in a lot of activities and those activities should be posted on the Blooming Bell calendar.

February Registration Committee Meeting

- Terry Bradburn

The February Registration Committee Meeting will be on **February 4th** at 09:00am. All Master Gardeners and Interns are welcome to attend. Major agenda items will include: Registration Manpower needs, budget concerns (subcommittee chairs need to have dates and dollar amount projections), and signage needs.

Thanks for your hard work,

Questions? Call me at 254.698.7260 254.681.5373

What's Happening in Your Yard



January Bloomer!

- Gail Garner

I took this photo on the 2nd of January. These iris bloom about this time every other year or so and then always again in the spring.

Lovely Orchids

- Walter Ponder

This orchid just started blooming. I have it growing in a northeast window.



Officers

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First Vice President	Randy Brown
Second Vice President	Bernie Hurta
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Corresponding Secretary	Pat Allen
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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.

The State Conference Registration Committee makes headway.

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