

THE BLOOMING BELL

January 2017



This a true definition of an oxymoron: Sunny blue skies and a frozen pond...Gail Pierce

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**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**

JANUARY 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2	3	4 Work Day 8 am* Burger (Vegetable) Wednesday 10:30 New Class Orienta- tion 1 pm	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Work Day 8 am* General Meeting- Walter Ponder on TX Super Stars 10:30 am Social time 10 am New Class Begins	12	13	14
15	16 MLK Day	17	18 Work Day 8 am*	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Work Day 8 am* BOD Meeting 9 am	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming events: Home and Garden Show February 24-26; Landscape Design School Series XXV, Course II - February 27-28, 2017

* in the event of rain or 40 degree temperature or below, there will be NO Workday.

Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

Branch Of Juniper" by Vitolef

The President's Corner

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone has had a great end of 2016 and is looking forward to this next year.

I'd like to thank Gary Slanga for his strong leadership of the BCMGA these past two years. He, along with the rest of the Board of Directors and Committee Chairs, has kept us an organization that is fun to belong to while also providing a tremendous service to the communities of Bell County.

As your new President, I am humbled by the trust you have placed in me to be your leader. It was easy for me to accept this position, because I have seen how well everyone works together. This is definitely not an organization where one or two people do all the work. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming two years as we continue to make this a great and fun organization.

January is never a slow month, as we welcome a new class for training. The last that I heard, we had 22 registrants that will show up for orientation on January 4th. The New Class Committee would like to have designated mentors for each new student and I believe there is still a need for more volunteers. Mary Ann Everett is spearheading that effort, and sent a message to all members on December 14th with an attachment on the expected duties. If you missed that message in all your holiday preparations, contact Mary Ann for more information. By the time you read this, new class orientation will probably be over, but I suspect the need will still be there.

A new year means starting to accumulate the annual requirement of service and education hours. There are lots of opportunities for both in the coming months. The Wednesday workdays continue and offer a couple of hours of service. This is the time of year when the tools used throughout the year should be cleaned and sharpened. It will be much easier to prune our roses in February if we have sharpened the cutting instruments. We have already started refurbishing the wheelbarrows to repair or replace flat tires and to replace missing bolts. I've suggested to our new Grounds Committee chairmen that we have a "tool party" on one of the Wednesday workdays in January. Two other service opportunities coming up in

February are the BC Youth Fair the first week of February and the annual Home and Garden show the last weekend of February. Sign up to help out or share your special interest. At this year's Home and Garden Show, we are going to again offer edible plants for sale. We are restricting it to edible plants so we don't have to deal with any sales tax issues. If you'd like to help grow some plants that can be ready by the last weekend of February, we'd love to have your help. The Mother Earth News Fair is returning to the Expo Center on 18 & 19 February, giving those interested a quick way to earn some education hours. You can claim hour for hour of any classes that you attend, so in two days you can come close to meeting the requirement for the year. You can purchase advanced tickets at a discount from their web site. Of course, don't forget the monthly meeting where you can also earn one hour of education. If you'd like to present a topic during one of the monthly meetings, talk to MaryAnn Everett to sign up for a date.

That's it for this month. Thank you to all our members for making the BCMGA such a special organization. I appreciate everything you do. - Wayne

State Awards

State awards were presented to those in attendance at the Christmas Party. Others will be given out at the January General Meeting.

We won three awards at the 2016 State Conference.

**1st Place-Research, Square Foot Gardening
Wayne Schirner**

**3rd Place-Written Education,
Salado Demonstration Garden
Susan Terry**

**3rd Place-Project, McLane Children's Hospital Garden
Pat Johnson & Frances Idoux**

Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved in all our entries.

So Much for Which to Be Thankful

By Darla Horner Menking

There are so many things around me to be thankful for during this holiday season... cooler temperatures and wonderful rainfall, which I know will help tremendously with the wildflowers this next spring. The changing colors of the leaves weren't as nice, it seems, as years past. But it was a warmer yet comfortable fall, for which I'm thankful. Even in early December, my plants continued to bloom in the warmer temperatures and the butterflies were more prolific than I've ever seen in my yard.

The older I've gotten, the more it's felt like work... but I do love getting out and pruning my perennials which, with the longer growing season, spread way beyond their boundaries. Many have seeded so I know I'll have an abundance of new seedlings this spring and summer. I'm just thankful I can still get down there and actually get back up!

Spending time in my landscaping has also given me time to re-evaluate my plants, whether I need to move them to a different location, or even remove them totally. There are always the ones that have begun to take over their space plus the neighboring plants' area, as well. Like I always say, "some

plants you only need one of." Then you'll end up pulling out more of them than you keep! I'm sure everyone has a few of those plants.

I'm so thankful for the beauty of my plants and flowers and the enjoyment I've gotten from tending them. I feel like it's my own little piece of Eden with which God has blessed me. I love that so many pollinators and beautiful flying insects enjoyed it and found food, shelter, and places to reproduce.

Finally, this final month of the year is the perfect time to tell others how much I care about them. With the holidays here, it's a wonderful feeling to put away old conflicts, focus on the good in a relationship, and rekindle a spirit of love and hope. It's sort of like "dead heading" your flowers and removing old, used up blooms which encourages new growth and can revive a plant (or relationship) that once looked bleak.

Although mending relationships isn't as easy as snipping off dead flowers, deliberately putting forth the effort to restore relationships can result in quite a remarkably beautiful, blooming garden of friendships.

In Remembrance

A LADY WENT TO HEAVEN

Frances Idoux will always be remembered. She was a beautiful Lady and devoted friend. Frances has been my teacher and mentor for the last ten years. We worked very closely together in the Healing Garden at McLane Children's Hospital in Temple. The Healing Garden combined her love of children while working in God's garden. She had a childlike innocence and laugh as we watched nature come alive. She held the garden close to her heart and realized the HUGE impact we made in the lives of those who visited the garden. The patients in the hospital are not the only ones to benefit from her work and perseverance. It is visited by family members, staff and volunteers - it provides a place to be at one with nature and assist in their healing. Her work here on this earth has ended, and she will be missed...Joyce Richardson

Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Overwintering Insects

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

I often get the question about where insects go when it gets cold or what happens to insects during the winter. Insects have adaptations that help them survive winter temperatures.

Many insects may go into a type of hibernation called diapause to battle cold winter temperatures while other insects will migrate to warmer areas. Insects may hide in leaf litter, under rocks, logs, bark of trees, or in burrows. They can attempt to move indoors and share structures with us as well.

Other than those modifications, insects can be broken into freeze tolerant and freeze susceptible groups. Freeze tolerant insects tend not to totally freeze. The freezing process forces water out of living cells, dropping the freezing point even lower, and then the fluids around the living cells freeze. Smaller insects find this easier to do than larger insects due to the fact that they have less fluid in their body due to size. Insects will also empty their digestive tract because food attracts water that can freeze and cause crystals to grow.

Freeze susceptible insects avoid freezing by utilizing cryoprotectants, which are antifreeze compounds. These compounds allow body fluids and tissues to supercool above their freezing point. The most common cryoprotectant for insects is ethylene glycol which is the same compound found in antifreeze for vehicles

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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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/>

The Veggie Guy

- Wayne Schirner

Ready for Winter?

January is here, and that means getting ready for your late winter/early spring garden. Hopefully the freezing weather that hit us over a two-day period on 17 & 18 December didn't wipe out too much of your winter garden. I learned a valuable lesson. The real problem for me was the wind that accompanied the cold front. Even though I had covered my plants with frost cloth, I hadn't done enough to anchor it in place. Frost cloth doesn't do any good lying next to a plant. Most of you are smart enough to have known this, but I'm a slow learner at times. I think the only plants that really suffered in my garden were the artichokes, and one of those might even survive.

Are you dreaming of juicy vine-ripened tomatoes? Transplants won't be available to purchase until late February to go into the ground around mid-March. But, if you want to grow your own transplants, plan on getting seeds planted this month. You'll need to bump them up into a larger container once or twice between now and planting outdoors but by starting early you'll have a sizeable plant that is nearing blooming and fruit set by the time the last average frost date arrives. If you don't have a greenhouse, hook up a shop light in a corner of your garage where you can provide an adequate environment to start plants that will later be transplanted into your garden. The latest issue of Texas Gardener has a good article on Heirloom Tomatoes starting on page 14, and on pages 26-27 you will find the Spring Planting Guide for all the crops commonly grown in Texas. There are too many crops to list that can be started this month, but the family of cole crops can all go into the ground in mid January. January is also the time to set out onion transplants. Set the pencil-sized transplants so the base is about 1" deep. You can start green leafy vegetables and cool season peas this month too. Just be prepared to cover the young seedlings if a freeze threatens.

If you didn't prepare your soil last fall for winter/spring gardening, there's still time to finish that chore. For traditional gardening, work in a couple of

inches of compost as deeply as is practical. If you follow the Square Foot Gardening method, you add compost every time you pull plants from the garden, so this task is spread out over the year. The many seed catalogs available to look at can be overwhelming, but do try some new things this year. Your next favorite might be something you haven't tried before. If you don't want to be adventurous, stick with the varieties and crops recommended on the aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu web site and you won't be disappointed. Every time I go back to that web site, I learn something new, so I encourage every vegetable gardener to visit it frequently.

VERMICOMPOSTING

- Crystal Fisher

DIY Worm Chow

Online recipes tend to vary slightly. The point is... just feed your worms.

1 Part Whole Wheat Flour
1 Part Corn Meal
1 Part Ground Oats
1/2 Part Ground Oyster Shell/Egg Shell

See Homemade Dry Worm Food (Worm Chow) - YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyxfv1L0oxl>

Christmas Party Fun



All Photos for Christmas Party by Daisy Klassy and Randy Brown.



More Fun



More Fun



And the Award Winners Are...

The 2016 Golden Trowel Awards went to Kathy Love, Don Wyatt and Jane Van Praag. And the 2016 Green Thumb Awards (below) went to Carol Runyan, Betty Nejték, Louann Hight, Jan George and Gail Koontz. Don Wyatt and Louise Crowell received the Lifetime Achievement Award.



Frances Idoux was recognized posthumously for her 15 years of service to our association. We also honored Frances for her Distinguished Service to the Bell County Master Gardeners as a Lifetime Member and as a Green Thumb Award recipient.

There were too many incredibly active new Master Gardeners to give an award to just one. The 2016 New Master Gardener of the Year is Johnny Jones; First runner up is Sylvia Maedgen; Honorable mentions go to: Rose Harris and (not pictured) Tom Rennels and Gena Winston. And below: the Friends of the Master Gardeners are: David Quesinberry, Gordon Harris, Cliff George, and Allan Colwick.



Receiving Service Hours Awards

The Golden Shovel Award goes to Kathy Love for over 1,000 hours of work. Don Wyatt received his 500-599 Service Hour Award, and Jane Van Praag received her 400-499 Service Hour Award. Right: Wayne Schirner, Mary Ann Everett, Jane George and Gail Koontz received their 300-399 Service Hour Awards.



Mary Ann Everett, Jane George and Gail Koontz received their 300-399 Service Hour Awards.



Karen Colwick, Pat Johnson, Fran Sheppard, Edie Campbell, Gail Christian, Bernie Hurta and Gary Slanga received their 200-299 Service Hour Awards.



Receiving 100-199 Service Hour Awards were: Terrie Hahn, Johnny Jones, Carla Harmon, Bob Gordon, Sylvia Maedgen, David Carpenter, Betty Nejtek, Arthur Carr, Rose Harris, Carol Runyan, Larry Moehnke, Jerry Lewis, Louann Hight and Carol Morisset. Not pictured are Ray Machovsky, Tom Rennels, Mary Lou Edmondson and Pat Allen.



And Year Pins

Below: Receiving twenty year pins were Charles Newsom and Bob Gordon. Receiving 15 year pins were Mary Lou Edmondson and posthumously to Frances Idoux. Right: ten year pins were given to Louise Crowell (not pictured) Don Wyatt, Bernie Hurta, Fran Sheppard, Louann Hight and Gary Slanga. Five year pins were given to Pat Johnson, Stacye Parry, Jan

George, Randy Brown, Janet Stein and (not pictured) Susan Terry and Gail Pierce.



Below left: New Board of Directors is introduced. Wayne Schirner is the BCMGA's new President; Louann Hight is 2nd VP; Stacye Parry is Recording Secretary; Pictured below right: Carol Morisset & Jan Upchurch are the Outreach/Education Directors; Johnny Jones & (Tom Rennels, not present) are now in charge of the Grounds Committee; Edie Campbell will remain the Killeen Municipal Court Community Gardens Director.



This and That

KCCMG

- Randy Brown

We went to plant onions on December 12, but did that, plus harvested turnips, separated the greens, did the last of pepper and tomato harvest (97 lbs; took two shopping carts to get vegetables into the Homeless Shelter) and



pulled those plants. Great day at KMCCG.

Above: Alan Ramos from 2017 Class already hard at work separating turnips from greens



Below: Kathy finishing up on onions; our hard working Director Edie Campbell cleaning up

turnip row; Asian Greens doing great; Jerry worked the tiller hard!



Class Schedule for 2017

Date	Topic	Speaker
1/11/2017	Square Foot Gardening, Vegetable Gardening	Wayne Schirner, Bob Gordon, Jerry Lewis
1/18/2017	Overview of MG Program, Basic Botany	Jayla Fry
1/25/2017	Soil Testing, Basic Soils, Understanding Soil Test Results	Bob Whitney
2/1/2017	Plant Propagation Lab	Karen Colwick/BCMGA members
2/8/2017	Irrigation/Rainwater Harvesting/Water Issues	Gary Slanga/ Karen/Amazon / Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District
2/15/2017	Landscape Design	Diana Kirby, Diana's Designs
2/22/2017	Wildscape Gardening	Kelly Simon, Texas Parks & Wildlife
3/1/2017	Pesticide Safety, Fruit & Nut Trees	Lyle Zoeller, Extension Agent, Bell County, Gary Slanga, BCMGA
3/8/2017	Turf Grass	TBA
3/15/2017	No class, spring break	
3/22/2017	Plant Propagation	Karen Colwick/BCMGA members
3/29/2017	Plant Diseases	Dr. Kevin Ong, Director TPDDL
4/5/2017	Garden Entomology	Wizzie Brown, Extension Program Specialist, IPM
4/12/2017	Composting/Vermiculture/ EarthKind Principals	Louann Hight, Mary Ann Everett, BCMG
4/19/2017	Field trip to Austin	
4/26/2017	Field trip to local MG gardens in the morning	
5/3/2017	Growing & Using Herbs	Betty Nejtek, Terrie Hahn, BCMG
5/10/2017	Monthly Meeting	
5/17/2017	Graduation	

Announcements

Grounds Workdays

- Walter Ponder

Here is the Workday schedule for January:

January 4, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

January 4, 2017 10:30 a.m. Burger Wednesday

January 11, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

January 18, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

January 25, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

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

Dues and Hours are Due!

- Gail Christian

It is time to send in your dues. The dues are \$25.00. We need 2017 dues by January 31. If you are not an active member or are a member of the Master Gardener Friends, you do not have to pay dues.

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.

Also, make sure you get your service and education hours up to date in the Volunteer Management system. I need to turn in a yearly report to A&M every January.

January General Meeting

- Mary Ann Everett

The January General meeting's speaker will be Walter Ponder on Texas Super Stars. There will be a donation jar for anyone wishing to make a donation for the memorial gift to the McLane Children's Hospital in memory of Frances Idoux.

Fig Roots Available

- Crystal Fisher

I have a 100 yr old fig tree that will undoubtedly be removed when my property sells once I-35 is completed in Temple. If anyone would like to come dig up some roots, the sap is down.... time to transplant. Send me a note at crystalfisher912@gmail.com

Landscape Design School

Series XXV, Course II of the Landscape Design School is scheduled for February 27-28, 2017 at the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library Theater in the Rotunda (free parking), College Station, TX. For more information, go to:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/LDFeb17/LDSRegistrFmRev2-17.pdf>

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/LDFeb17/LDIIFeb17Announ.pdf>

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

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

What's Happening in Your Yard

Unexpected Blooms!

- Joyce Richardson



This is the first year my Christmas Cactus bloomed on Christmas Day - it has always bloomed in October!

Last of the Posies!

- Terrie Hahn

On December 7th, I picked the last bouquet of the year before the freeze. Roses, Shrimp Plant, Mexican Mint Marigold and Forsythia Sage.



Officers

President	Wayne Schirner
First Vice President	Mary Ann Everett
Second Vice President	Louann Hight
Recording Secretary	Stayce Parry
Corresponding Secretary	Pat Allen
Treasurer	Don Wyatt

Directors

Youth Programs	Gail Koontz
New Class	Fran Sheppard
Grounds	Johnny Jones Tom Rennels
Plant Sale	Kathy Love
KMCCG	Edie Campbell
Outreach	Carol Morisset Jan Upchurch
Awards	Bernie Hurta
Webmaster	Louann Hight
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TEXAS A&M
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