



# The Blooming Bell

June, 2012  
BCMGA Newsletter

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# June 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 General Meeting with Gil Eckrich speaking on Dragon- flies and Damsel- flies 11 am	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Board of Directors Meeting 9 am	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Upcoming Dates to Remember: Keyhole Gardening with Dr. Tolman, July 26  
 Fall Plant Sale is September 22nd  
 July General Meeting, Clint Walker talks about bees.  
 Fall Garden Tour, October 20

# The President's Corner

May was a busy month with graduation of a new class, installation of officers and several school events. We graduated 9 new certified gardeners and 7 interns. Welcome to all of you.

The class committee chose to hold graduation at the extension office this year. The committee decorated the meeting room, it looked festive and the ice cream social was fun. Besides ice cream, there was time to visit and get to know the newly certified gardeners and interns.

New officers have been installed on the MG Board. Jeanette Karr, Pat Maskunas, and Beth Buhl have completed their terms on the board. They all deserve a big thank you. Please welcome Recording Secretary: Myra Crenshaw, Corresponding Secretary: Peg Fleet, Grounds & Maintenance Director: Sophie Gomez, and Garden Tours Director: Margaret Leigh, to the MG board. Beth Buhl will continue to chair the garden tour committee.

Attending the state Master Gardener conference was a new event for me. I enjoyed the speakers, left with a few new ideas and visited a local nursery on a field trip. I am ready to sign up for the next state conference.

McAllen, Texas will be the site of the next conference held in October 2013. This is an exciting location and it should be a great conference. I hope you will begin to consider attending. There will be good speakers and the field trips will be interesting and diverse.

Our June monthly meeting will be Gil Eckrich presenting a program on dragonflies and damselflies. Gil always brings a good program with useful information. In July, Clint Walker will return with a Bee program. If you missed the last Bee program, put this on your

calendar. As Master Gardeners we all need to be aware of what is happening with Bees. They are our most important gardening partners.

We have several events in the works. A fall vegetable gardening seminar will be held in July, the date will be announced. Prior to the fall plant sale a tree seminar will also be presented. Add the fall plant sale, September 22 and the fall garden tour, October 20 to your calendar. Both of these events require multiple volunteers. They also raise funds for our organization.

July 26, Keep Temple Beautiful is sponsoring a workshop by Dr. Deb Tolman on keyhole gardening. If you are a member of an electrical coop, the February issue of the coop magazine had an article about "Dr. Deb" and keyhole gardening. The time for the event is not yet available, but it will most likely be during the day. Please make an attempt to attend this workshop. I think if you cannot attend you will miss an interesting gardening alternative that is making the news.

The building committee continues to work toward our new facility. A trench was dug at the site of the former greenhouse to determine the stability of the soil. Good news, we will not have to remove all of the old fill and have it replaced. This is a sizable financial savings for the organization. Hopefully permits and plans will now begin to fall into place and we will have

visible signs of progress before the summer is through. I know everyone is anxious to see progress.

I think I have prepared the garden for the months ahead. The soaker hoses and mulch are in place and I have erected frames for shade cloth. I have harvested a few vegetables and am awaiting more. Hopefully this summer will not be the scorcher we had last year. If we do suffer another extreme summer, I may be the only part of the garden not prepared for the heat. Which gives me a good excuse for a new sunhat and maybe a hammock in the shade. Hope to see

you at the next monthly meeting.....Laura

Photo by Terrie Hahn



# MG's Participate in Salado Earth Day

- Susan Terry

Salado Earth Day Festival was a success because of the people involved. Bell County Master Gardeners Guy Okeson and Steve Overby provided info on composting and rain harvesting while new class volunteers Elaine Passman, Betty Burkett, Pam Drago, and Sandy Wilson entertained children with grass heads and other activities. Central Texas Master Naturalists and their Angler Education instructors, pictured in bottom two photos, also participated and helped to make our area a highlight of the event. If you were unable to attend this year you really missed something. Mark your calendar now for the 3rd Saturday in April 2013.



Photos by Gail Christian and Cheryl Kibbe



# State Conference Awards Announced

- Gary Slanga

The outcome of this years awards at the State Master Gardeners Conference were not as good as anticipated. We did win one 2nd place award in the Mass Media category. Mass Media includes our newspaper articles "Tip of the Week" and we submitted a series of articles on managing our landscape during the drought. Thanks go out to Mary Lew Quesinberry and



Attending the State Conference were Gary Slanga, Laura Murphy, Mary Ann Everett, Mary Lew Quesinberry and Karen Colwick.

Candice Mullen for the hard work they did to educate the public in this area. I want to extend a thanks to all the other Master Gardeners who participated in the awards. I felt we had some awesome entries this year and we will just try harder next year. Thanks also to Pamela Dragoo who volunteered to join the awards committee. Always good to get some fresh ideas for the upcoming awards.

Just a reminder that awards nominations are being accepted for "New Master Gardener of the Year," "Green Thumb," and "Golden Trowel." Criteria and forms are on our Master Gardener web site. I encourage all members to nominate anyone you feel has done an exceptional job for our organization so that we can recognize their hard work.

Once again, thanks to all who participated in last year's awards.

## Q & A

*Editor's note: This is a new column for Questions and Answers. When I get a question from a MG, I'll put it out there for other MG's to answer and publish the answer for everyone to benefit from it. Please send your questions and answers to me at [moompie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moompie45@hotmail.com) or call me at 512-863-9837.*



I picked this along the Pepper Creek Trail. Can you tell me what it is? It is 3 " long at present.

- Myra Crenshaw

# Spring Cactus—A Special Field Trip Surprise

- Pat Smith

While on our recent class field trip, many of us purchased plants and other items with which to embellish our gardens. My special find was a Spring Cactus. I enjoy working with my collection of Christmas Cacti so this was a special treat. A little Google effort helped to solve the mystery of this plant that was new to me.

Spring cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis* or *Hatiora*) is similar to other holiday cactus. Spring cactus, also called Easter cactus, has bright to dark green leaves that are slightly scalloped ovals. The flat leaves are joined together to form a long stem that produces flowers. It is native to the Brazilian jungle where it grows in lightly shaded conditions. As a jungle cactus rather than a desert cactus, it can withstand more humidity and heat. It can be grown outdoors in zones 10 and 11 where the minimum low temperature is 30 degrees. In other zones it needs to be treated as an indoor plant. However it can be grown in shaded outdoor conditions in warm temperatures. It prefers bright light, but no direct sun.

The flowers produced can be a variety of colors including red, pink, peach, white, yellow or purple. The flowers appear during April and May, can have sharp or rounded

edges and are solid colors. They are truly a spectacle of beauty. Spring cacti can be induced to flower by exposing the plants to cool temperatures and less light, followed by a transition to warmer temperatures and light for longer durations.

Caring for Spring cactus is easy. It requires care similar to other holiday cactus.

Allow soil to dry between waterings but do not stress the plant, especially when it is in bud and bloom stage. According to White Flower Farm

([www.whiteflowerfarm.com](http://www.whiteflowerfarm.com)), apply a balanced (20-20-20) houseplant fertilizer monthly, diluted to half strength from April to August.

Propagation of new plants can be done by simply taking cuttings of cactus branches then letting the cuttings dry

out overnight before planting two or three cuttings per 6" pot in a well-drained medium.

The Spring Cactus is not as popular in the United States as it is in Denmark and the Netherlands.

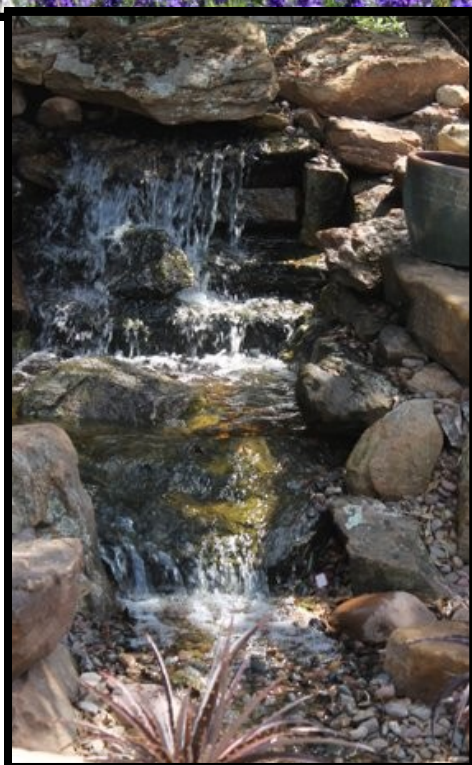
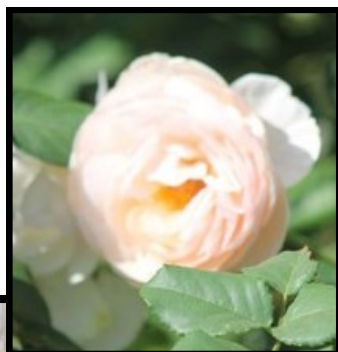
This eye-catching beauty may prove to be a new favorite of mine.



# Photos from the Class Field Trip in April

- Frances Idoux

Here are more photos from the April New Class Field Trip to Boggy Farms, The Great Outdoors and the Hill Country Water Gardens.



# News from the Master Gardener Class of 2012

## - Pat Smith

WE GRADUATED! What a happy day! Our heads are swelling with the things we have learned about gardening, each of us practicing our new-found knowledge in his or her own way. Some of us are already taking on community projects such as working on a church landscape committee or working with the community garden in Killeen or other volunteer projects for which we now have a greater appreciation.

Susan Terry quoted about our class, "This has been an awesome learning opportunity and has already led to new adventures.



Mary Ann Everett and Mary Lew Quesinberry helped me develop a landscape plan for Holy Trinity Catholic High School. Amazing!!" This picture shows completed phase 1.

Maritza Kincaid, our T-shirt designer said, "The MG class was not only informative but great fun! If you love to garden and want to meet some great like-minded people, I highly recommend this class. I'm glad I was finally able to take it and I'm looking forward to getting involved in the many projects and services that the MGs provide the community."

Several of us in our class are retired teachers or college professors so we know and appreciate the level of work that goes into preparation for each class. We realize the many hours of volunteer work it took for us to achieve our goal of completing this class and nine of us to have completed Master Gardener

Certification. Thanks to all who participated in any way to make this happen.

## New Class Committee

*Class Director...* Mary Ann Everett

*Class Coordinators...* Jerry Lewis & Fran Sheppard

*Mentor Coordinator...* Peg Fleet

*Propagation Lab Coordinators...* Judy Hermann & Wayne Baker

*Field Trip Coordinators...* Suzanne Boyer & Kim Pringle

*Other Committee Members ...* Diane Calderwood, Bernie Hurta, Laura Murphy, Carol Runyan & Mary Lew Quesinberry

*Propagation Mentors...* Mary Lou Edmondson & Carol Runyan

*Traditional Mentors...* Brenda Albro, Bette Gilmore, Wayne Baker, Terrie Hahn, Beth Buhl, Werner Hahn, Bev Chenoweth, Carla Harmon, Vern Chenoweth, Laura Jung, Karen Colwick, Mary Lew Quesinberry, Peg Fleet & Carol Runyan

Lastly, thanks to all of the refreshment mentors that graced us with the additional nourishment to carry our new-found knowledge into our own gardens. I think all

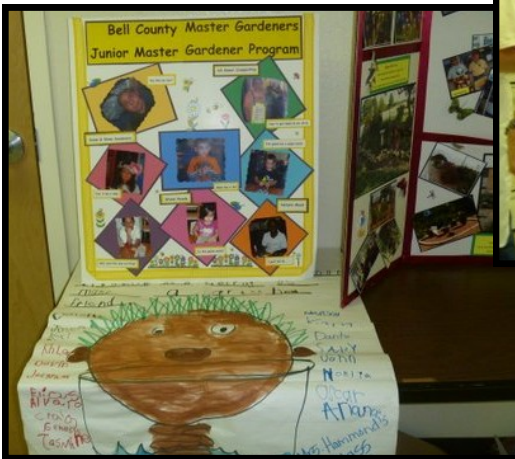


of us certainly worked to burn off the additional calories gathered from the wonderful refreshments provided each week. The class on herbs with the demonstration of how to use

herbs in cooking was especially awesome.



# Graduation Day



Photos by Mary  
Lew Quesinberry



# Herb Presentation for the New Class



The Herb Presentation for the New Class needs a lot of people working together to make it a success. There are presenters, cooks, servers, tech crew, photographers and tasters! Betty Nejtsek is the main presenter with Suzanne Boyer and Terrie Hahn helping with their specialties. The crew helping out included Bernie Hurta, Jerry Lewis, Mary Ann Everett, Fran Shepard, Peg Fleet, Carol Runyan and Mary Lew Quesinberry.

Photos by Mary Lew Quesinberry

# With Many Thanks

## - Peg Fleet

Details do make a difference, and those who served as either traditional mentors or refreshment mentors for the Bell County Master Gardener Class of 2012 provided that something extra that turned a remarkable education experience into something even more memorable. Traditional mentors this year were Brenda Albro, Wayne Baker, Beth Buhl, Bev Chenoweth, Vern Chenoweth, Karen Colwick, Peg Fleet, Bette Gilmore, Terrie Hahn, Werner Hahn, Carla Harmon, Laura Jung, Mary Lew Quesinberry, and Carol Runyan. Refreshment mentors were Brenda Albro, Raye Virginia Allen, James Anderson, Wayne Baker, Suzanne Boyer, Kathleen Brown, Beth Buhl, Betty Burkett, Karen Colwick, Myra Crenshaw, Pam Dragoo, Peg Fleet, Jan George, Bette Gilmore, Sophia Gomez, Werner Hahn, Maritza Kincaid, Darla Menking, Betty Nejtek, Stacye Parry, Elaine Passman, Gail Pierce, Mary Lew Quesinberry, Fran Sheppard, Pat Smith, and Susan Terry. The class graduation has come and gone, but I am still in awe of this group of people who stepped up to volunteer or to fill in when needed. You helped make it all work, but even more than that, you gave the New Class a glimpse of the workings of the association. Thank you for the gifts of your time and talents.

## Safety Day

### - Darla Horner Menking

On May 17th, six Bell County Master Gardeners volunteered at the 2012 Belton 4-H Safety Day at the Bell County Expo. Area school districts including Belton, Salado, Academy, Holland, and Killeen brought middle school students to attend this annual activity. Students rotated to several stations to hear speakers on a wide variety of safety issues, from Project Tornado with News 10 TV's Rusty Garrett to alcohol/driving safety, first aid, ATV safety, Meth awareness, passenger/rollover safety, lawnmower safety, 911 awareness, internet safety, sun safety, disability awareness, fire safety, food/nutrition safety, and last

but not least- outdoor/snake safety, the topic taught by BCMG members Louann Hight, Linda Young, James Anderson, Mary Ann Everett, Jerry Lewis and Darla Menking. The students were enthusiastic, well-mannered and had many stories and questions about snakes and their own close encounters. Snake safety topics included distinguishing characteristics of venomous/ non-venomous species, habitat awareness, first aid tips, and even positive contributions snakes make to our environment. It was a fun day for all!

## Martin Mania

### - Ursula Nanna

*Editor's note: This is an update on the martin houses Ursula put up a few months ago.*

The 6"x6" houses have only 2-3 eggs maximum while the new 10"-11" new gourds have at least 6 eggs in each. Seems like the more space, the more eggs....that translates into more Martins! I took these pictures by lowering the houses and unscrewing the clean out port.



Photos by  
Chuck Abare



# Announcements

## General Meeting Information

### - Bernie Hurta

The program for the June 13th Monthly Meeting is "Dragonflies and Damselflies" with Gil Eckrich from Ft. Hood. Hope to see you there.

## It's Time for Annual Dues

### - Don Wyatt, Treasurer

It is time to pay your annual dues. The amount is \$25, payable to BCMGA. You can give your check or cash to me, leave at the extension office or mail to:

Don Wyatt

153 Autumn Circle

Belton, Texas 76513.

Please pay by the deadline of June 30, 2012. Remember that you do not have to be certified in order to stay a member of BCMGA. But you do have to pay your dues. I hope you decide to stay a member and come to our monthly meeting and stay involved in our activities.

Also, JMG teachers are exempt from paying dues. As well as the new class that just graduated. Your dues were included in your tuition.

## Dear Bell County Master Gardeners,

You will be proud to know that our association won second place in the 2012 mass media award at the Texas Master Gardener Conference in San Antonio.

Our "Tip of the Week" articles are published weekly in the Killeen Daily Herald and Temple Daily Telegram. They are available also on the Killeen Daily Herald website, our web site, and can be found by googling and sometime appear in the Salado newspaper.

We are in need of summer articles. We need 5 for July and 5 for August. Articles need to be turned in to Candy Mullen [candylane@taptrain.com](mailto:candylane@taptrain.com)

Everyone, including our new 2012 graduates, is encouraged to write a 300 word "tip", written in arial font., with a photo, if possible. Articles need to be submitted as soon as possible.

Candy is going to Australia to visit her new grandchild and has requested that all articles reach her by July 1.

**Sincerely,**

**Mary Lew**

# What's Happening in Your Yard?

- Darla Horner Menking

Here is a cardinal flower from my yard along with cream echinacea and a hardy perennial hibiscus.



- Myra Crenshaw

I wrote an article for the newspaper some time ago about  
Triumphator Lilies.  
Mine are now in full bloom with several lilies per stalk.  
They are a great  
cut flower to bring in, lasting 6 to 7 days.



## Officers and Directors 2011- 2012

<b>President</b>	<b>Laura Murphy</b>
<b>First Vice President</b>	<b>Bernie Hurta</b>
<b>Second Vice President</b>	<b>Jerry Lewis</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Myra Crenshaw</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	<b>Peg Fleet</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Don Wyatt</b>

## Directors

<b>Garden Tour</b>	<b>Margaret Leigh</b>
<b>JMG</b>	<b>Pearl Fellingham</b>
<b>New Class</b>	<b>Fran Sheppard</b>
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Don Gold</b>
<b>Grounds &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>Sophia Gomez</b>
<b>Greenhouse</b>	<b>Mel Myers</b>
<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	<b>Randall Rakowitz</b>

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