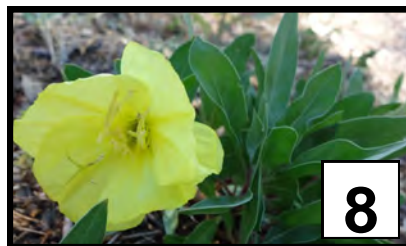
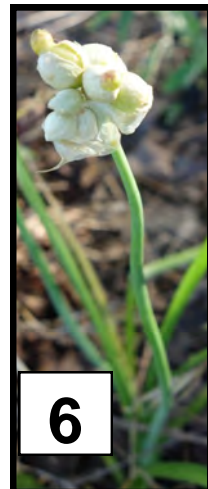


The Blooming Bell

May 2014



Bell County
Master Gardener
Association



Name that wild-
flower: Check
out page 9.

Photos by Laura
Murphy, Charles
Newsom, Terrie
Hahn

Inside this edition:

May 2014 Calendar	2
President's Corner	3
Wonderful World of Insects	4
How to Control Fire Ants	5
Butterfly Population	6
MG News	7
Field Trip	8
Conference Update/New Officers	10
Q & A/Name That Wildflower	11
Announcements	12
What Happening in Your Yard	13



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Work Day 8:30 am Pasta Wednesday 11 am	8	9	10
11 Mother's Day	12	13	14 General Meeting 11 am in New Building	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Work Day Graduation 1 pm In Classroom	22	23	24
25	26 	27	28 Board Meeting 9 am	29	30	31

Please turn-in your service and education hours for last month. Everyone turns in service/education hours, that includes 2013 graduates and lifetime members.

Possible date for tour of Expo Center - June 11

Photo by Charles Newsom

The President's Corner

May is the month of beginnings, endings and celebrations. We celebrate the graduation of our new interns this month. They have completed the Master Gardener course, and many have completed their volunteer hours to become a Certified Master Gardener. Congratulations Class of 2014. Graduation is May 21st.

May is also the month we install new officers and bid farewell to officers and directors leaving the board. New officers will be installed May 28th at the board meeting. They will officially take office on June 1st. Please welcome the new officers. Along with those remaining to complete their terms of office, the new board will be a very talented group of officers and directors.

We begin our annual campaign to collect dues this month. Dues are \$25.00 annually. This next year is an important year in our local association. Hosting the annual conference in April 2015 requires many hands. Most importantly you must be a Master Gardener to attend the annual conference. It is not open to non members. To be a Master Gardener you must pay your dues, sign the volunteer form and have a current background check. These requirements are set by the state association. Dues and the volunteer form are annual requirements. Background checks are required every 3 years. If you wish to be a CERTIFIED master gardener you must ALSO submit the required education (12) and volunteer hours(50). Education and volunteer hours must be approved prior to reporting.

The new reporting program is up and running. It is user friendly. It does make reporting education and volunteer hours and contacts very easy. You will be receiving more information about training.

Thank you master gardeners for giving me the opportunity to be your president. Thanks also to the other officers and directors who have made my office easier. I look forward to this next year, it is a great time to be a Bell County Master Gardener.

.....Laura

Top three photos of Dallas Blooms at the Dallas Arboretum by Randy Brown, bottom photo by Terrie Hahn



Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Hover Flies

- Wizzie Brown

(Editor's note: I'm excited to announce the addition to the Blooming Bell of this column written by Wizzie Brown, Travis County's AgriLife Extension's Entomologist. I know everyone will be very happy to learn something new about insects!)

Hover flies, also known as syrphid flies or flower flies, are bee and wasp mimics. You can tell that they are flies because they only have two wings (bees and wasps have four wings). The flies can range in size from about ¼ to ¾ an inch long. Most are black or brown with yellow markings and wings are held out to the side when at rest. Other flies also mimic bees and wasps, so you can tell a hover fly by the spurious vein (a vein that has a tip that is not connected to other veins) in the wing.

Hover flies are great fliers and are capable of hovering or even flying backward. Adults are considered beneficial because they help to pollinate plants. Larvae are considered to be beneficial because they feed on aphids and other insects. Hoverflies cannot sting.

Hover flies have complete metamorphosis with 4 life stages- egg, larva, pupa and adult. Females singly lay whitish-grey oblong eggs near aphids. Eggs hatch in about 3 days. Larvae are legless and carrot shaped. The larvae vary in color but most have a stripe running the length of the back. Larvae develop for 2-3 weeks before pupating. Pupae are pear shaped and typically found on the plant or soil surface. Adults emerge in 2-3 weeks unless



it's an overwintering stage. There can be up to 7 generations per year.

Adult flies feed on pollen and nectar and may also be attracted to honeydew caused by sucking insects such as aphids, mealybugs and scale insects. Adults are typically found around flowers. Larvae feed on aphids and other small, soft-bodied insects. Larvae move along the plant surface looking for prey. When they find something, they grasp it, suck it dry and discard the skin. Pupae are non-feeding.

Other species of syrphids feed on fungi and live in decaying vegetation and wood while some live in nests of ants, termites or bees. One group, called rattailed maggots, live in highly polluted water and have a long breathing tube off the tip of the abdomen for breathing.



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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How to Control Fire Ants

- **Cindy Bollinger**

The 2014 BCMG class had an interesting discussion about how to control fire ants. In regards to this discussion, I would like to submit information from an article as it appeared in Spring 2014 Guide to Organic Gardening written by Vicki Matthews.

The article began - "Shelve the grits, baking soda, club soda, vinegar, molasses, plaster of Paris, aspartame, cayenne pepper, cinnamon and coffee grounds!"

Scientific testing shows none of this works against the red imported fire ant (*Solenopsis invicta*). I did not realize that in addition to biting and stinging you – they could also devour germinating seeds, tunnel into potatoes and tomatoes and girdle young fruit trees. Drought makes them even more of a problem.

If you have one or two fire ant mounds, the simplest thing is to pour 3 gallons of very hot water directly onto the mound, according to the article. This method is credited with about 60% success so will probably need to be repeated. Be careful of course with hot water – none on you or other plants.

Even more effective, drench the mounds with citrus oil and soap solution. According to the article, this has reportedly proved effective. Controlled studies conducted by Texas A&M University entomologists on fire ant mounds still showed no activity nearly a month after the researchers treated the mounds with a mix of 1 ½ ounces of Medina Orange Oil and 3 ounces of Dawn dishwashing soap. D-limonene, in citrus oil, breaks down ants exoskeletons and causes them to suffocate. The commercial product Orange Guard Fire Ant Control – rated organic – also contains orange oil.

If your fire ant problem is bigger than a mound or two – try the "Texas Two Step" recommended by Texas A&M specialists. The first step, broadcast a fire ant bait product that contains spinosad, a natural metabolite produced by soil microorganisms as its active ingredient. Foraging ants will carry it back to their nest and it will work in a few days to a few weeks. Applying fresh granules when ants are active works best. Soil temperature between 70-95 degrees and a forecast of no rain should also be in play. The second step, if you spot new fire ant activity in your garden or surrounding area between applications described in the first

step, treat the individual mounds with either one of the following - spinosad, the Medina Orange oil/soap solution, Orange Guard or very hot water.



Photos from <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/organic/files/2011/03/fireants.pdf>



Drought Clips Butterfly Population

- **Cindy Bollinger**

The following information appeared in USA Today in an article by Doyle Rice. One of the sure signs of warmer months to come is monarch butterflies. This year it might be harder to find these butterflies according to tracker Craig Wilson, a senior research associate at Texas A&M. In fact, 2014 may go down as one of their worst years ever because of several things occurring in Texas now.

The butterflies are under stress because of ongoing drought, an unusually cold winter and a lack of milkweed, their primary food source and a plant necessary to their life cycle. The milkweed is necessary for monarch caterpillars to live. Due to these conditions, the plant has not yet started to grow. Larvae feed on milkweed. Now is the time to plant and help weave the web of life. Each March and April, the monarchs fly through Texas and stop here to munch on milkweed. It is interesting to note that no single monarch completes the journey; it takes a few generations of monarchs to complete the trip. In the summer, the life span of breeding monarchs is only about 2-5 weeks.

Wilson explained that butterfly wintering sites in the Mexican state of Michoacan are at near-historic lows.

Earlier this year, the butterflies were clustered on only 1.2 acres in comparison with the average of around 15 acres in the middle 1990's. Wilson said there should be a national effort to save the monarchs or their declining numbers will reach critical stage. "We need a national priority of planting milkweed for this magical migration of monarchs to continue for future generations."

It has been of concern to this writer to note that milkweed plants are not found in any of the local nurseries she has visited in Temple or Austin. I did find seed available through the Native American Seed Company online. I bought a pack of seed about six weeks ago and have been making

rather persistent attempts to germinate the seeds not realizing that there was a specific protocol for germination. In search of helpful information, I contacted a representative of the company earlier this week by phone seeking help. She told me that it was necessary for seeds to be cold stratified.

It is interesting to note that seed sales are now being limited to packages of 10 seeds due to extreme shortages. The web site for the sale of packages of milkweed include this quote: the "packets have been created in the hopes of reaching as many helping hands as possible. Once plants are established, seeds can be harvested from the plants." In addition to the sale of packets of common milkweed, Native American Seed Company also offers for sale a "Sustain the Migration Kit." It includes seeds for six varieties of milkweed, instructions and vermiculite.

At this writing, my seeds are tucked away in my refrigerator. In 23 days I will plant them in my butterfly garden in hopes of helping Monarchs on their way. I am probably too late for the spring migration but hope to be ready when they return late summer to fall. Plants already planted in my yard for butterflies include numerous blue mistflowers, butterfly weed, butterfly bush and coneflowers. Last summer my neighbors would stop to enjoy watching large groups of butterflies fluttering above the flowers. Butterflies included both the Monarchs and the Queen butterflies. It was something to see....



Photo from <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/2013/05/02/monarch-tracking-by-cell-phone/>

April's MG Meeting

- Randy Brown

April's meeting took place in the New Building with Gil Eckrich giving a great presentation on Bird Migration.



Spring at KMCCG

- Randy Brown



Some of what's growing at the Killeen Gardens: Olive Trees, Peaches, Blackberries, Potatoes and Asparagus.

Photos by Randy Brown



Time for a Field Trip

- Gail Christian



This year's field trip was to Messina Hof Vineyards & Winery in Bryan, Sand Creek Farm, near Cameron, and Walker Honey Farm, Rogers, TX. Continued on next page...



Field Trip

Photos by Gail
Christian



Conference Update

Gary Slanga, Conference Chair

I am happy to report that we now have **57** of our members assigned to one committee or another. To help fill out some of the smaller committees, I would encourage all committee chairs to recruit any master gardener who you believe has some expertise in the area that you will be responsible for. I also ask that any master gardener who has not yet volunteered for a committee, please do so. We need your help. And also thanks to all of you who have volunteered and have worked so hard up to this point.

I have added several new committees as we identified new events to add to the conference. One is Arts and Entertainment. We have decided that we would like to decorate the walk-way around the dome with art work from the local college and high school art departments. We are also considering using music talents from these schools to provide entertainment. Pat Smith has taken on that job but needs help from any master gardener who has past experience working in the schools, teachers etc. who would be willing to use their connections to help with this committee. If you have an interest in art or music, this is the committee for you.

Another committee added is the Conference coordination committee. Its responsibility is to help ensure that all aspects of the conference are being looked after. Charlotte Jones is working on that committee along with Laura Murphy. If you have experience working on conferences or large social events and

would like to work on that committee, please contact Charlotte or myself.

The last committee I will be adding is the Facilities Coordination Committee. This will be a small group of no more than four or five who will be responsible for coordinating with the Expo staff on our conference needs. This committee includes Laura Murphy, Ilene Miller, Charlotte Jones, Jerry Lewis and myself. The Expo staff has requested that this number stay small so that they are not constantly bothered by several people running in with questions or requests. To that end, there will be another meeting, our third, at the Expo center planned for June 11th. This date is still in the works so look for updates later. We plan to tour the facility and determine placement for all the events. If you have not attended any of the first two tours you are encouraged to attend this one. Committee chairs will be able to stake their claim to space for their events.

The committee lists and task lists are by no means all inclusive and many tasks may have been missed. Any one who can identify a task that is not addressed, whether for your committee or some other committee, please let me know so that we can cover all bases. Likewise the committee lists may be out of date since volunteers have signed up for additional tasks after the original lists were compiled. Please let me know if I have missed you on any committee.

Thanks again to all for the hard work you have already done. We have a great start on this conference. Let's keep the momentum going.

New Officers to be Installed

- Laura Murphy

The new officers to be installed at the May 28th Board Meeting are: (all 2 year terms) Gary Slanga, President; Bernie Hurta, 2nd Vice President; Pat Smith, Recording Secretary; Pat Allen, Corresponding Secretary; Susan Terry, Outreach Director; Edie Campbell, Killeen Gardens Director; Carla Harmon and Walter Ponder, Landscape Directors.

Q & A

Name That Wildflower

- Terrie Hahn

On the front cover of April's *Blooming Bell* were photos of wildflowers in bloom in March. (pictured to the right) Can you name them all?

Beverly Wickersham emailed me with the answers!

The Answers are:

1. Bluebonnets
2. California Poppy
3. Stork's Bill, *Erodium texanum*
4. Texas Star, Lindheimer Daisy, *Lindheimera texana*
5. Spurred Snapdragon, Toadflax
6. Paintbrush, probably Western Paintbrush
7. Death Camas
8. Prairie Verbena, Dakota Vervain, *Verbena bipinnatifida*
9. Golden Eye Phlox

Thanks Beverly!!!

The front cover of this issue of *The Blooming Bell* has 10 photos of wildflowers blooming in April. Can you come up with the names of all of them? Let's see who knows their wildflowers!

Email me at moompie45@hotmail.com or call me at 512-863-9837.



Announcements

Ground Committee News

Let's do pasta for Burger Wednesday on May 7 and a work day. We will also have a work day on the 21st.

This is the last month for Sophia and Brenda as chairpersons of the Grounds committee. It has been a real learning experience but one that has been great. Thanks for letting us serve in this position. We want to say THANKS to all of you who worked so hard to make progress on the projects but also those of you whose patience seemed to never end as we asked lots of questions. You are a wonderful group of people.

Thanks,

Brenda and Sophia

New Program for Service/Education hours

- Gail Christian

I noticed that quite a few people have entered service hours in the new program. A few brave souls have even put their photos on their profile page. The responses have been positive from everyone experimenting with entering data. If you haven't tried it, now is the time to experiment with the program.

Just remember, we still need you to turn your time in by the paper time sheet until **after the first of June**. That is when we start our new fiscal year. Then we will start using the new system. Stacey will still enter the data for those who don't have a computer. If you have a problem with the system, I am available to help.
Thank you.

Dues Due

- Gail Christian

The 2014 - 2015 membership dues are payable now till the end of June. Dues remain \$25.00 for each individual. Checks should be made to BCMGA and

may be mailed or dropped off at the Agrilife Extension Office at 1605 N. Main St., Belton, TX 76513. They may also be mailed directly to the Treasurer, Gail Christian, at 3426 Bob White Lane, Belton, TX 76513.

If you have already paid this years dues, thank you for your continued participation in this organization.

FYI

40 Gallon Challenge

- Cindy Bollinger

I took the 40 Gallon Challenge and pledged to save 122 gallons of water daily for Texas. How much water will you save? Go to:
<http://www.40GallonChallenge.org>.

I urge you to check out this website. Share it with everyone in your address book. Take the pledge and let's save water for future generations in Texas.

Plant Sale Profit

The Spring Plant Sale made about \$5,100.

Texas Gardener

Make sure to check out the upcoming July/August issue of Texas Gardener for the article on the Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden.

Anniversary Gardens on Tour

Saturday, May 10, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Enjoy a retrospective tour of five gardens featured previously on Gardens on Tour plus the gardens at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center as we celebrate the tour's tenth year. Learn how these gardens use native plants effectively and beautifully to create sustainable landscapes with features such as rain-water harvesting systems, ponds, wildlife habitat and more. Don't miss this tour, rain or shine, the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend.

Go to: <http://www.wildflower.org/gardentour/>

What's Happening in Your Yard

Spring is Here!

- Crystal Fisher

Oh, look what my friend, Sharon Vick found on the aloe vera plant while she was pulling weeds in a flowerbed.

A Copperhead. Good thing neither she nor her dogs got any closer. We've all been told that this is the time of year to see them out moving. So, be careful when you are walking through debris.

Photo by Sharon Vick



Carefree Beauty Babies

- Annette Ensing

These two pictures are of Carefree Beauty rose seedlings. There was an abundance of rose hips last fall, and of course I couldn't let them all go to waste. So late November, I processed 213 seeds from four types into mini loaf pans, and stuck them in a refrigerator drawer--- and forgot them. I remembered them around the first of March, which was later than the time I'd usually pull them out, but I was leaving on vacation, so left them- safer in the refrigerator, I thought. When I came home, I again forgot them. When I did open the drawer, I had a bunch of seedlings! 68 in fact (a pretty good yield). They

have their true leaves and I just transplanted them into

6 packs. Don't ask what I'm going to do with 68 roses, or in fact, where I'm going to keep them, since my greenhouse was damaged in that storm. They may have to take over my kitchen.....Since I didn't breed these, the results will be another surprise.



Photos by Annette Ensing

What's Happening in Your Yard

Spring is Here!

- Charles Newsom

The garden really liked the moisture and cool weather in the beginning of April. Garlic, Beans, Onions, Tomatoes and Potatoes are coming up along with Amaryllis and Iris. I have set up two 250 gallon totes to collect rainwater in addition to the 900 gallon barrel.

T-post and cages have similar prices. I think driven T-posts will support the tomatoes better. The driver is a gasoline powered eccentric driver for driving posts and stakes. We will see if the cages or T-posts work better this year.



What's Happening in Your Yard

Spring is Here!

- Laura Murphy

Went "wild flowering " mid April. We saw small flower gaura near Smithwick.... which is between Bertram and Marble Falls. And my Lady Banks Rose is giving me a show.



- Terrie and Werner Hahn

Our Crushed Ice succulent plant in full bloom-it didn't mind last summer's heat and this past winter's cold. And Bells of Ireland that we got from the Fall Plant Swap. Kim Pringle brought it to the Swap. Thanks Kim for a beautiful, fun looking plant!



What's Happening in Your Yard

Spring is Here!

- Mary Lew Quesinberry

A small patch of white and blue Bluebonnets on Old Howard Road/Reasearch Blvd. south of Vista Church construction site in Temple.



- Diane Calderwood

My yard in bloom this spring!



Officers

President	Laura Murphy
First Vice President	Randy Brown
Second Vice President	Jerry Lewis
Recording Secretary	Myra Crenshaw
Corresponding Secretary	Peg Fleet
Treasurer	Gail Christian

Directors

Youth Programs	Mary Ann Everett
New Class	Fran Sheppard
Education/State Conference	Gary Slanga
Grounds & Maintenance	Sophia Gomez & Brenda Albro
Awards	Bernie Hurta
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*Please submit articles for the Blooming Bell as Word Documents with **photos separate as JPG files** to Terrie Hahn at:*

moompie45@hotmail.com

Please do not send PDF documents.

Photo below by Terrie Hahn. This photo of a duck was taken in a live oak next to our house. We're about 2 miles from water. Mary Ann Everett identified it as a

A publication of the Bell County Master Gardener Association sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension of Texas A & M University

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