

# *The Blooming Bell*

**November 2013**



**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**



Above: The Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden's Low Water Demonstration Garden. Photo by Randy Brown.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 <b>Conference Planning Meeting at Expo Center, 9:30 a.m.</b>	5	6 <i>No Hamburger Wednesday</i> <b>Dallas Arboretum Field Trip, 7:45 a.m.</b>	7	8 	9
10	11	12	13 <b>Work Day and Grounds Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m. General Meeting on Bats, 11 a.m.</b>	14 	15	16
17	18 	19	20 <b>Work Day</b> <b>New Class Orientation, 1 p.m.</b>	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 <b>Board meeting will be <i>DECEMBER 4</i>, 9 a.m.</b>	28 	29	30

Upcoming dates: November/December Board Meeting, December 4, 9 am Christmas Party, December 5  
 Photos of flowers at the Extension Center by Frances Idoux      Leaf images from [www.thefreelanceretort.blogspot.com](http://www.thefreelanceretort.blogspot.com)

# The President's Corner

The state Master Gardener conference in McAllen was good. Their theme did not disappoint, there were plenty of birds, butterflies and blooms. The speakers were informative and interesting and the convention center was beautiful. I am convinced that Bell County will receive many compliments after we host our great conference in 2015. There is a state conference meeting on Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at Expo. We need as many people as possible to attend, hear what the staff at Expo has to say and walk through the facilities. It is time to be underway on the conference.

November 6<sup>th</sup> is the field trip to the Dallas Arboretum. Cost is \$40 per person. This includes the entrance fee and cost of transportation. Bring your own lunch or plan to eat lunch in a restaurant on the grounds. It is a beautiful time of year to visit the arboretum. Randy Brown has made the arrangements and can answer any questions you might have.

Our monthly meeting will be November 13<sup>th</sup>. The speaker will be from Bats International. Bats are very important to the agricultural crops in our state. I hope you can attend. This is the first program on bats that we have had in our chapter. November the 14<sup>th</sup> will be the Clear Water Conservation Districts annual fall conference. We will be hosting a table at the conference with hand outs and native plants. The plants will be given as door prizes to the attendees.

The November and December board meetings will be combined into one meeting to be held on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. This is due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The following day December 5<sup>th</sup>, is the annual Christmas party at Expo at 6:00pm. This will be our traditional December meeting. Also on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, Bell County is hosting the Pecan Show. Lyle Zoeller, our County Extension Agent, will need some volunteers to work the show. If you are not decorating for the Christmas party (guys and girls) please volunteer to assist with the Pecan Show.

Work continues on the grounds around the Master Gardener building. Some of the bricks have come in and the foundation soil for the bricks has been prepared. You will also see the installation of an irrigation system in the immediate future. Lyle generously

agreed to pay for the irrigation system. It is never too late to purchase a brick for yourself or someone else. Gail Christian continues to take brick orders.

October was busy with school programs, public appearances by master gardeners, and a plant sale. Though we did not have as many customers this fall, we made a profit and it was a successful sale. Between the spring sale and the fall sale we have done well this year. Thank you Carla and plant sale committee.

We have a new class beginning in January. It may well be one of our smallest classes. We are advertising in Coryell and Hamilton counties for students. Neither county has a master gardener chapter. If you know of anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener, please encourage them to enroll.

If you need to send out an email to the general membership, send it to Rhettlee. She will graciously send it out. When you answer emails from Rhettlee, reply to the person sending out the message. **Do Not** reply to Rhettlee. The office is short two agents and one secretary. We all need to be cooperative and mindful of those staff shortages.

I continue to hear good things about Master Gardeners and the work you do in the communities in Bell County. Thanks to all of you. I am thankful to be a part of such a nice group. Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families.....Laura



Frances Idoux has notified me that the Master Gardener book is being printed. It will cost \$25.00 per copy. It will be a great book with the history of MG's as well as every newspaper article published.....so lots of great gardening information. The book will be ready for the Christmas party...Laura



# White Squirrels?

- Jerry Lewis

I found this little guy in my yard on October 12. I have seen him three times since then. When I first saw him I thought, "albino." But when I noticed the hair pigmentation and the dark eyes I knew he wasn't an albino. An albino's eyes are without any color pigmentation and appear to be red or reddish-pink due to the exposing of the blood vessels behind the eye.

I have found that there is much written about "white squirrels." There are four cities in the U. S. and one



in Canada that claim to be the "white squirrel capital." They have white squirrel festivals, white squirrel bike races, white squirrel carnivals, a "Squirrel Box Derby" (a variation of the soapbox derby), and there is even a white squirrel song. In Brevard, N. C., the White Squirrel Research Institute monitors the abundance and distribution of Brevard's unusual color variant of the Eastern Gray Squirrel.



Enough said about other squirrels, what about this one? I contacted Derrick Wolter, Wildlife Biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department,

and received the following information:

"There are no parts of Texas that I am aware of that have white squirrel populations. This looks to be a blond color phase of the fox squirrel. I know that they are sometimes black, too."

Since fox squirrels usually live eight to twelve years, I hope he is around a long time.

"Blondie" is a too common and too obvious of a name, so he goes by "Mr. Dithers."



Photos by Jerry Lewis



# Plant Sale Prep



# FALL 2013 PLANT SALE



Photos by Randy Brown



# FALL 2013 PLANT SALE





# MG State Conference Garden Tours

- Randy Brown



Photos by Randy Brown





# State Conference Garden Tour at Quinta Mazatlan

- Randy Brown

One of the Garden tours at the State Conference was at Quinta Mazatlan, a 1930's historic Spanish Revival adobe hacienda turned into a conference center surrounded by tropical landscaping & native woodland in McAllen. They had quite a few metal sculptures of birds.



Photos by Randy Brown



# Fruits of the MG's Labor

- Randy Brown



At the Killeen Municipal Court Community Gardens, there are many blooms on the tomatoes and fall squash, the okra is doing well and ornamentals are in bloom.

Photos by Randy Brown



# Fruits of the MG's Labor

- Frances Idoux

I took these photos at the extension office in early October. The demonstration gardens are beautiful! I thought it would be nice to remind us how lovely the gardens can be in October!



Photos by Frances Idoux



# Q & A

*Editor's note: Let's learn from one another. Submit your questions and answers to me at [moom-pie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moom-pie45@hotmail.com) or call me at 512-863-9837.*

## ***Last month's Question from:***

**- Terrie Hahn**

Is the color of Plumbagos (Plumbaginaceae) affected by the soil they're in as Hydrangeas are, or by the amount of sun they're getting? I have some Plumbagos that are very deep blue and others that are very pale.



Does the quantity of flowers have anything to do with soil or sun?

## ***And the Answer is:***

**- Terrie Hahn**

I've researched this and couldn't find anything talking about different shades of blue. I guess what I have are just natural variations. The amount of sun that a Plumbago gets does affect the number of flowers. They tend to have more flowers in sun than in shade.

## **This month's Questions are from:**

**- Pam Dragoo**

Does anyone know what this plant is? It is growing on a friend's land. Bees and butterflies seem to enjoy it.



## **And from:**

**- Jerry Lewis**

My granddaughter found this caterpillar on the Clear Creek Golf Course in September, while she was practicing with her high school golf team. I couldn't find it in any of my guides. It does not look like any of the pictures. Several people were contacted, including Wizzie Brown, Extension Entomologist. I have been told that it might be sulphur or a skipper. What do you think?





# FYI

## Cork Harvesting

- Crystal Fisher

I'd imagine that there are some YouTube clips of this that are probably more clear, but this was where I came upon this. Most interesting. Who would have ever thought of trying to peel a tree centuries ago? Go to:

<http://www.chonday.com/Videos/how-cork-harvesting-is-done>

*Editor's Note: This is a really interesting short video showing cork bark being harvested from Cork Oaks in Portugal. This skill has been passed on from generation to generation for 300 years. This harvesting employs about 60,000 skilled workers in the middle of summer. Each large Cork Oak could produce approximately 4,000 wine corks. The bark is peeled off of the tree using a special ax. A mark is placed on the tree and nine years later, the bark is harvested again. This does NOT harm the tree.*

Photo is from [www.thewinedup.net](http://www.thewinedup.net)



## MG History

- Charles Newsom

Does anyone remember this? The beginnings of the old greenhouse.



## Succulent Pumpkins

- Terrie Hahn

My sister and I put together these table top pumpkins that have sphagnum moss and succulents glued on top. The idea came from a Los Angeles Times story that was posted on Facebook. They are supposed to last a few months with periodic misting. We'll see!





# Announcements

## BCMG Book Available

### - Frances Idoux

The Bell County Master Gardener 16th Anniversary Book will be available at the Christmas party on December 5th. The cost is \$25.00.

## Grounds Work

### - Brenda Albro

This is what the November Calendar looks like:

November 6th is the Field Trip, so will not meet or have Burger Wednesday. A lot of our committee will be on that field trip.

November 13th is a workday, weather permitting. We want to work on the new landscaping now that the plant sale is over but would rather have the rain. The Grounds Committee will meet at 8:30 a.m. even if we can't work.

November 20th is a full day of meetings so if we work it will be early and of course weather permitting.

November 27th: HAPPY THANKSGIVING! We have much to be thankful for.

Last year the Grounds Committee decided to define "weather permitting". If it is not pouring down rain and if the temp is 40 degrees or higher we will still work or meet according to the days we have planned.

Best wishes for a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving to each and every one of you.

Brenda and Sophia

## October Monthly Meeting

The November 13th monthly meeting will feature a speaker from Bats International.

## New Master Gardener Classes

If you know anyone interested in attending the next Bell County Master Gardener classes, please give them the following information:

Classes start January 8th, 2014

They meet 1-5 pm at County Extension Office

Cost: \$250.00

Class Orientation, November 20, 2013

Application may be obtained at the County Extension Office or by downloading from:

<http://txmg.org/bell/join-bcmga/application-certification/>

## State Conference Planning Committee Meeting

### - Gary Slanga

A reminder that there will be a meeting of the committee chairs for the 2015 conference at the Expo center at 9:30 AM on Monday, November 4th. We will cover provisions required in the Expo Lease agreement and tour the facility so that you may become familiar with the spaces available and have a better idea of where each of the activities will be placed.

Hope to see you all there.



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## Contributing Writers:

Laura Murphy  
Jerry Lewis  
Frances Idoux  
Pam Dragoo  
Crystal Fisher  
Brenda Albro  
Gary Slanga  
Randy Brown  
Terrie Hahn

## Contributing Photographers:

Randy Brown  
Jerry Lewis  
Frances Idoux  
Pam Dragoo  
Charles Newsom  
Terrie Hahn

## Editor:

Terrie Hahn

## Proofreader:

Werner Hahn

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

***moompie45@hotmail.com***

***Please do not send PDF documents.***

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1605 N. Main St.  
Belton, Texas 76513  
(254) 933-5305

Salvia and  
Lantana in  
Terrie and  
Werner Hahn's  
yard.

