



Inside this edition:

October Calendar

President's Corner, Whistle Stop Park

The Plant Sale

Field Trip to Wildseed Farms, Planting Wildflowers

Q & A, Announcements

What's Happening in Your Yard?



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Grounds Committee Meeting Hamburger Wednesday 11 am	4	5	6 Killeen Farmer's Market
7	8	9	10 General Meeting on Bird Migration, Why and Where by Gil Eckrich 11 am	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Fall Garden Tour
21	22	23	24 Board of Directors Meeting 9 am	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 Halloween			

Upcoming dates: MG Christmas Party, Thursday, November 29th

The President's Corner

I think autumn is my favorite time of year. Plants play a big part in setting the stage for fall. Fall leaves, pumpkins, gourds, and numerous dried plants provide the color we all associate with cooler weather.

Though we have a few more weeks before much fall color appears in our area, temperatures are cooling down and it is more pleasant to be outdoors. I have been spending more time in my garden and yard in the last week or so, but I am really looking forward to the weeks to come. After purchasing plants at our fall plant sale, and getting them planted, I am ready to do a few more fall gardening tasks.

I hope most of you were able to attend the plant sale. We had a great selection of plants and they all were very healthy. We did not sell as many plants as we had hoped, but we have been more successful this year with our combined plant sales than we were in previous years. Thanks to Carla and all of you who gave time and energy to the plant sale. With the sale behind us, our attention now turns to several other Master Gardener events.

This week our organization participated in the Belton Senior Expo, answering many gardening questions and providing materials to the general public on gardening. The Expo was well attended and might be an event we want to consider participating in annually. Thanks to Ursula and those who represented us at the expo.

October is an eventful month for our organization. On Saturday, Oct. 6, we will be at the Killeen Farmers' Market and the Bend of the River estate. October 10, is our monthly meeting. Gil Eckrich will present the program entitled "Bird Migration-Why & Where". Gil always presents an interesting program. October 13th, two more seminars on gardening topics will be presented to the general public. Gary Slanga is investigating the possibility of a series of public seminars for next year. October 20th is the Fall Garden Tour. Along with all of these activities, you will find more volunteer opportunities available at the October meeting.

As most of you know by now, the board has been challenged to match a \$5,000.00 donation to our

building fund. The board challenge ends on October 15th. Originally, the membership was asked to wait until after October 15th to make donations to the building fund. However, several members have indicated that they are ready to make a donation. Therefore, we will begin to accept donations from all members immediately. Please send your donations to Don Wyatt, our treasurer. Your donation is confidential. You will receive the proper forms for your tax deductible donation. Please consider what you might comfortably contribute to your new Master Gardener education center.

If any of you have grown the "Great Pumpkin", be sure to send Terrie a photo for the November Blooming Bell. I keep hoping my pumpkin patch will produce something worthy of a photo, but it won't be this year. Enjoy the coming autumn weather.....Laura



Photos from the September General Meeting when the upcoming Plant Sale was discussed. Lyle Zoeller, our new Extension Agent spoke with the group.

Photos by Gail Christian

Whistle Stop Park Cleanup



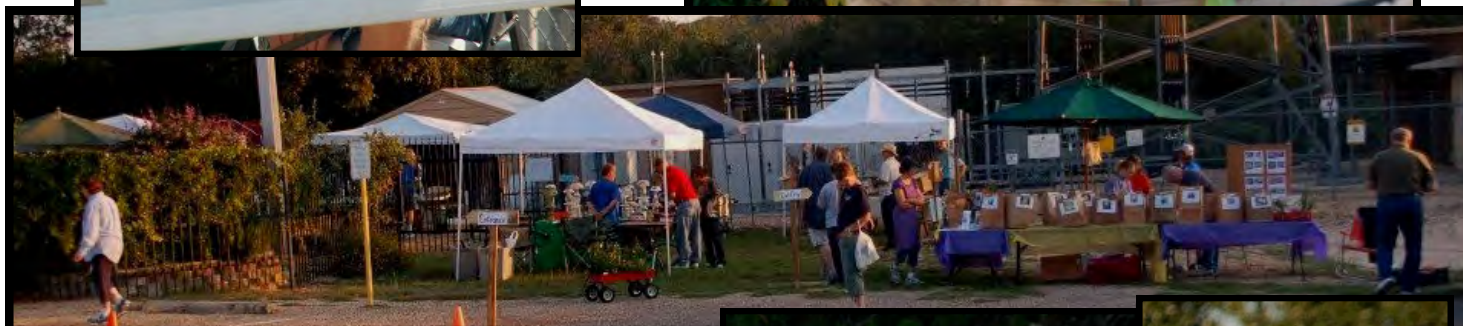
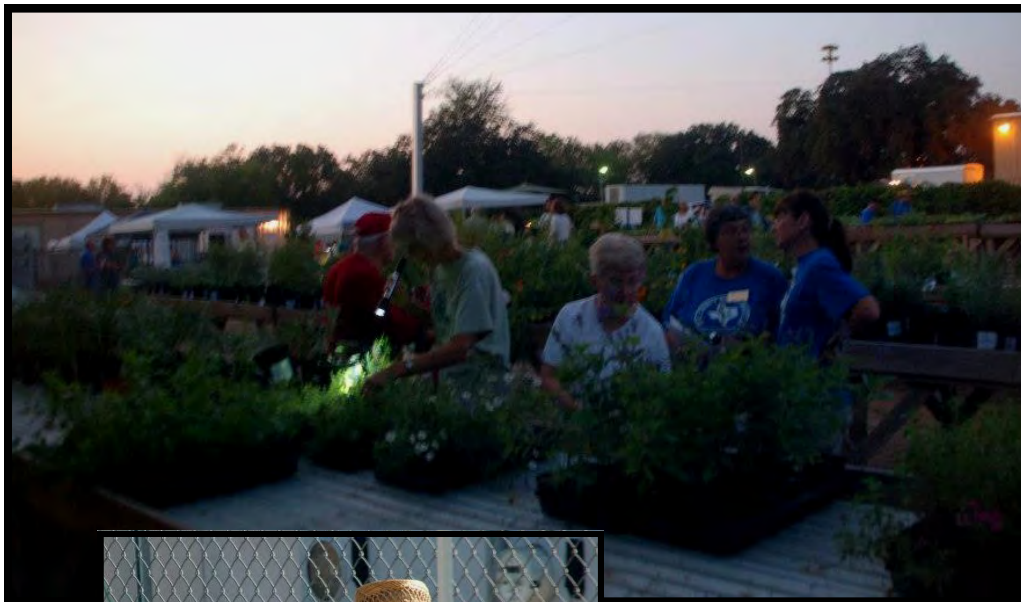
Getting Ready for the Fall Plant Sale



Photos by Gail Christian



Fall Plant Sale a Success!



Photos by Randy Brown

Fall Plant Sale...continued



Photos By
Randy Brown

Field Trip to Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg Fun For All

- Bernie Hurta

On a cool, rainy Friday morning (September 14), twenty Bell County Master Gardeners made the trek to Fredericksburg, Texas. After shopping and having lunch on Main St. in Fredericksburg, we made our way to Wildseed Farms (seven miles east of Fredericksburg) to shop and attend the Wildflower Planting Seminar. If you've never been to Wildseed Farms, they have a wonderful gift shop, a great seed selection, as well as many beautiful pots, plants, and anything else you could wish for your yard.

John Thomas (pictured top and bottom right), owner of Wildseed Farms, presented a wonderful seminar on Wildflower Planting from 2 pm to 4 pm. He was a great speaker and I learned several things at the seminar.

This time of year is perfect for planting wildflowers if we have had a hot, dry, summer, good fall rains, and the weather cools down. For good germination, you must have soil and seed contact and the soil surface should be wet for 5 to 6 days. After germination, you should stop watering. Bluebonnets do not like wet feet and grow best on slopes where there is good drainage. After 10 days, bluebonnet plants can handle a hard freeze.

Continued on next page...



Field Trip...continued

Bluebonnets are considered a reseeding annual.

To have wildflowers of the same height, plant bluebonnets, phlox, Indian paintbrush, and California poppy together. For a taller plants, plant Indian blanket, lemon mint, gaillardia, black-eyed Susan and standing Cypress together. Wildflowers are considered broadleaf plants, so keep that in mind when using broadleaf poison.

It was a fun trip and it's always great to be together with our Master Gardener members.



Photos by Bernie Hurta and Frances Idoux

Texas Wildflowers

- Frances Idoux

If you want to paint your garden with the springtime colors of wildflowers, now is the time to get your paintbrush. The first step to enjoy the colorful blooms of wildflowers is to plant the seeds this fall. Although wildflowers are typically hardy, they need to be planted right. In Texas, the time to plant those seeds is the period from late September to mid December.

During a Wildflower Kickoff seminar this September, John Thomas of Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg outlined steps that will help gardeners become successful at growing wildflowers. First, he explained that wildflowers, such as bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, horse mint and others, are annuals – plants that complete their lifecycle in one growing season. However, if they remain standing long enough after blooming, they will reseed, leaving a start for the next year. Thomas pointed out that not all wildflowers are suited for Texas, and he suggested that gardeners should pick a mixture of seeds suitable for our climate. If a mix is not available, gardeners can make one of their own by mixing seeds from packets of various types.

Soil contact is essential for seeds to germinate, and thick vegetation can keep seeds from reaching the soil. So, rake the surface of the soil to a depth of one inch. Because morning dew might also restrict soil contact, the gardener should wait until afternoon to plant in grassy areas.

Thomas recommended the “Feed-the-Chickens” method of sowing, putting seeds in two buckets, mixing them with some coarse, clean sand, then tossing them in rows of the planting area, going east to west with the seeds from one bucket, alternately



from right to left until the first bucket is empty. Then take the second bucket and go north to south, covering the same area. Walking lightly over the seeds helps to insure soil contact.

If the gardener is depending on rain, the job is done and hopefully Mother Nature will take over. If the hose is going to supply the needed water, the seeds should be watered gently but thoroughly for a few weeks if there is no rain.

Thomas suggested that the gardener plant a pinch of the wildflower seed in a pot with potting soil, place it in a sunny, nearby, visible spot, and water it at the same time the wildflower



planting area is watered. When the baby plants in the pot begin to emerge, they and the plants in the planting area no longer need daily watering. Planting the pot also serves another purpose – the gardener will know what the baby plants look like when they emerge and they will not be mistaken for unwanted weeds. Baby bluebonnets are so hardy that the planting area can be mowed if the blade height on the mower is adjusted. The gardener can check the height of the baby wildflowers in the pot. Even cold weather may not damage baby bluebonnets. They can usually handle a hard freeze if it occurs ten days after they have emerged, as long as the freezing temperatures do not last for several days.

Now, the gardener just needs to wait until spring – when it's time to plant sunflowers!

Photos by Terrie Hahn

Get Ready For Wildflowers

- Myra Crenshaw

Do you have an area in the back of your yard which is not very attractive? Do you plant bluebonnets and wonder why you have little success in having them grow and bloom? Do you drive around in the spring and gaze in awe at the beautiful wildflowers of Texas? Hopefully, some of the following tips will help.

Contrary to popular opinion, wildflowers should be planted in the fall rather than the spring. According to John Thomas at Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg, wildflowers need fall rains and a wet winter. Site location and weather patterns are a big factor in planting. If you plant September through December, many of the species will germinate in order to allow the seedling enough time to establish a healthy root system before going dormant in the winter.

Pick a location that receives at least eight hours of sunlight a day. Also select a site that drains well. Wildflowers do not like wet feet; that is why so often you see them on slopes. It is recommended to start with a mix of seeds so that you can determine which ones do the best in your area. Be sure to buy bluebonnet seeds that have been scarified. The seed has to be treated to remove inhibiting properties of the seed coat which prevents water uptake and the initiation of growth. Seeds that have been properly scarified will germinate in 10 days after planting in moist soil.

The seeds require ample moisture to germinate, so the area should be kept moist for 4 to 6 weeks. Do not keep the soil too wet, just moist. After the seedlings are 1 to 2 inches in height, watering should be gradually reduced and applied only if the plants show signs of stress.

Your wildflowers will return if allowed to reseed. When the dead brown foliage offsets the floral color, the area can be mowed to a height of 4-6 inches.



Photos by
Myra
Crenshaw
and Terrie
Hahn

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 moom-pie45@hotmail.com or call me at 512-863-9837.

And last month's question from:

- Terrie Hahn

Who can tell me the name of this plant? I got it at a BCMGA Fall Plant Swap. It was just a piece from someone's plant. I don't know whose it was. It loves the heat. It doesn't mind if you forget to water it. I cut it back in the spring and it grows like crazy! I love this plant-just don't know what it is!

From Jann Dworsky:

It is very likely that you got the Baby Jew from me. I am glad you enjoy it and I have for years. I always put a small pot in the garage to keep it from freezing, but it will winter over some years up next to the house on the south side. In a partially shaded area, I use it for a ground cover, but I also have about 3 pots where I let it trail over the edge.

After getting this info from Jann, I looked up Baby Jew plant and according to www.austinbug.com, it is also called Itsy Bitsy Inch Plant and Bolivian Jew (*Callisia repens*) amongst many other common names. - TH

Where did these frogs come from and how did they know the empty pond was full again-the pond has been TOTALLY dry for quite some time now!

From Bob Gordon:

They go into the mud and holes in the pond. Some of the tadpoles turned into frogs (tiny ones).

This month's question is from:

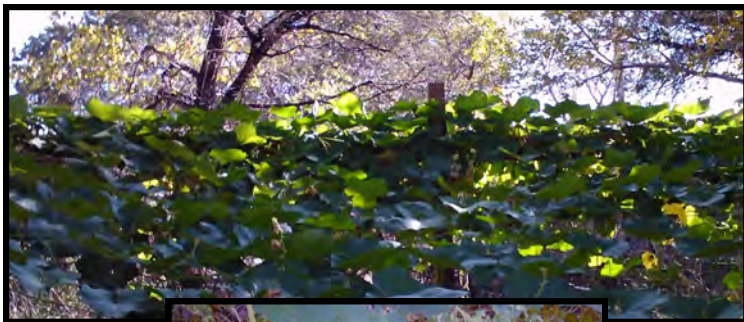
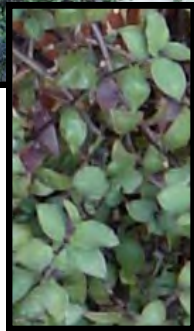
- Rick Shroeder

The plant came up by itself. The vine is over 75 long and has climbed to the top of a cedar tree that is close by. Fruit is hanging 30 feet up in the cedar tree as well as along lower portions of the vine. The fruit is 18 inches in length, one inch at the neck and three inches wide at the tip. There are three pictures.

1. The fruit
2. The vine which has covered the top of the garden below (the picture is of the vine that is supported by netting 10 feet over the garden)
3. A leaf

What is it?

When cut open it is white inside.



Announcements

October Monthly Meeting

- **Bernie Hurta**

The October monthly meeting will be Wednesday, October 10th. The program will be "Bird Migration, Why and Where" presented by Gil Eckrich from Ft. Hood.

We won't have a plant swap this Fall. I am planning to have the plant swap in April. However, if you have some seeds or plants that are to be planted in the Fall, please bring them to the meeting. You know Master Gardeners can't resist seeds or plants, especially free ones!

DON'T FORGET TO ATTEND

THE GARDEN TOUR

ON OCTOBER 20TH!

Save the Date for

The MG Christmas Party

on November 29th!

Help Wanted: Traditional Mentors for the New Class

- **Peg Fleet**

Orientation for the New Class of Master Gardener interns is scheduled for November 28th, and the New Class Committee is looking for Master Gardeners to volunteer as traditional mentors for the interns. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet the interns and to gain service hours. Classes begin on January 9th. Mentor duties include setting up the classroom, monitoring homework, providing assistance as needed during classes, and making sure that the room is returned to order afterward. Mentors should plan on being present from 12:00 noon on class days until 5:15 – 5:30. Signup sheets will be available beginning with the October membership meeting so that you may choose dates that work best for you. Master Gardeners who sign up will receive confirmation by e-mail. The response last year was outstanding, and I hope that we will have the same experience this year. We will not have refreshment mentors for this class, so only one set of signup sheets will be available. Please consider sharing your time and skills to help make this class the rewarding experience that it is meant to be. For the next few months, I will provide you with updates to let you know how close we are to filling the list. Thank you.



What's Happening in Your Yard?

The Scarlet Spiderling, a Dramatic Wildflower

- Beverly Wickersham

The Scarlet Spiderling wildflower grew out of our Canna bed last summer. I was impressed with its hardiness, its purple flower clusters, and its spreading ability. Not until the cold weather set in did we cut the stems back to the ground thinking that the plant would NOT reappear in the spring. But here it is, spreading further than last year and forbidding entrance to the left side of our garage.

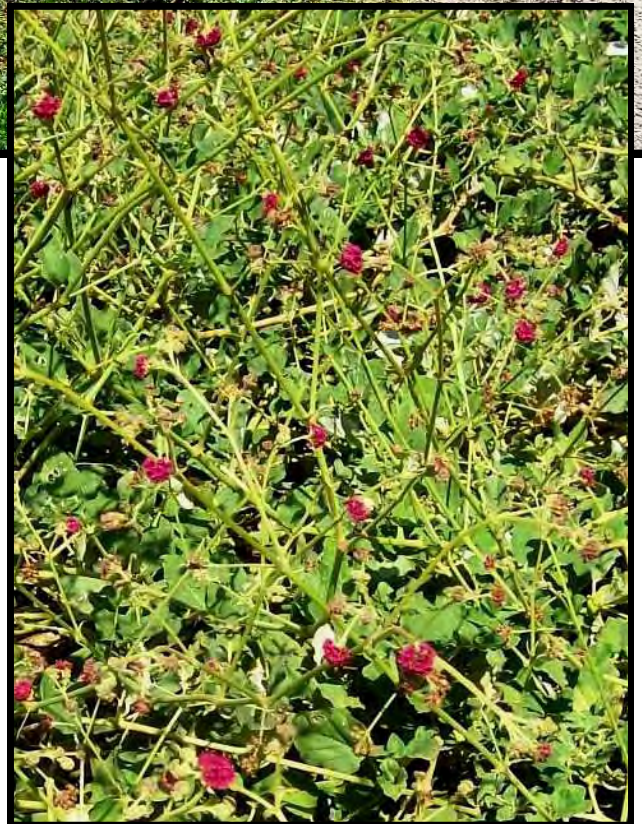
This perennial flower is a member of the Nyctaginaceae family (the Four-O'clock Family). I wonder if we will have any access to our garage next summer.



Sorghum and Herbs?

- Terrie Hahn

I found a sorghum plant coming up in the middle of my herb bed. So, do I try to pop the kernels like popcorn once it's dried out?! Maybe it will taste like herbs!



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