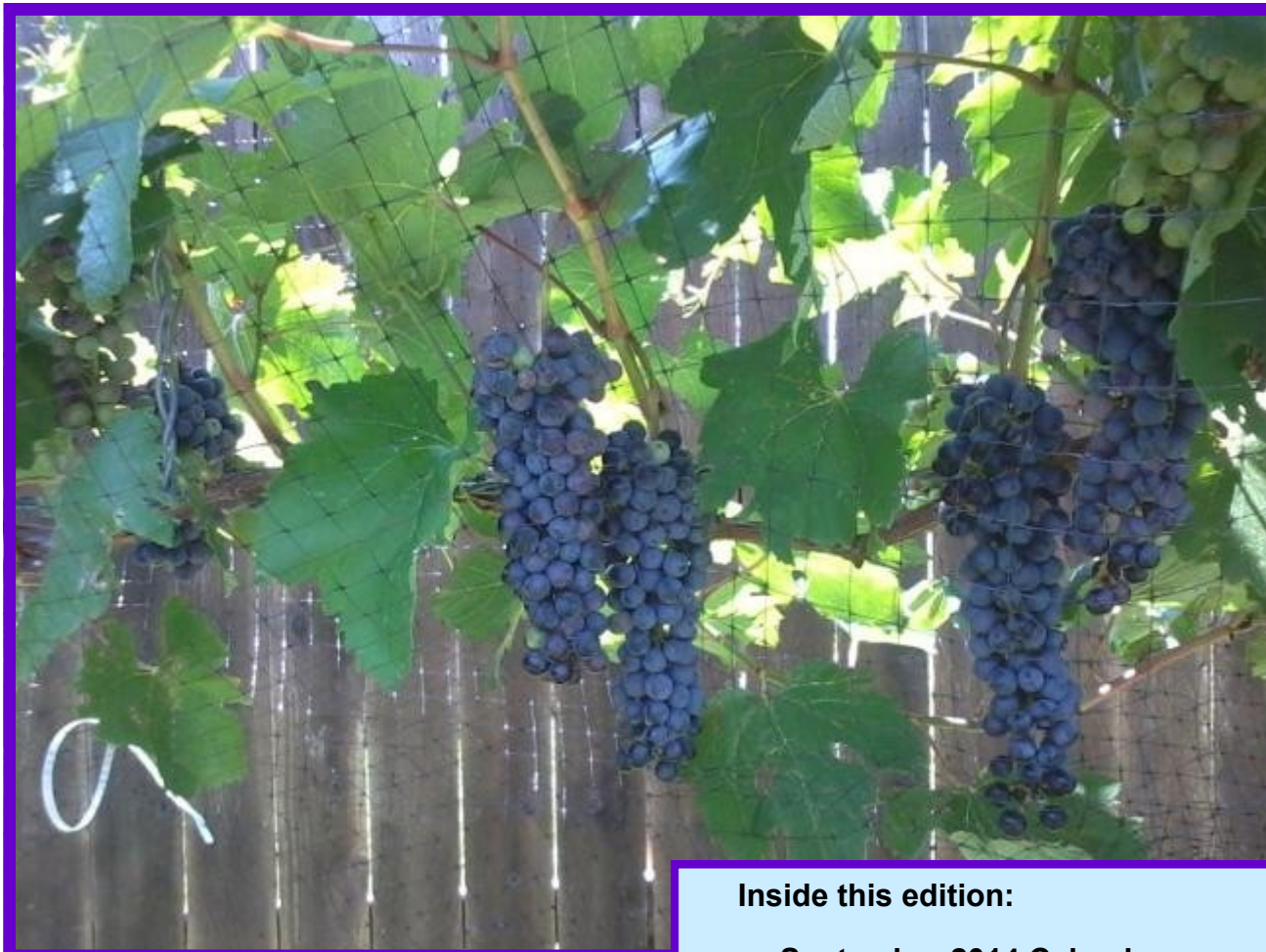


The Blooming Bell

September 2014



**Bell County
Master Gardener
Association**



Above: Gail Pierce's
Black Spanish Grapes that
she started in her propa-
gation class. See page 7
for her story.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Labor Day	2	3 Hamburger Wednesday 11 am	4	5 Work Day 7 am Grounds Committee Meeting 9 am	6
7 BWI Order Dead- line	8	9	10 Work Day 7 am General Meeting w/Social Time at 10:00 am Speaker Jan George discussing Plant Sale at 10:30 am	11	12	13
14	15 Deadline for Volun- teer Reg- istration Discount- Conf.	16	17 Work Day 7 am Board Meeting - 9 am followed by Conference Ven- dor/Sponsor meet- ing	18	19	20
21	22 	23	24	25 '14 TxMG Conf.	26	27
28	29	30				Plant Sale

Upcoming Dates: Fall Plant Sale, **October 4, 7 am - 1 pm**
Remember to record volunteer/education hours. 2

Deadline for award nominations, **Oct. 31**
 Banner Photo of Fig tree by Melinda Arriola

The President's Corner

During this hot part of summer there is not much that can be done in the garden except get it ready for the fall planting. And speaking of getting gardens ready, the grounds committee and volunteers are working hard on the AgriLife gardens and grounds getting them ready and presentable for the plant sale. And Jan George and Carla Harmon have been working hard on getting the plant sale all lined up.

At our next general membership meeting Carla will outline the procedures that we are going to follow for this fall's plant sale on Oct. 4th. Everyone who plans on working at that sale will want to be at the meeting so we are all on the same page. We will not have a plant sale in the spring due to our hosting the State Conference but we will be promoting the vendor plant sales at that conference in place of our spring sale. Please encourage all of our guests to visit the vendor

area at the conference. They will find some great plant buys there.

With the conference in mind, the Midland Odessa conference is the 25th to 27th of September and several of our members plan to attend. We have moved the monthly board of directors meeting to the 17th of September to avoid a conflict. If you have not attended a board meeting lately, please plan on doing

so. You can learn a lot about what is happening in the organization that way.

Our conference plans are well under way. Thanks to all the committee members that are working so hard to make this event happen. If you have not volunteered for a committee yet, there is still time to do that so you can take advantage of the reduced early registration fee.

Gary

Conference Registration Information

- Terry Bradburn

The 2015 Texas Master Gardener State Conference planning is in full force. During the month of September, Bell County Master Gardener Conference Volunteers are being afforded the opportunity to pre-register. The Volunteer Pre-Registration window is from 1 Sep to 15 Sep 2014. This registration will be via 'Invitation Only' to those Master Gardeners that are participating as Conference Volunteers.

Conference Shirts

- Jan George, Registration Committee

Those of you who pre-register by the 10th of September and order a Conference shirt will be able to get them around the 17th of September so that you can promote the Conference at Odessa and at our plant sale, which will be October 4th. Again, the ladies shirts are somewhat fitted and are running small so you may want to order a size larger or a mans size. The small is about a 2-4, med 6-8, large 10-12, and XL 14-16. Let's all get our shirts now so we can promote the Texas Master Gardener State Conference!



Foraging For Our Meal

- Crystal Fisher, Class of '06

Saturday, Aug 2nd, four of us met to forage our first meal. Two BCMG's, Mary Lou Edmondson, and myself, along with two other ladies, Kathy Jones and Jane Van Praag, who plans to take the next BCMG class this upcoming January.

We spent the morning foraging through the Amaranth which made up the bulk of our Chef Salad. Mary Lou Edmondson offered Purslane from her yard for transplanting over here. We also came to the conclusion that we missed the season for harvesting the Bamboo and Nut Sedge. The Bamboo roots were greatly reduced. Maybe Bamboo shoots will be on the Spring menu.

Nut Sedge was too small to spot any significant nuts. Since then, we've learned that nut Sedge produces antibacterial compounds that may have saved the enamel and prevented cavities of prehistoric men in Central Sudan 7,000 years ago according to Dr. Mercola's This Dirty Little Weed May Have Cleaned Up Ancient Teeth <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2014/08/09/nutsedge-dental-health.aspx>



Above: Mary Lou Edmonson identifying the Bamboo and our Spring time meal. (Note the butterfly on her shoulder.) Below: Kathy Jones and Jane Van Praag studying the Amaranth patch.

This might be one that I'll want to pass on. However, it's tempting when you think of trying to rid our yard of it.

We're also considering doing this again in the Fall with the next crop of weeds. After all, what's better than collecting your edible harvest from plants that you didn't have to tend or water. Plus, the added benefits of so many that are loaded with potassium, iron, calcium, vitamins A, B, C, K, proteins, starches, fibers, and the list goes on.

Photos by Kathy Jones and Crystal Fisher

Continued on next page...



Foraging... continued

Kathy Jones sent this list of ingredients we used for our delicious Amaranth Salad:

"Our first foraging outing was absolutely awesome. We ended up with a salad (suitable for the finest dining establishments) consisting of:

- Amaranth
- Wild Purslane
- Mexican Marigold
- Tomatoes
- Slivered Almonds
- Mint
- Garlic
- Garlic Chives
- Hard-boiled egg
- Yellow Squash
- Okra



- Swiss Chard with a choice

of salad dressings. For drinks we had Crystal's Very Special Iced Tea and Banana Icee (2 recipes: one with extract, one made with real bananas) and her home-made Fig Newtons for dessert.

When I contacted Mark Vorderbruggen about freezing amaranth, he said, "You can either dehydrate it and then add the powered amaranth to foods or you can freeze it. If you freeze amaranth leaves you should follow the blanching directions for freezing spinach to get the best results."

With Bell County hosting the next annual Texas Master Gardener Conference, we'll be seeing Mark (Merriweather) Vorderbruggen from Foraging Texas as he will be a speaker at the Conference.

Now, here's a preview that you might not want to miss. If interested in joining us this Fall, possibly in October, please get in touch with me and bring your harvesting bowl. Jane said, "I am eager for our next and subsequent gatherings. Our first forage proved a new way to have fun; afterward, I felt like I wanted to do this every day! Indeed, as we keep at it, that's exactly what we'll be able to do...just step outside our respective homes, look down with confidence, and pull or snip away!"

Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Chinch Bugs

- 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!)

Dead spots in the lawn? Look for chinch bugs....

Chinch bugs often appear in Texas lawns during hot, dry conditions. Usually damage starts in sunny locations or near driveways and sidewalk areas. Damage

appears as irregular dead patches in the lawn surrounded by yellowing or dying grass. Chinch bug damage can be mistaken for other lawn problems like white grubs or fungal diseases, so confirmation of chinch bug activity is needed before progressing to proper treatment.



So how do you tell if you have chinch bugs? Look for the insects. One way is to cut both ends out of a can, push it into the ground using a twisting motion and then fill the can with water for about 10 minutes and wait for any bugs to float to the top. Another way would be to get down on your hands and knees and part the grass to look for the insects. For both methods, samples should be taken in the damaged (yellowed grass), not dead, grass areas.

Chinch bugs are small (about 1/5 of an inch). Adults are black with white wings that have triangular black marks on them. Nymphs, or immatures, are yellowish or pinkish with a light colored band across their body. Nymphs do not have fully developed wings.

Treatment is usually a liquid or granular formulation. Liquid formulations are often bottles that you can attach to the end of the garden hose or concentrates that you mix into a tank sprayer. Granular formulations are put out with push spreaders and need to be watered in after treatment.

Treatment should be applied in the area where damage is occurring and several feet out from the damaged area; the entire yard does not have to be treated. All label instructions should be read and followed before and during the treatment.

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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August Meeting

- Randy Brown

Certified Arborist, Duncan Brooks, spoke at the August General Meeting about Oak Wilt Disease.



Grapes: Propagation to Table

- Gail Pierce

On February 12, 2012, in my Master Gardener class, I propagated Black Spanish Grapes and on March 12th my "baby" started sprouting. Jump forward 2 years and 4 months and I am the proud Mama of these beautiful grapes.

Netting was put over the grapes to prevent the birds from getting these jewels. The birds were aggressive and would get under the netting. The time came to make jam. I have never made jam before. I think I used every bowl in my kitchen. I ended up with 11 cups of grape juice.

I am so proud with the end result. The flavor is tart/sweet. It's quite tasty. It's exciting to watch the process and growth of what started from a raw branch. Gardening is exciting and always evolving. (See Front Cover for photo of Gail's Grapes.)



National Botanic Garden of Ireland

- Frances Idoux

Can you find a cactus in Dublin, Ireland?

The answer is yes, if you visit the National Botanic Garden there, which I did this August. For many years, my brother has lived in Dublin, where he has taught mathematics at the University of Dublin. This was my first visit.

Not only is there a rock garden with varieties of cactus, but also there is a Cactus House, one of several wrought iron glasshouses built in the 1800's and later restored. The garden covers over 46 acres, and the plant population numbers over 15,000 cultivated varieties -- either in the glasshouses or in beautifully arranged and maintained display areas, including a vegetable and fruit tree section. The garden's collections include 300 endangered species, six of which are no longer found in the wild.

The garden also features a pond with waterlilies and a bridge similar to those found in Monet's paintings. The beautiful surroundings are one indication of the Irish love for their island.



Q & A

This Month's Question

- Cindy Allen

We had beautiful berries this year, both blackberries and strawberries, but we are losing most to critters. Anyone found solutions to the birds in blackberries, and to snails or pill bugs...whatever it is that leaves a hole in every strawberry we have ripen? I feel like I remember some advice from MG class, for getting strawberries up off the dirt, but can't find that for the life of me. Help!

And the Answer is:

One of the reasons strawberries are called strawberries is that the cultivation is traditionally done with straw around the plants to protect them from munching bugs. Some people use weed cloth or plastic and punch holes in it to plant the strawberries.

This Month's Question

- Cindy Allen

Does anyone know what laid eggs on my gourd vine? It has split it open and it's dying.

It seems I have answered my own question.

- Cindy Allen

It's a squash vine borer, *Melittia cucurbitae*.

According to the Galveston MG website, <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/Gardening-Handbook/PDF-files/GH-030--squash-vine-borer.pdf>, these are the identifying characteristics of this pest:

- One of the most damaging and most common pests of squash, especially in home gardens

- Eggs are laid on squash stems, normally close to ground level
- Eggs hatch into larvae which tunnel into the squash stem leading to the subsequent demise of the plant or portions of a plant
- Excrement (frass) produced by larvae may extrude from the stems
- Stems may wilt and die
- Adult stage is a colorful moth that flies during the daylight hours...resembles a wasp
- Moths about 1" long, with a brilliant orange and black abdomen and matching "hairy" hind legs
- Front wings are opaque and hind wings are clear with dark veins

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Plant borer-tolerant cultivars
- Covering emerging plants with floating row covers until female flowers are open can provide early protection on young plants
- Wrap a pair of pantyhose around the stem and the base of the plant



Announcements

To All Master Gardeners

The September Board of Directors meeting has been changed to **17 September at 9 AM**, due to the Mid-land Conference the following week. The Vendor/Sponsor meeting will be held following the BOD meeting.

Thanks to all.

- Gary

To the Vendor/Sponsor Committee September General Meeting

Please mark your calendar for **September 17th**. We will meet in the Extension Meeting room after the BOD meeting. We will be splitting up into Vendor Committee and Sponsor Committee. All committee members need to bring their list of those they have contacted. Hopefully you have made a second contact.

Bring a list of all those you have been unable to contact or had a positive "No" as well. Committee chairs of other Committees can submit additional contact suggestions, we will get you a list of Vendors and Sponsors prior to the meeting.

- Karen Colwick

Plant Sale Info

Our annual fall plant sale will be held **October 4**, from **7:00 am until 1:00 pm**. We will have all information and sign up sheets for workers at the September 17th general membership meeting. We will need a great deal of help in order for the sale to be a success, so please sign up. If you can help but won't be able to make the September meeting, contact Jan George, at cliffg1@embarqmail.com and she will sign you up. If you have a project and would like us to order multiple plants for you, we would be happy to do so if they are available. Thanks in advance for all of your help.

Plant Sale Committee

- Jan George, Pat Smith Johnson, Vera Townsend

Award Nominations

The deadline for Green Thumb, Golden Trowel, and Intern of the Year award nominations is **October 31st**.

The nomination forms are on our website. There will be nomination forms available at the September 10th monthly meeting. Your nomination will not be considered if your nominee has not recorded 12 education hours and 50 service hours for the June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014 year. If you have any questions, please contact:

- Bernie Hurta at bhurta@gmail.com

September General Meeting

This month's speakers will be Jan George and Carla Harmon. They will be discussing the upcoming Plant Sale with us. Remember the meeting is at 10:30 a.m. social time is at 10 a.m. - Randy

Grounds Committee Hours

Work times in September are as follows:

September 3, Burger Wednesday, 11 a.m.

September 5, Work at 7 a.m.

September 5, 9 a.m. Grounds Committee planning meeting

September 10, Work at 7a.m.

September 17, Work at 7a.m.

September 24 - No work

- Walter Ponder

BWI Order

We will be doing a BWI order on Monday, September 8th. Please let me know by Sunday, September 7th if you want to order anything. There is a catalogue in the MG office.

- Judy Herrmann at dr_herrmann@hotmail.com

Announcements

Just wanted to let everyone know that my last day here at the office was **August 29th**. If you need any emails to go out to the membership after this day, please send them to either Scarlot at: sbarreras@ag.tamu.edu or Janice at: janice.runyon@ag.tamu.edu. You can also contact these two ladies if you may have any questions or concerns.

Thank you!

Rhettlee Wooley, Secretary

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

FYI

20th Annual Sorghum Festival at Brazos de Dios in Waco, Texas

On Monday, Sept. 1, 2014, we will have our 20th annual Labor Day Sorghum Festival at Brazos de Dios.

The festival will start at 10 A.M. and go until 5 P.M., and admission is free.

Watch the entire process of making sweet sorghum syrup—from pressing the raw cane using a horse-powered mill to cooking the juice into a rich, golden brown syrup. Enjoy some samples of sorghum syrup on freshly-baked cornbread made from stone ground cornmeal!

For more information, go to:

<http://www.sustainlife.org/events/>

CHECK OUT BCMG FACEBOOK PAGE! GO TO

<https://www.facebook.com/BCMGA?ref=hl>

Interesting Websites

Check out the calendar on this link for veggie planting calendar:

<http://www.almanac.com/gardening/planting-dates/TX/Temple>

Texas Gardener's Seeds online newsletter:

Austin: Arturo Arrendondo will discuss transforming, turning your yard into a food producing ecosystem, at the Austin Organic Gardeners' Club meeting September 8 at the Austin Area Garden Center, 2220 Barton Springs Rd, in Zilker Botanical Gardens. Doors open at 6:30 pm for the opportunity to meet and mingle with local gardeners; club business begins at 7 pm, followed by our guest speaker's presentation. For more information, visit www.austinorganicgardeners.org.

These are some great time-lapse videos of blooming cacti

You really need to see this - really amazing!!!

<http://blog.instagram.com/post/95565374557/echinopsisfreak>

Good General Information

<http://www.centraltexasgardening.info/>

Landscape Design School Series XXIV, Course 1

Several BCMG's are attending this workshop.

Begins: Monday, September 29, 2014

Ends: Tuesday, September 30, 2014

8:30 am – 5:00 pm

For more information, go to:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/sglandex2.html>

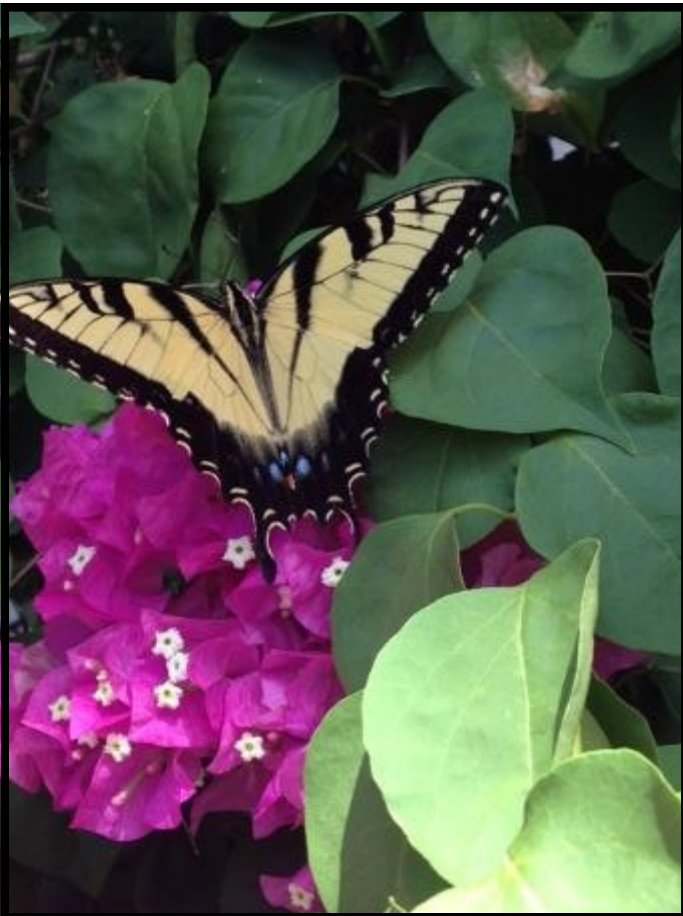
What's Happening in Your Yard



- Bernie Hurta

This is a picture of my Sweet Autumn Clematis. A friend gave me the plant last year when it was only four inches tall and this year it has gone crazy.

Below: "Here Birdie, Birdie!" Our cat "Bitsy" likes to sleep in the bird bath.



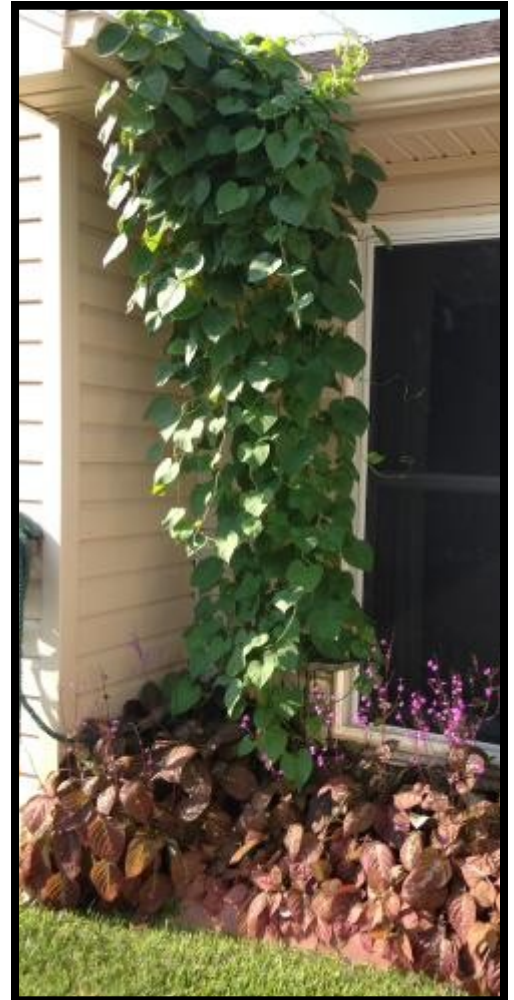
- Pam Dragoo

I just took this picture of this beautiful swallowtail butterfly on the blooms of my bougainvillea plant.

What's Happening in Your Yard

- Suzi Judd

Some of my Backyard Beauties include (clockwise) Morning Glory, Duranta, and Sweet Peas.



What's Happening in Your Yard



- Melinda Arriola

I harvested carrots in August, figs and plums in July, spaghetti squash from my key hole garden in June and apples in May.



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