

# THE BLOOMING BELL

## MARCH 2015



**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**



**SNOW IN BELL COUNTY!**  
See page 14 to see some  
real snow!

- Frances Idoux

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4 Work Day 8 am*</b>  <b>Burger Wednesday</b> <b>10:30 am</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>  <i>Spring forward</i>
<b>8</b> <i>Day Light Savings Time Begins</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11 Work Day 8 am*</b> <b>General meeting</b> <b>10:30 am, LaShara</b> <b>Nieland on Medical</b> <b>Uses of Wildflow-</b> <b>ers</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 	<b>18 Work Day 8 am*</b>  <b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>   <i>Spring Begins</i>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25 Work Day 8 am*</b>  <b>Board of Directors</b> <b>Meeting 9 am</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

\* in the event of rain or temperatures below 40 degrees, there will be No Workdays.

Upcoming Dates: April 22, New Class Field Trip; April 29, BOD meeting; May 13, plant/seed swap 9:30 a.m.

Remember to record volunteer/education hours. 2

## The President's Corner

Well, February is gone already. Talk about going out like a lion, what a cold ending to the month. Many folks attending the Home and Garden show were talking about the peach and plum trees that bloomed in mid-month and what the freeze would do to them. Only time will tell.

Speaking of the Home and Garden Show, a great big thanks to all who helped with that event. We had quite a turnout for a change. The seminars had good attendance, so thanks again for all the hard work. A special thanks to Louann Hight for spearheading this event and getting it off the ground.

Registration for the Spring conference picked up some at the end of February, so we are doing well in that department. We did extend the regular registration period to the 15<sup>th</sup> of March in hopes of generating more last minute registrations. A thanks to Charlotte Jones and Terry Bradburn for their hard work on the registration web site. Also a big thanks to Karen Colwick and Susan Terry for the sponsor/vendor portion of the conference, we are also doing quite well in that department. I know there are many more of you working hard on this event so thanks to all of you. Keep up the good work.

Most current project in the works now is the McLane's Children's Hospital. A meeting this month will hopefully get things started there again. Thanks to Frances Idoux and her committee for working on that project.

Don't forget the monthly meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>. We have been having a great turn out for the meetings. See you all there.

- Gary

## Conference Updates

### Plants for Speaker

One of our speakers for the Conference is Clint Walker. He is not charging any fees for speaking. He did say he would like any native plants from our gardens. Be on the look out for any extra plants you may have, and pot them up and label them. He is speaking on Friday morning, April 17. If you want to bring them to me before then, that is okay too. Any Wednesday I will be at The Extension Office. Thank you.

Mary Ann

### Tee-Shirt & Apron Order

To all Master Gardeners and Interns,

Conference tee-shirts and aprons are here and ready to be passed out. The first round will be on Wednesday, March 4th, immediately after the conclusion of the Registration Committee meeting, 10:30am.

The second round will occur immediately following the General Membership meeting on Wednesday, March 11.

If a third round is needed then we will be talking about April, just before the Conference. If you have not paid please bring sufficient funds to cover your order.

Thanks,

Terry Bradburn 254.698.7260

# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Ants vs. Termites

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County  
AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Soon ant and termite swarmers will be seen flying in Central Texas. "Swarmers" is another term used to describe the reproductive stage of ants and termites. These insects have wings when they initially leave the colony, but the wings are either shed (by termites) or chewed off (by ants) before they form a new colony. Some people may have trouble distinguishing the two types of insects, but with a few key characteristics, it can be very simple.

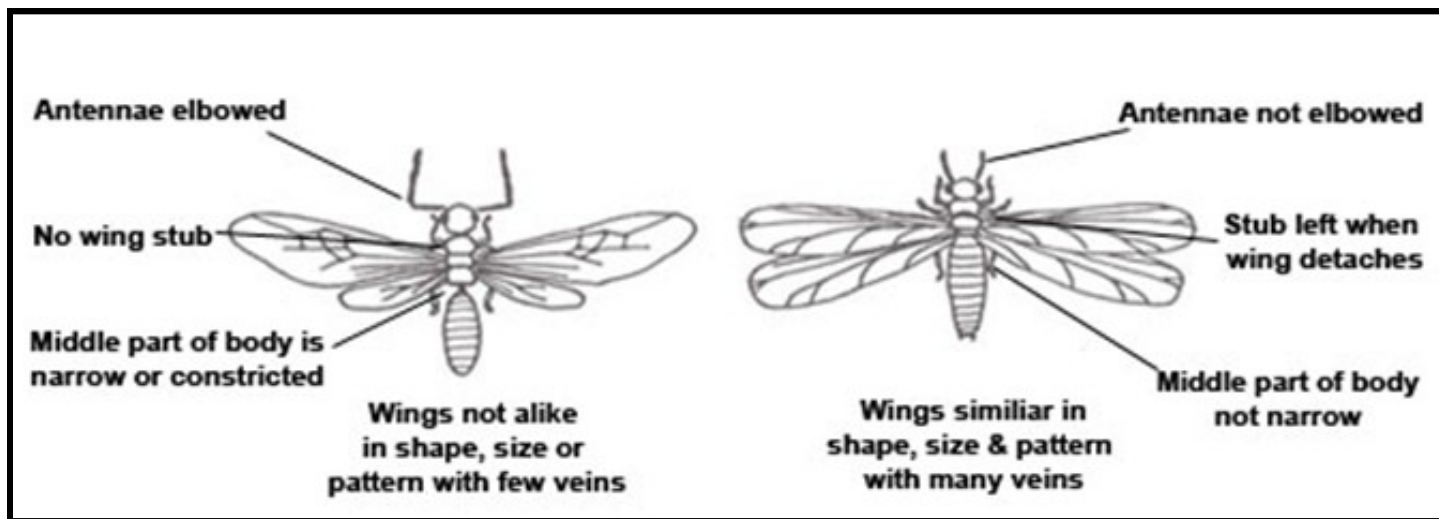
Ant swarmers have elbowed antennae and a narrow, or constricted, waist. The front and back wings of ants are not similar in size or shape and have few veins. If the wings are missing from the ant swarmer, there will not be a wing stub left on the thorax from where the wing was attached.

Ant swarmer (left) and termite swarmer (right).

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](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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Termite swarmers have antennae that are not elbowed and the waist is not narrowed. The wings on termites are of similar size and shape and have many veins. Termite swarmers have a wing stub left on the thorax once the wing detaches from the body.

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION



# Veggie Gardening Hints

- Don Latham

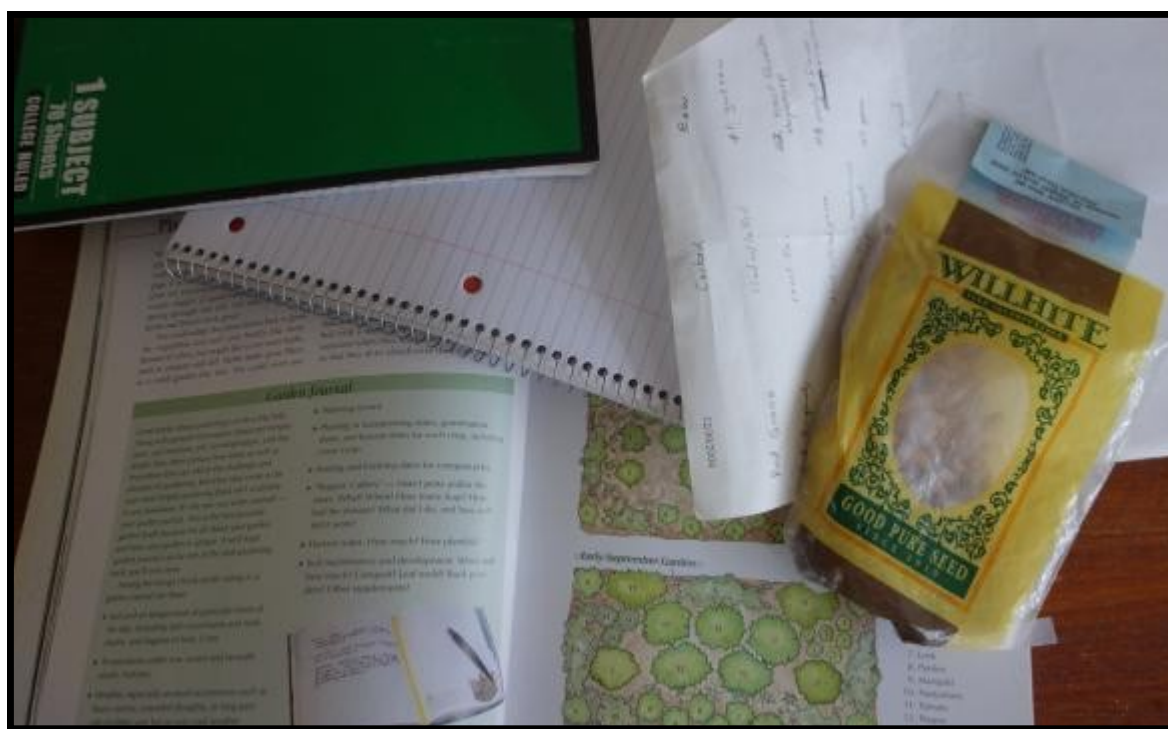
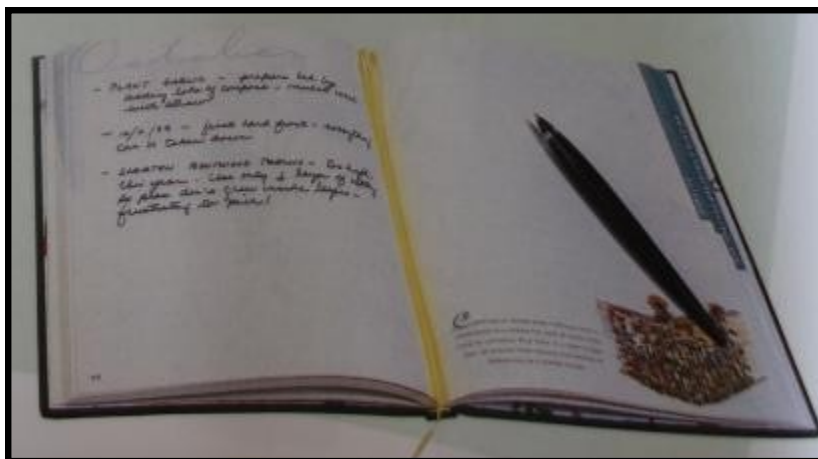
It's time to plan out your veggie garden for the upcoming season! I think a great start begins with plot preparation, layout, and seed selection. When I went thru my classes at Master Gardening, I was presented a spiral notebook, which I used to take notes and now, I am still using. I now use it for making plans for my garden. I number my rows and decide what I will be planting in each row. I do this early while I am not able to work in the garden. When planting time comes I have a good thought out plan. After deciding what I wanted to plant in each row I did some research on what variety of seed I would use. I ordered several seed catalogues and read about their seed and found a great deal of information on each seed offered by their company. Many seeds offer resistance to various funguses and other plant problems that does effect production. [harrisseed.com](http://harrisseed.com) is an excellent source.

They have a great catalogue that gives a great description of seeds, their culture, and days to harvest. Other companies such as [twillyseed.com](http://twillyseed.com) offer great seed as well. They offer organic as well as regular seeds.

Even if you don't order from them, the catalogue is a great tool. After you have your plans made, you are ready to plant. As I plant I like to enter the plant date. As the season progresses make notes as to how well or not that seed does, as well as harvest. If you are successful, you should have an idea whether you want to plant that variety again, or something else

next planting. After a growing year has come and gone you will be left with a great start for the next season. Crop rotation will be easy, and important, as you will have your records from the past year.

Good Luck and Happy Gardening!



Photos by Terrie Hahn

# BCMG's at Home and Garden Show

- Louann Hight

The Bell County Master Gardeners participated in the 2015 Home and Garden Show held February 20 - 22 at the Bell County Expo Center. Thanks to all who volunteered to make this great public interaction a success. Our Booth was featured in the Sunday edition of the Temple Daily Telegram and the Killeen Daily Herald thanks to Larry Causey, Telegram Staff writer. He showcased the fruit growing seminar given by Gary Slanga. Gary provided information (via two seminars) on growing a variety of fruit and citrus trees. Jerry Lewis presented three vegetable planting seminars which focused on growing tomatoes. Jean Flores gave a seminar on vermiculture. The free seminars were very well attended and we thank each of the presenters for participating. The 'Ask a Master Gardener' booth was kept very busy by answering various questions from show participants concerning lawn grasses, trees, vegetable gardening, tomato planting & identification of weeds and bugs.

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION	
FRIDAY - 2/20	
6:00 pm - 8 pm	- ASK the Master Gardener
SATURDAY - 2/21	
10:30 am	- Vegetable Gardening
12:00 pm	- Home Fruit Production
1:30 pm	- Vermiculture (Composting Using Worms)
2:30 pm	- Vegetable Gardening
SUNDAY - 2/22	
1:00 pm	- Home Fruit Production
2:00 pm	- Vegetable Gardening



Photos by Randy Brown





# KMCCG Progress

- Randy Brown

February 7 and 21 was the Weed Harvest at KMCCG...Again! Weeding was our business and business was good! We had a pick up truck full on the 7th and the trailer pictured below on the 21st.



Below: the Farm KMCCG after a good weeding. Onions and potatoes in the ground...though it may not feel like it, Spring is around the corner. Terry Bradburn preps soil for four rows of potatoes to be planted February 14th. Kathy weeded and pruned low water demonstration garden, and all other beds were weeded too!



## *Elegy to a Fallen Rose*

- Annette Ensing

Have you ever had a plant you grew to hate? Well, one of mine is a rose I bought at the Fall Plant Sale of '06 for \$3.00. Pruning roses this month, I decided I'd had enough of it. This limerick tells the story.

### **Elegy? To a Fallen Rose**

Oh, Phyllis Bide, Oh Phyllis Bide

Sorry, you can't run or hide

'Cause you, I no longer can abide.

With your thorns you've prickled me.

With long limbs, you've stickled me.

Alas, you no longer tickle me.

Your black spot I like not.

Your lack of bloom has caused your doom.

So with a shears and with a saw,

I'll cut your limbs until they're raw.

Into the trash you will go

And no longer be my foe.

Into piles, compost you'll make,

For other better roses' sake.

## "Don't Bag It Lawn Care Plan"

- Dawn Orange, Recycling Coordinator of the City of Temple

Most people like a beautiful, green lawn and often use more fertilizer and water than necessary. More mowing, extra back-breaking work in bagging grass clipping and higher water bills often result.

Between March and September, the volume of residential solid waste increases 20 to 50 percent because of grass clippings. During the spring and summer months, grass clipping strain the garbage collection and use valuable landfill space.

Now consider **not** bagging your grass. With the "Don't Bag It Lawn Care Plan" you won't have to stoop every 10 minutes to empty your mower bag. By leaving the clipping on the lawn and allowing them to work their way back into the soil, you will help produce a beautiful green lawn. Your lawn will recycle the clippings and you will save time, energy and money!



# A Day at the Fair

by Gail Koontz, class reporter

I have lived in Bell County since 1968, and Monday, February 9, was the first time I have ever attended or been involved in the Bell County Youth Fair and Livestock Show. And what a fun day it was!

First of all, I got to see many of my Wilsonart friends. Dorothy Tomasek was working in Hospitality where lunch was served for all the volunteers. Got to visit with Rosie Craft who was one of the Superintendents for the Senior Cake Classes. And then there was Gennie Tepera who was back for her second year as a Recipe Reader in the Candy Classes. She invited me to join her this year. Always good to serve with experience the first time!

As Recipe Readers, we served with Laura Wiley, Superintendent of the Candy Classes which included Divinity, Fudge, Brittles and Other Hard Candies, Toffee, Pralines, and other types of Candy.

We were given our instructions by Nila Ehrig, Superintendent of the Foods Division.

Our responsibility was to proofread each recipe to make sure it met all the rules as to title, list of ingredients, and directions. If it did, we announced the exhibitor's number and "good." At that point the recipe card received a Smiley Face sticker. If it did not, one of us would call Laura back to our table to make a decision. If she could not make a decision, the card went to Nila. A few were disqualified and sent home, but most were given a second chance to correct their recipe or correct the number of pieces in their package before their entry went to the judges.

The rules stated 12 pieces of candy; none were under, but a few were over that number. Let me just say that no one shared an extra piece of candy with me or Gennie or Laura. Probably good for me; no telling what that would have done to my blood sugar.

Last of all, this day was an opportunity for me to visit one on one with some of the Class of 2015. I had lunch with Jane Van Praag and got to know and ap-



preciate her more. Gennie and I had student "runners" for a while that we handed entries off to for placement on the tables that you can see in the picture behind us. But, for some reason, they soon disappeared. And Kathy Love joined us. She asked lots of questions about what we were doing, and the three of us became a great team!

This red tape measure is one of the gifts all the volunteers were given for all our hard work! Really . . . that much fun cannot be called work. And Gennie and I plan to read recipes together again next year!

Our day was spent in the Assembly Hall. Instead of barnyard smells, we got to enjoy the aroma of pies, yeast breads, quick breads, candy, and cakes to be



judged in the family and consumer sciences portion of the competition. We are all proud to have been a part of the team of some 200 volunteers who help check in the entries and organize them for judging.

# *From my point of view . . .*

Wrapping up February - Class of 2015

- Gail Koontz, Class Reporter

Two more days and February will be gone. Time flies when you are learning and having fun at the same time! And that we are doing as we learn, fellowship, and garden together.

In February, the Class of 2015 read and learned about Landscape Design, Wildscape Gardening, Plant Diseases, Irrigation and Water Issues. We also propagated roses, vegetable seeds, and Black Spanish grapes.

vegetables/flowers. I will refer to **GO TEXAN Guide to Landscape Success** to find the best way to take care of my landscape and to **Native and Adapted Landscape Plants**, an earthwise guide for Central Texas, for appropriate plant selection.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> Kelly Simon shared some wildscaping tips: Use native plants whenever possible. They are more adapted to our local conditions, provide the kind of food and cover wildlife require, and need less maintenance. Recycle leaves, plant clippings, and kitchen

scraps into compost and don't bag grass clippings. Conserve water; irrigate in the early mornings or evenings to reduce water waste. Closely follow all label instructions when applying pesticides and fertilizers and try to minimize their use.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> Dr. Kevin Ong with the Texas Plant Disease Diagnosis Lab in College Station shared a lot of information about plant diseases

On the 4<sup>th</sup>, Diana Kirby shared her approach to landscape design: intentional design for inspirational landscapes. Design: What is it? Why design? Seven design principles. Elements of design. Where do I start? Obtain a scaled map of my property-a must! Also a copy of plot plan or property survey-original, not reduced or a faxed copy. Walk my property and observe or consider traffic flow/use areas for people/pets, relationship of landscape to house, views from various points, shade areas, sunlight direction/hours, moisture, soil/rock/sand/clay, wind direction, slope/grade issues/drainage, problem areas, irrigation/rainfall patterns, existing plants/conditions, maintenance. Finally, what are the goals of my landscape design? Formal/casual, purpose, shade, screen, seating/entertainment,

On the 25<sup>th</sup> we enjoyed an early morning snow! Big, beautiful flakes. This cancelled our 9:30 propagation class because Gary had planned to take us outside to prune grapes and to learn about grape propagation. By late afternoon the sun was shining, so class ended

Continued on next page...





## Wrapping Up...continued

early enough for our grape pruning/propagating lesson outside.

I've heard it said there are two seasons in Texas, and they often occur in the same week. Well, on February 25, 2015, they occurred on the same day! Welcome to Texas!

Our reading assignment for February 25 was Chapter 3 Earth-Kind Landscaping. Our speakers were Todd Strait, with Clearwater Underground Conservation District, and Gary Slanga, President of BCMGA. Todd covered water issues in Texas, and Gary spoke on drip irrigation. An adequate supply of high quality water has become a critical issue for Texas. Exploding populations have increased the demand on the state's already limited supply of quality water. Seasonal fluctuations in rainfall and periodic droughts have created a feast-to-famine cycle in Texas. Water is a limited and fragile resource; a vital concern. Water conservation demands common sense landscaping to protect water quality and quantity and to ensure continued prosperity for the residents and businesses of Texas.

I am concerned and truly appreciate the information which Todd and Gary shared with us. I am also thankful to be better educated on this matter of water conservation.



Looking forward to March. I think my brain is beginning to process some of this information. Bob, Jerry, Judy, Gary, how long does it take to be as experienced/knowledgeable as you?

Remember to check your folder weekly in the box beside the sign in sheet. It will contain your signed/dated homework with an answer sheet.

***Remember we have no class on March 18 because of Spring Break.***

Photos by Werner Hahn

## Propagation Tips

- **Mechelle Davies, Intern 2015**

During my propagation class we learned to make mini green houses by placing soil and rose cuttings in the plastic bag blowing air into it sealing it and placing it in a window.

I could not keep the air in the bag after blowing into it and it would flop over after just a few hours. I needed something to keep the plastic from laying on the plants. So I placed bendable drinking straws (use 3 or 4) with the bendable side up, seal the bag tightly and open only a tiny portion; blow into the bag and fill it up then gently begin to slide the straw out and seal it. This is what I call the "drink box principle". It works so much easier than trying to blow it up and then seal

it; I kept losing all the air that was enclosed. This method serves as two problem solvers it keeps the bag away from the plants and it also allows you to blow air into the bag without losing it upon sealing it.



Photo by Mechelle Davies



# Lavender Sense or Is It Scents?!

- Terrie Hahn

Lee Harris from Bird Song Lavender Farm outside of Troy spoke with 63 Master Gardeners about the History and Use of Lavender. Mr. Harris and his wife expanded from a tiny garden plot to over 3 acres of lavender. He went from 36 Grasso lavender plants to 3500 plants. The Provence variety grows the best for them.



Mr. Harris described how Lavender grows best if it is on a mound of very well draining soil, or even better, on a slope. These plants like limestone and brick walls. He prunes his after the first year 1/4 - 1/3 to shape in October or early spring. You shouldn't cut into the woody stems. When cutting out dead branches, cut the branch all the way out.

Bird Song Farm is now making lavender oil. Lavender oil can be used for restless sleep. Put on bottom of feet and spray on pillowcases. A drop on the temple is said to help migraines. Lavender was used as a disinfectant in Roman times and is still to this day. Anecdotally, Mr. Harris said he's known people who have used lavender flowers on wasp stings to reduce the swelling; to encourage ants to move; and to use as a moth proofing agent.



Photos by Randy Brown  
and Birdsong Lavender  
Farm



# Announcements

## March General Meeting

### - Randy Brown

LaShara Nieland will speak on "Medical uses of Wild-flowers;" She will also be at the Conference.

Upcoming dates: **April 22nd** is the New Class Field Trip and **April 29th** is the BOD meeting

## Grounds Work Days

### - Walter Ponder

Here are the scheduled workdays for March:

March 4, 2015 8:00a \*Workday

10:30a Burger Wednesday

March 11, 2015 8:00a \*Workday

March 18, 2015 8:00a \*Workday

March 25, 2015 8:00a \*Workday

\* in the event of rain or temperatures below 40 degrees, there will be No Workdays.

Thank you.

## Updates from the BOD

### - Bernie Hurta

#### Plant & Seed Swap

We will have a plant and seed swap before the **May 13<sup>th</sup>** monthly meeting. More details to follow at a later date.

## Documenting Your Work

### - Bernie Hurta

Bell County Master Gardeners:

Please take at least one picture of all the presentations you do and prepare a short write-up and send it to Terrie Hahn for the Blooming Bell at [moompie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moompie45@hotmail.com). This includes teaching classes for the New Class. Please do not use PDF files.

On projects, we need to take several pictures of the process and do a write-up on it also.

When we get ready to write the entries for the State Awards, we need documentation of all the work we are doing.

Also, all service hour opportunity dates should be sent to Terrie Hahn for the Blooming Bell calendar. The BCMGA is involved in a lot of activities and those activities should be posted on the Blooming Bell calendar.

## Share on Facebook

### - Terrie Hahn

If you're on Facebook, please go to our facebook page and share the Conference material. It's a good way to spread the word!

**CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK  
PAGE! GO TO**

<https://www.facebook.com/BCMGA>



# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***



**- Frances Idoux**

This is Texas snow (my front yard), and the other is the front yard of my daughter in Rhode Island. The black object in the photo is her mailbox on its pole by the street. You can't see the pole or the street! We have had some cold, gray days, but they have had a winter of blizzards.





# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

**- Jan George**

These Irises were blooming in my garden on Feb. 16, 2015. These same Irises bloomed the week before Christmas. The poor things are so confused, they don't know when they are supposed to bloom. It will be interesting to see if they bloom again in the spring.





# ***What's Happening in Your Yard***

**- Crystal Fisher**

My East Texas friend, Sharon, sent me some pics of the electrical lines that came up out of the yard. She didn't know what to do with them. I suggested that she give some thought to covering them up and making little houses. She's done very well. She made both windows and doors out of some Sculpey clay that she had left over.

They have covered the electrical lines that come up and out of the ground.





# What's Happening in Your Yard

- Terrie Hahn

Wildflowers have been popping up all of February. This is our first Bluebonnet in bloom in the yard. It's going to be a great year for Bluebonnets! Below are anemones, mini daffodils and toadflax (from a package of wildflower seeds from Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg) and an owl waiting for us to leave one of our kitties out for him for dinner.





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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.***

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

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