

# *The Blooming Bell*

**May 2015**



**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**



Photo by Diane Calderwood of  
her yard.

## **Inside this edition:**

<b>May 2015 Calendar</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>President's Corner</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Coming in June</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pollinators Are Our Friends</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Keeping Vegetables Off the Soil</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hours Completed</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Emerald Ash Borer</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Western Flower Thrips</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>KMCCG Hosts Jr. League</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Those Oak Leaves</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tom Burseen's Iris</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>My Point of View (Field Trip)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Announcements</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>What's Happening in Your Yard</b>	<b>14</b>



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 Work Day 8 am*</b>  <b>Graduation Ice Cream Social 1 p.m.</b>  <u><b>NO</b></u> <b>Burger Wednesday</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>Work Day 8 am*</b> <b>Plant/Seed Swap 9:30 a.m.</b> <b>Silent Auction General meeting 10:30 am</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20 Work Day 8 am</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27 Work Day 8 am</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

\* in the event of rain, there will be No Workdays.

Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

Photos by Charles Newsom



## The President's Corner

Well, the conference is behind us now, a complete success thanks to the hard work of you all. Now its time to get back to our regular gardening routines, we still have several projects to keep up with.

For those who have not gone by the Killeen Municipal gardens recently, it's worth the trip to see all the work that went into it to get ready for the conference tour. Most of the produce is in the ground now, except for squash, which is waiting for the ground to dry out a little. Been several years since I heard the comment that the soil was too wet to plant.

The new class of interns is ready to graduate on May 6<sup>th</sup>, if you plan on attending please get in touch with Fran Sheppard and let her know. 18 of our new folks have completed their hours for certification, congratulations to all of you new Master Gardeners.

Great job everyone.

Gary

*Make sure you check out the Special "Trails To Rails" edition of The Blooming Bell.*



## Coming in the June

### The Temple Children's Hospital Garden

by Frances Idoux.



### Keyhole Gardening

by Kathy Love.



### My Gardens by Georgio Graf.



### My Point of View by Gail Koontz.

# Pollinators Are Our Friends

## - Dawn Orange

The first thought of many people when they see bees is to get rid of them so that they do not get stung by them. However, without the help of bees and other pollinators, we would not have our pretty flowers, fruits and vegetables and even some medicines. It is estimated that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of pollinators. Pollinators visit plants and flowers in search of food. While visiting, pollinators brush against the reproductive parts of the flowers, leaving behind pollen from the previous flowers they feasted on. The plants then use that pollen to produce fruits and seeds.

Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, bats and many others are facing survival challenges today. There is a decline to many of the pollinators due to mankind taking over the lands to build, disease and even environmental contaminants. They need our help for survival. It is recommended that we plant trees such as dogwood, cherry and plum that will provide necessary pollen and nectar in the spring when food is scarce for pollinators. Throughout the seasons, select a variety of plants so that you can attract different pollinators. Pollinators need water just like we do so set out shallow dishes with stones or marbles half-submerged so that they have something to perch on.



These photos were taken on the Intern field trip to Lady Bird Johnson's Wildflower Center.

Photos by Dawn Orange



# Keeping Vegetables Off the Soil

By Larry Moehnke

I grew up on a farm and gardening has been in my blood since those early days. We always had a vegetable garden, and since we had plenty of land, it was a large one and we took no steps to provide support to the plants.



Once I left home, I continued to have a vegetable garden at all of our locations whenever possible, often breaking new ground so that I could play in the dirt. However, as I continued to raise vegetables, I usually had small plots of land devoted to the main garden and began to realize the importance of keeping plants healthy by providing support to keep them from laying on the soil. Plus, it makes harvesting easier.

Today, I always use cages for tomatoes and peppers. In this article, I will be talking about support for plants such as bush beans, pole beans, black-eyed peas, cucumbers, and squash. I usually plant these plants, with the exception of squash, in rows of two to maximize my yield. Over the years, I have put together a number of possible supports, including construction of fold-up trellises made of one by two-inch lumber. A number of years ago I started using cattle panels for my peas, cucumbers, and pole beans. A few years ago I began adapting cattle panels to support bush beans and squash. These are functional, they won't deteriorate like wood, and they are easily stored.

Cattle panels can be purchased at a number of stores usually for a little less than \$20. Since they are 16 feet in length, I take bolt cutters with me and cut the metal prongs at the site of the store so that I have two eight-foot sections. This makes it easier for transport and the plan is to use them in eight-foot sections because they are easier to move and adjust. In a few instances, I cut them into shorter sections if I need to finish out a row. When I get them home, I use the bolt cutters to remove some of the horizontal metal that will serve as the bottom of the trellis. This results in individual "legs" and allows you to press the section into the ground for stabilization. I put two sections together to establish an "A-frame"

trellis and use wire at the top to attached them to each other. There are no other mechanisms needed to place in the soil to have a sturdy growing area for the plants. It also makes storage easy, since you can just lift the trellis by the top and fold the bottom together, making it fairly slim.

If you grow vegetables, your plants are probably similar to mine at this time of the year, maybe a little larger or a little smaller, meaning they are still small enough to trellis. The pictures showing the trellises were taken April 24th. Plants have not been thinned yet. For bush beans, peas, and cucumbers, the length of most sections is eight foot. For pole beans, I use the eight foot sections vertically to provide the additional height that is needed. In other words, they are four



Garden trellis and support system on April 24. Front row closest to camera provides support for squash; second row bush beans on the left and cucumbers to the right; third row black-eyed peas on the left, cucumbers in the middle, and the tall trellis is for pole green beans. Mulching between the rows has not occurred prior to this picture although the mulch between them has been spread.

feet wide and eight feet tall. I again use bolt cutters to create "legs" that will stabilize the trellis in the ground. If you happen to have a fence such that enough sunlight is received, you can place one panel (of whatever length needed) at an angle against the fence so that it can serve as a trellis. I usually use this for something like salad cucumbers where I am not seeking

Continued on next page...

## Vegetables off the Ground...continued

a huge harvest for canning like the pickling cucumbers.

The plant supports for the bush beans and squash must be laid on their side so that the width of the support will be a little more than two feet, providing enough room for two rows. I use the bolt cutters on each side to again establish "legs" but in this case, cuts are made on both sides. I then curl the "legs" to be at a right angle with the main surface of the support so that each side is able to be inserted into the garden soil, thus stabilizing it and maintaining a height of about eight inches above the bed. The plants grow up through the support and are easily accessible for harvesting, and they are not laying on the soil.

To prepare for planting, I lay and stake my soaker hoses. Then I pile mulch in the middle of the two rows that I plan to plant, with the intent to spread it once the plants are big enough. I plant the seeds next to the soaker hoses, install the trellis or plant support and then wait for the seed to emerge into plants. Once the plants are tall enough, I reach through the trellis, either with a four-pronged hoe or with my hands, and spread the piled mulch to each side to the inside portions of the plants. Other mulch is added from the outside parts of the trellis so that the plants are evenly mulched.

I know that most gardeners have developed their own methods over the years, ones that are successful for



them. This is only one way to ensure that your plants remain off the soil and have a good chance of staying healthy. My vegetable garden is approximately 25 feet by 25 feet. We grow enough to share with family and friends. The main garden also contains potatoes, onions, dill, and a few other plants. In addition to the main garden, other locations include spots for herbs, lettuce, cabbage, and other tasty plants. You can tell that I am an avid gardener because I had to move a fence in the back yard so that I would have a location that received enough sun for the plants. I learn something all the time and appreciate all the tips I received over the years as well as any new ones that come my way. Happy gardening - enjoy the work in the garden and then the delicious results.

2014 Pole Beans

## Hours Completed



Vivian Rush, class of 2014 became a Certified Master Gardener and received her nametag at the March General Meeting.

Photo by Randy Brown



# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Emerald Ash Borer

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County  
AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Emerald ash borer, often referred to as EAB, is an exotic pest from Asia. This beetle is a serious threat to ash trees. Emerald ash borer was accidentally introduced into the United States in the 1990's from Asia. It was in wood packing material for items shipped to Michigan. EAB has not yet been confirmed in Texas, but it has been found in Arkansas.

Larvae bore into trees under the bark and cut off the water and nutrient conducting vessels. Larvae are creamy white, legless with a flattened body. Larvae are 1- 1 ½ inches in length when fully developed.

As an adult, the beetle is elongated and cylindrical with the pronotum (a part of the thorax) extended back as a lobe towards the abdomen. Most notably, these beetles are bright, metallic green with reddish hues. The adults are about 1/2 inch in size. If the wings are removed or lifted, the upper side of the abdomen is bright coppery-red and is a great characteristic to separate this beetle from closely related species in Central Texas. Please note that there is varying coloration- more blue or reddish instead of green. If you have concerns or questions on identification,



collect samples and submit them to me.

Canopy die back is often seen in the

top one third of the canopy and then moves down until the tree is bare. Epicormic shoots may also be seen. Vertical fissures may appear on the bark and galleries may be able to be seen through the openings. If bark is peeled off of the tree, serpentine galleries packed with frass may be seen. Adult beetles produce a d-shaped exit hole (1/8 inch diameter).

Woodpeckers may cause damage to trees infested with EAB. Look for flaking bark and uneven holes

caused by the woodpeckers feeding on larvae and pupae.

If you suspect Emerald ash borer on your ash trees, please collect a sample or take photos and contact me.



Photos from [www.desmoinesherald.com](http://www.desmoinesherald.com)

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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# Western Flower Thrips

- Robbi Daves Will, Horticulturist at The Rose Emporium

*Author's note: Our roses started off the season really well and within a couple of days were turning horribly brown and I knew we had a thrip problem. The photo below shows some thrip damage. A TAMU site suggested, "Thrips are so small they look like a hyphen that moves." If you blow into your rose, you'll see that moving hyphen! We remembered Robbi Daves Will talking about thrips when we attended one of the Rose Emporium's Fall Festivals, so I thought I'd email her. Robbi has personal experience with roses and as a horticulturist for over 35 years. She is an honorary MG in Comal County. Her answer is based off of personal experience.*

I LOVE to use Spinosad for western flower thrips. It knocks them down immediately and seems to have a residual effect. It may just be me, but I think the biological action of the bacteria based Spinosad might give it some longevity on the plants. The western flower thrips disappeared for several weeks after the application. I like it because it is naturally occurring, organic, and more earth and people friendly than some other products. I have had good success with it. BE CAREFUL using it around honeybees. Spinosad is NOT SUPPOSED to harm honeybees, but to be cautious I spray it in the evening when the bees have gone home for the day. Spinosad is the active ingredient sold under several different producers' labels.

I also use beneficial nematodes to reduce the potential western flower thrips population. Part of their life cycle occurs in the soil. Putting out beneficial nematodes in February and September helped my situation out. Beneficial nematodes can be used any time of the year. Applying beneficial nematodes after a rain or lawn irrigation is a nice time to put them out, as moisture is needed for them to move through the soil. (The February application reduces the numbers we see in the spring when our roses and gardens are blooming so nicely.) Some folks argue the beneficial nematodes sold on the blue sponges are the best way to go.

Western Garden Thrips will always be present year round. The pressure seems to be greatest in the spring, especially as the wildflowers wane. If you live near big open fields of wildflowers, thrips seem to move into the kept landscape as the wildflowers start declining. It is a management and coexistent thing. The hummingbirds like thrips just fine for dinner!



Photo by Terrie Hahn



# KMCCG Hosts the Killeen Junior League

- Randy Brown



Ten Members of the Killeen Junior League Toured KMCCG hosted by Master Gardeners on April 21.





# Those Oak Leaves!

- Charles Newsom

Beginning of composting oak leaves (pictured right). I picked up about 50 bags (120 cubic feet) yesterday in Belton. I run a mulching mower over the oak tree leaves I have several times. I do this each year, and do not add any fertilizer to my lawn. We seldom water the lawn except during the hottest part of the summer. At the end of March, both retention ponds are full and overflowing. These ponds hold the water to prevent flooding and they also control the erosion at the farm.

My compost on day two-123° (pictured below). There were enough grass clippings in the leaves to get the composting started. The pile was well wetted and I added a few gallons of diluted urea. I also added some compost from last year to ensure I had the microbes that were necessary. Day three -143 degrees.



Photos by  
Charles  
Newsom



## Tom Burseen's "Chocolate" Iris

- Sandra Jones

On tour with the Dallas Iris Society, we visited gardens in the Dallas area on April 21-22. It was hosted by members who had hosted the National Iris Conference the last two years and just wanted to enjoy the gardens. Their hospitality was primo!

Photo by Sandra Jones





# *From my point of view . . .*

Busy April - Class of 2015

- Gail Koontz, Class Reporter

April has been a busy month. Where do I start? OK, let's begin with a question: How does a bus load of master gardeners celebrate Earth Day? We journeyed



to Austin and visited the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. My group of 15 enjoyed a walk through the Luci and Ian Family Gar-

den with our guide Gail Lord. Beautiful, peaceful, enjoyable. Most of us decided we must come back another day to spend the day.

Then our bus driver Ricky drove us to the home of Patty Leander, who writes for **Texas Gardener**. We toured her backyard vegetable garden, and she answered many of our vegetable gardening questions.



Then on to the Natural Gardener where we were greeted by John Dromgoole, owner of The Natural Gardener and Lady Bug Natural Brand. He has been involved in the advancement of organic gardening and environmental issues for over 30

years. With shopping baskets in hand and/or pulling red wagons, we shopped for plants and other garden essentials. Thank you, Ricky, for helping us load our loot onto the bus.



Continued on next page...





## Busy April...continued

Going and coming we played games on the bus, won prizes, ate, and visited. Especially enjoyed visiting with my seat mate Ann Eubanks Reynolds. I am the proud and thankful winner of a kneeling pad. I spend a great deal of time in my yard now, sometimes in my backyard swing just enjoying the beauty of God's creation, but often on my knees in my garden areas working and thanking God for this wonderful learning opportunity of master gardening.

Here I am (below) on Friday of the State Conference with Gail Garner, Gail Christian and Gail Pierce. On Thursday, I understand Gail Hughling was present. So sorry we missed you. The majority of my time was spent in the Silent Auction/Raffle area. Had opportunities to visit with people as they browsed our area, many of whom shared positive comments about the conference. Do not have the names of the Silent Auction winners. Disappointed that I did not walk away with something, but glad I was able to contribute to driving up some of the bids. Congratulations to our Raffle winners: Carol Ann Holcombe won the Painting, Walter Ponder the Yeti cooler, Linda Singleton the Cross, Tobi Cooley the Quilt, Robin Winfree the Master Gardener cartoon and Margaret Hensen the Water Fountain.



The only class I can report on in April is Wizzie Brown's most interesting presentation on Entomology and IPM. Oh my, she shared so much information on insects, and we were all careful not to "bug" her too much with questions and comments so she could cover it all.

Spent a delightful day with Jane Van Praag on Friday, April 24, as we traveled to Clifton to attend the Keyhole Garden Workshop. Very interesting and informative. With observations I have made in Austin and in Clifton, I am sorry I have not saved my blue Reisling wine bottles. If any of you have extras you would like to share with me, I will gladly accept. They are a colorful addition to the garden landscape.

See you next Wednesday for our last class. Look forward to learning about growing and cooking with herbs.

Photography by **Gail Koontz, Randy Brown and Dawn Orange**



# Announcements

## May General Meeting

- Randy Brown

Anne Hamilton from Fort Hood Natural Resources will be presenting butterflies and other beneficial insects for the May 13th meeting. Plant Swap starts at 9:30 right before the meeting. There will also be a Silent Auction until 10:30 a.m. with all the leftover raffle prizes from the Conference.

## May 13th Plant & Seed Swap

- Bernie Hurta and Randy Brown

We will have a plant swap before the May monthly meeting. Please pot any extra plants that are coming up in your yard. Also, please bring any seeds you have harvested to share. Please remember to label the plants with names and growing information. Plant swaps are a lot of fun and you go home with a lot of new plants.

Please bring your plants to where the meeting is to take place by 9:30 am. (classroom or our outside building) The plant swap will be from 9:30 to 10:30.

## Silent Auction on May 13th

- Karen Colwick

There will be a Silent Auction the morning of May 13th until 10:30. We'll be auctioning off some raffle prizes and other items from the Conference.

## Grounds Work Days

- Walter Ponder

May 6, 8 a.m. Workday

May 13, 8 a.m. Workday

May 20, 8 a.m. Workday

May 27, 8 a.m. Workday

## Wildflower ID

- Terrie Hahn

Check out last year's Blooming Bells for April, May and June to see some of our local wildflowers identified. Go to [www.txmg.org/bell](http://www.txmg.org/bell) and click on Newsletters.

Our website also has tips of the week articles from over the years which are very informative. If you haven't already, you should check out this educational section of our website. Click on Educational Resources on the right hand side of the home page.

## 2015 New Class Graduation

- Bernie Hurta

The 2015 New Class graduation is **Wednesday, May 6th at 1 pm**. Along with the graduation, we are having an ice cream social. We need a count for the ice cream and the number of tables and chairs to set-up. Please email Bernie Hurta at [bhurta@gmail.com](mailto:bhurta@gmail.com) if you would like to attend. Please RSVP before Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

**2015 Class:** If I did not get your guest number, please email me the number of guests you are bringing. Remember, every intern goes through graduation whether you are being certified or not at graduation.

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

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

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

## **Spiderworts in Bloom**

**- Don Latham**

The pink are rare for me, but sure makes a pretty picture!



## **What a Mushroom!**

**- Jan George**

Found this mushroom growing in my desert garden. Don't know anything about shrooms! Is it poisonous? Sure don't want to smother my steak with it if it is!



## **Springtime!**

**- Mary Lew Quesinberry**

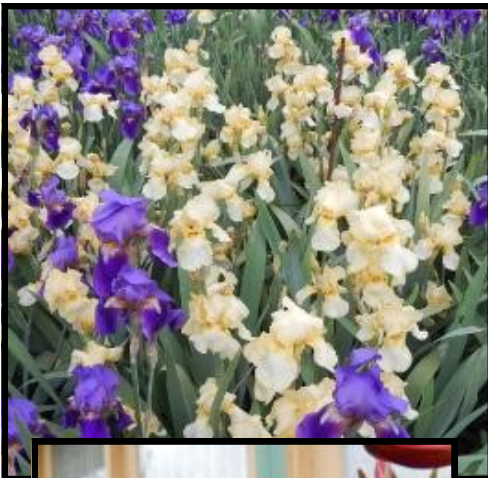




# What's Happening in Your Yard

- Charles Newsom

The irises occupy about 1,200 square feet (30 x 40 or so). They bloom in stages mostly by color. In the beginning of April, there were several hundred getting ready to blossom out if the weather holds for them. St. Joseph's Lily or Hardy Amaryllis and Louisiana Iris.



**Easter  
Sunday**

**- Bill and  
Beverly  
Hilliard**

Bear and  
Belle with blue-  
bonnets in  
Belton.





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

## **Beautiful Roses**

- Frances Idoux

My two Peggy Martin roses are in full bloom - spectacular!



## **Croatia Beauty**

- Beverly Hilliard

I was on tour in Croatia and saw many beautiful flowers at a market in Slovenia. Reminded me of home. My favorite picture was of tulips





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

- Diane Calderwood

Spring in Texas!





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

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