



The following members and their spouses attended the 2017 Texas Master Gardener State Conference aboard the Carnival Valor cruise ship from April 27-May 1: Jan and Cliff George, Jo Carlsen, Gary Slanga, Gail and Tom Christian, Pat Allen, Ilene and Michael Miller, Susan and Gene Terry, Kathy Patterson, Sylvia and Tommy Maedgen, and Mary Beth and Terry Bradburn.



Flower Photos by Daisy Klassy



**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 Work Day 8 am* Burger Wednesday 10:30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10 Work Day 8 am* Social 10 am General Meeting 10:30 am</b>	<b>11 Gardening In Bell Co. -Native Plants Seminar 6:30 pm</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14 Mother's Day</b> 	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17 Work Day 8 am* Intern Graduation 1 pm</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24 Work Day 8 am* BOD Meeting 9 am</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31 Work Day 8 am* 5th Wednesday Clean-up at Whistle-Stop Playground 7:30 am</b>			

\* In the event of rain, there will be No Workday.

Photo of home pasture by Sylvia Maedgen

**Upcoming events:**

- ◆ Career Day, Duncan Elementary, May 12
- ◆ Graduation, May 17
- ◆ Career Day, Lakewood Elementary, May 19
- ◆ Fall Plant Sale, September 30
- ◆ Fall Plant Swap, October 11

Remember to record volunteer/education hours.



# The President's Corner

- Wayne Schirner

This has been another busy month (are there any that aren't busy?) Even though the Spring Plant sale was mentioned last month, we now have the final stats from this sale. There were 710 customers who came through on sale day, and we had a net profit of \$8,000. The number of customers was a record for a BCMGA plant sale, and the profit was close to the record. Kudos to the many members who worked to pull this off. Kathy Love has done an outstanding job putting together a great team. We should all be proud of the results of our efforts.

We hosted the first ever TMGA Turfgrass Specialist training program the end of the first week of April. There was significant positive feedback, confirming our vision to develop this course. There were eight of our own members who took this training. That means we will be able to benefit from the total of 160 service hours these eight will contribute in the next 12 months to become a certified Turfgrass Specialist. Gary Slanga was the main driving force in getting this organized, and we are exceptionally proud of what he accomplished in putting this together. We look forward to being able to offer this again sometime in the next 12 months.

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, we were "invaded" by 121-second graders, plus teachers and adult supervisors, from Chisholm Trail Elementary School. They were split into five groups and learned about rainwater harvesting, greenhouse growing, container gardening, bugs – good and bad, and raised bed vegetable gardening. Gail Koontz did an absolutely outstanding job organizing this educational activity, which was a tremendous success. As always, there were numerous members who made this another great BCMGA day. Gail continues to find new ways for us to engage with the youth of our community. She has had several messages sent out asking for more volunteers. Please see if you can find time to serve in this way. Educating our youth is one of the most long lasting contributions we can make.

A special thanks to Don Latham, Diane Calderwood, and Mary Lew Quesinberry for opening their gardens for a tour by our intern class. I'm positive that they came away from this tour with many ideas that can be incorporated into their own gardens or landscape projects. This event was rained out for the last two years, so it was wonderful to be able to get it back on the schedule for this year. The intern class is nearly finished with their coursework, and graduation will be held on May 17<sup>th</sup>. More information will be forthcoming so that we can come together to celebrate this accomplishment with them.

Several of our members attended the TMGA Annual Meeting the last week of April. We look forward to their report back to us. Start planning now to attend this meeting next year in College Station, when the TMGA celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Thanks again to all of you for your continued support of our many and varied activities. We should all be proud to belong to such an outstanding organization. See you at the general membership meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

One last thing: don't forget the tax-free holiday over Memorial Day weekend when many lawn & garden supplies (any plant, mulch, select irrigation systems and more) can be purchased without sales tax.



## **Texas Water-Efficient Products Sales Tax Holiday May 27-29**

Texans may buy water conservation or water efficient products — such as a drip-irrigation hose, plants, mulch, even rain barrels — tax free this weekend.

## **Texas Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday May 27-29**

This weekend lets Texans buy energy efficient items such as air conditioners, clothes washers, ceiling fans, dishwashers and certain types of light bulbs tax free.



# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Cycad Scale

- **Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist**

The cycad scale is a little known pest in Texas that can cause major problems for cycad lovers. It has been identified in South Texas up to Central Texas. Heavy infestations of this scale insect can quickly cause mortality.

Mature females are about 1-1.5 mm long (~1/16") and are pear-shaped but will conform to the shape of the plant. Adult females have a white cap that when flipped over reveal an orange insect. Males are smaller than females, 0.5 mm long, but also create a white cap.



Females lay over orange 100 eggs that hatch usually in 8-12 days depending on environmental conditions. Cycad scales have overlapping generations, so populations can build very quickly.

Damage first appears as chlorotic spots, but left untreated the fronds will turn brown from desiccation. Cycads with large populations often appear white from the covering of scales. Dead scales do not readily drop off the plant, so the scales must physically be removed by using high pressure water sprays.

Check all plant material before purchasing/ trading to make sure it is not infested. Look over the whole plant and especially the underside of fronds as the scales like to settle there to feed. You may need to use a hand lens since the insects are very small. High population levels of cycad scale will cover the entire surface of the plant, including the roots.

If an infestation is found, dispose of heavily infested plants by double bagging. If plants do not yet have high numbers of insects, prune heavily infested areas

and discard in sealed bags. Pruning tools should be thoroughly cleaned before pruning other plants.

Treatments of cycad scale include horticultural oils, insecticidal soap, systemic pesticides or contact pesticides. Oils and soaps should have multiple applications. Oils should be applied in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler. Systemic pesticides, active ingredients such as acephate or dime-thoate, should be applied as a soil drench so the chemical is taken into the plant from the root system. Contact pesticides include active ingredients such as carbaryl or pyrethrin. When using contacts, care must be taken to thoroughly cover the plant so that all insects are treated.



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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**AGRI LIFE**  
**EXTENSION**

## The Veggie Guy

# Moving On To The Next Garden

- Wayne Schirner

Most of the cool-season crops are finished and have been pulled out. Squash, cucumbers, and beans are coming into their peak harvest in May. I even saw a red tomato in Diane Calderwood's garden this past week. Once you've removed your cool-season crops, add more compost to your garden and prepare to plant warm-season crops.

This month you can plant southern peas, okra, sweet potatoes, and Malabar spinach. Pumpkins, winter squash, and cantaloupe can also be seeded into the garden now. You will save space if you trellis these vining crops. As a general rule, select varieties with a shorter days-to-maturation so they will mature before the really hot weather is here. Even though May is officially still a spring month, it is the beginning of our summer.

Water well once or twice a week, allowing the top few inches of soil to dry before watering again. I've started using an inexpensive moisture meter to measure soil moisture to a depth of 6 inches. If it indicates that the soil is still moist between 4-6 inches deep, I hold off another day or two to water. Deep watering, less frequently, promotes deeper root growth so the plants will tolerate our hot dry weather. Mulch also helps hold in moisture and also keeps weeds down. It is much easier to keep ahead of this chore than to try to catch up when the weeds are 3-4 inches tall.

If you row garden, you might consider placing layers of newspaper down between rows, wet it, and then cover with a mulch of any organic material that will eventually decompose. Remember that the key to having a successful garden is to see the shadow of the gardener in the garden every day. Look for evidence of pests or diseases when they are in the early stages. Don't forget to look at the underside of leaves. As with weeds, it is much easier to deal with pests and diseases early before they have destroyed much of your garden.

Finally, May is the time to select what tomato varieties you want to start from seed to have ready to transplant into your garden by mid-July. There are many varieties to choose from, and this might be the year that you discover a new favorite for your fall harvest.

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> in a series of articles where I have tried to remind readers of some of the monthly vegetable gardening tasks. I don't want to become repetitious, so, starting next month, I'd like to see articles from members about some specific successes (or failures to learn from) on things you have done that might be a little off the beaten path. Maybe you ran your own experiment to try something new, or to confirm an accepted practice. Share what you did and what your results were. It can be something done individually, or by a group. I'd like to see another entry for the TMGA Award in the research category, and this gives us an opportunity to learn about what members are doing in this area. Let me know if you have something you'd like to contribute.





# Nectar Gardening for Butterflies, Honey Bees and Native Bees

- Michelle Peterson, St. Lucie County Master Gardener, Florida

Plants produce nectar as a means of attracting insects, birds and other potential pollinators. One of the greatest benefits of gardening with nectar-producing plants is being able to provide an attractive habitat for a great number of wildlife, particularly butterflies, honey bees and native pollinators. A standard nectar garden includes a mix of annuals, perennials, herbs, shrubs and trees. Although there are many commonalities in nectar gardens, each has specific requirements when attracting a specific pollinator.

Butterflies:

- Prefer red, orange, pink and yellow flowers
- Like trumpet-shaped flowers that hold sweet nectar
- Need species-specific host plants that provide shelter, camouflage and larval food.

Honeybees:

- Prefer yellow, white, blue and purple flowers – can't see the color red
- Like daisy-like flowers with broad petals that offer a large landing pad
- Need pollen as well as nectar to feed the hive

Native Bees:

- Prefer fruiting trees and shrubs and native plants
- Have short life spans, and like a variety of blossoms throughout the year
- Are largely ground-dwelling and prefer native soil that free of pesticides and fertilizers

Butterflies and bees also like shallow mud puddles where they get their source of water and minerals.

Most plants that attract pollinators require full sun (a minimum of 5 to 6 hours of light a day), so it may be more of a challenge to attract bees and butterflies to your shade garden, though not entirely impossible.

Pesticides will not only keep pesky bugs away, but also the ones that you're trying to attract. Be very judicious in your applications, and choose spot treatments over systemic.

Avoid planting the red flower passion vine (*Passiflora racemosa*) which can be poisonous to butterfly caterpillars.

Also, be cautious about toxic plants like Yellow Jessamine aka Carolina Jasmine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) and White Ti Ti (*Cyrtilla racemiflora*) which are poisonous to bees.

A chart that provides additional information by botanical and common plant names can be found at the web site -

[http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu/pdfs/master\\_gardener/2011/Nectar%20Gardening%20for%20Bees%20Butterflies.pdf](http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu/pdfs/master_gardener/2011/Nectar%20Gardening%20for%20Bees%20Butterflies.pdf)



Photo by Sylvia Maedgen



Photo by Daisy Klassy

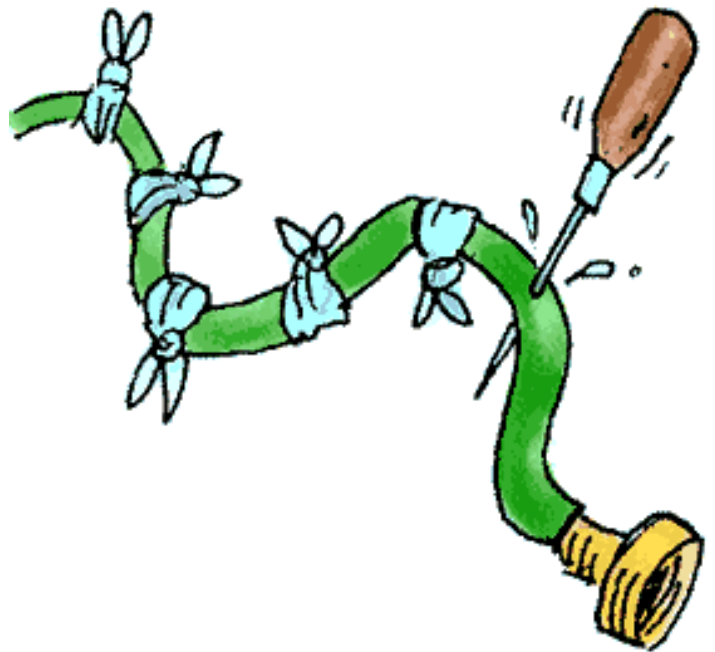
# Irrigation Tune-up

- Wayne Schirner

May is the ideal time to check out your irrigation system before it's really needed in the hot summer. We've had adequate rainfall up to now so that most landscapes shouldn't have required irrigation yet, at least not more than once or twice. As a general rule, irrigation shouldn't be needed more than once a month between November and February, not more than twice a month between March – May and in October, and once or twice a week between June and September. Part of the key to irrigation efficiently is recognizing when your landscape needs water. It is best to irrigate deeply on an infrequent basis to encourage roots to grow deep. The most accurate way to know when it is time to irrigate is with a moisture meter. You don't need to spend a lot to get something that only checks soil moisture. One for < \$10 works fine for what you need it for. You do want one that will check soil moisture to a depth of 6 inches. If your meter indicates that your soil is still moist at a depth of 6 inches, you don't need to irrigate. Another fairly reliable method to determine if your turfgrass needs to be irrigated is to simply walk on it in the early morning. If you turn around and see your footprints, then it is time to irrigate. Don't do this in the late afternoon on a hot day, because even lawns that have adequate moisture will show footprints when the turfgrass blades are folding up to conserve moisture. If you don't yet have a rain-freeze sensor, it would be good to add that to your system too. There are numerous options available, and the newer ones can interact with your controller wirelessly. I see lots of systems running while it is actively raining, and this only wastes water.

The average homeowner over-waters. Not because they want to waste water or have a high water bill. They just don't know how long or how often to water, and they don't know how to set their irrigation controller. There are some basic things that any homeowner can do to check out their system for some common irrigation problems. Most controller boxes have a "test" option that the dial can be set to. This will turn on each section or zone of the irrigation system for two minutes, then go to the next zone. This allows you to watch each zone to determine if there are clogged heads, broken heads, mal-aligned heads causing overspray of roadways or driveways, or spray that

is now blocked from trees or shrubs that have grown. Spray heads should also be straight up and down. Check to see that your system isn't watering your or your neighbor's fence. No matter how much water you apply to a fence, it won't grow taller. Most of these problems can be fixed yourself, but even if all you do is identify a problem and then call an irrigation specialist to fix the problem, you will save money and conserve water. The typical soil in Bell County is a heavy clay soil. This soil will usually not absorb water as quickly as most sprinkler systems will apply it. This frequently results in runoff, wasting more of this valuable resource. Setting the irrigation controller to a cycle and soak method will enhance efficiency and reduce water runoff. As an example, I have determined that at this point in the season, irrigating my turfgrass for 20 minutes once a week will apply 1 inch of water to my turfgrass. If my moisture meter indicates that I need to irrigate, I turn my system on. I have my irrigation system set to water each turfgrass zone for 10 minutes, and once the system has cycled through every zone, it starts over to apply another 10 minutes of irrigation to each zone. By using this method, I have practically eliminated any runoff, which I know is saving me money.



# Spring 2017 Annual Plant Sale Report

- Kathy Love, Plant Sale Coordinator

## THE BOTTOM LINE

(And I DID NOT manipulate the numbers to get this exact total Just worked out that way.)

**TOTAL NET PROFIT \$8,000.00**

SALES		COSTS	
Plants \$15,320.00		Plants \$8,969.37 – Roses \$259.55 = \$ 8,710.00	
Raffle 215.00	\$	Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 224.00
Merchandise 496.00	\$	Advertising	\$ 1,044.00
Cook Books 162.00	\$		
McLane's Children Hospital	\$ 1,785.00		
Total Sales	\$17,978.00	Total Costs	- \$ 9,978.00

## Spring 2017 Plant Swap Trade Days

- Jane Van Praag

Whether we are counting number of participants, number of plants and seeds exchanged, the ever-increasing variety of specimen available, or measuring the sheer fun of mixing and mingling, our plant swaps are steadily getting better. Special thanks to Plant Swap Committee members Carol Morisset, Gena Winston, Jan Upchurch (though she was ill that day), Rose Harris, and Sylvia Maedgen who are responsible for our continual improvement!

Our Fall 2017 Plant Swap will be on Wednesday October 11, before our General Meeting.



Photos by  
Randy Brown



# Cruising on the Caribbean

## Texas Master Gardener

### State Conference



- Sylvia Maedgen

It was bon voyage from Galveston on Thursday afternoon, April 27th, as we set sail for Cozumel, Mexico. We enjoyed tropical drinks on the top deck by the pool and were entertained by the ship's cruise director and passengers having fun on the pool deck dance floor. We were treated to a lovely reception later that afternoon and greeted by Doug Steele, Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Next stop - dinner and meeting new Master Gardeners from across the state and country at our tables. After dinner, we saw an entertaining Welcome Aboard Show in the ship's theater. As we returned to our room, we were greeted by a towel elephant on our bed.

Friday's schedule was full, starting off with breakfast, then, sessions 1 & 2 included "*Wine and Viticulture*" and "*Nature's Cycles and Flows*". Then lunch, followed by "*A Taste of the Tropics*" and "*Broadcasting from the Garden*". Next stop, our elegant dinner night and the wait staff treated us to a song and dance during our meal. We finished the night off with musical entertainment of Karaoke and piano music. Our room surprise was a towel rabbit sitting on our bed.

Saturday was fun and relaxation in Cozumel. First we started off with a hardy breakfast and then off the ship we went. Some of the activities that our members experienced included: swimming with dolphins, relaxation at secluded beaches, visiting the Chichen Itza Mayan Ruins, being a working crew member in Cozumel's 12 meter America's Cup sailing race on the Stars & Stripes and True North IV sailboats; mixing and making margaritas and salsa; deep sea fishing; and touring the island of Cozumel; and maybe a little bit of shopping. Back on board, it was dinner time! After dinner, a few of us enjoyed some Latin music. As we entered our room, we found a towel monkey hanging from the curtain rod.

Sunday breakfast was a little early; but because of technical difficulties, the movie "*Symphony of the Soil*" was not viewed. So now off to explore, shop, or relax on the ship. All of that was exhausting, so we refueled at lunch. The afternoon schedule included: "*Garden Inspirations from Travel*" and "*Beneficials in Texas Gardens and Landscapes*". Several of us in our group decided we need to start traveling to see some beautiful gardens outside of our area. (Europe anyone?) Next, someone found a Play Station from a crew member so the movie was shown. After the movie, several of us enjoyed our last dinner together on the cruise; afterwards, we got to reminisce some of our younger years with music from the 80's performed by the cruise ship theater ensemble. I still new all the words to the songs! Then, we capped it off once again with a little Karaoke music. Back in our stateroom, another towel monkey was hanging around in our room.

I heard a few from our group came home with a little more money after playing in the casino, I was not one of them, but my husband broke even and Gene said he did pretty good.

As we approached our return to Galveston, we grabbed our last leisurely breakfast and awaited the call for debarkation. I believe most of us experienced smooth sailing and we will miss all the wonderful service we received on the ship. It was all we could eat, and no bed making, picking up towels, or dishwashing. All in all, we had a great time and even picked up a few education hours as well as maybe a few extra pounds.

After we arrived back in Galveston, several members took tours of Galveston and attended the Awards Banquet at the Moody Gardens Hotel.

# Awards Banquet

- Kathy Love, Awards Committee Chair

Our group received the following Search for Excellence Awards:

- ◆ 1st Place Project - Fort Hood Community Gardens - submitted by Gail Pierce and Pat Johnson, received an average score of 80 out of a possible 100 from the 3 judges
- ◆ 1st Place - Outstanding Association Large Counties - submitted by Wayne Schirner and Kathy Love, received an average score of 89.3 out of 100 from the 3 judges
- ◆ 2nd Place - JMG/Youth - St. Mary's Learn Grow Eat Go (LGEG) - submitted by Gail Koontz and Mary Ann Everett, received an average score of 84 out of a possible 100 from the 3 judges

Specialist certificates and pins were presented to:

- Mary Ann Everett, Growing Healthy Communities
- Larry Moehnke, Vegetables
- Wayne Baker, Propagation

Two members also received 15 year award recognition:

- Jeannette Karr
- Kim Pringle

Thanks so much for all of the hard work in 2016 and congratulations to our winners (all of us!). Also thanks for the submissions which were not awarded but were certainly important:

- Education Project - Rainwater Harvesting - Karen Colwick received an average score of 88.7 out of a possible 100 from the 3 judges;
- Written Education - Cookbook - Sylvia Maedgen and Pat Johnson received an average score of 74 out of a possible 100 from the 3 judges
- Outstanding Individual Master Gardener - Kathy Love received an average score of 92.7 out of a possible 100 from the 3 judges

This was my first year to chair the awards for our state nominations and of course it has been a learning experience for me. I certainly hope to do better for all of us next year and increase our awards collection on behalf of all of you who work so hard to serve our community.



Photos by Jan George



# Galveston Tours

- Ilene Miller

Historic Galveston Recovers from Hurricane Ike Devastation

Mike and I toured the Historic East End viewing numerous historic building including the 1894 Opera House which has been restored after several natural disasters including the 1900 Storm and Hurricane Ike in 2008.

It is the Official Opera House of the State of Texas and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Stars of stage, screen and Broadway plus concerts, dance, drama and comedy performances have appeared on this magnificent stage over the past 123 years.

Our next treat was the Tree Sculpture Tour which stopped at some of the 40+ sculptures created by three area artists after Hurricane Ike flooded the Island in September 2008. 55,000 trees died as a result of that natural disaster. But the citizens of Galveston turned the symbols of destruction into signs of rejuvenation which were a joy to view. Around 500 tons of Galveston trees have been used over the past nine years for restoration projects of two historic ships and for numerous building projects, so none of the wood went into the landfill. New plantings of 8,000 new oak and other trees and many shrubs have also been completed on the Island and amazingly the oleaners, Norfolk pines and palm trees all survived Ike and still provide a special charm to Island landscapes and boulevards.



Photos by Ilene and Michael Miller





# Fun in the Sun Cruising



Photos by  
Sylvia  
Maedgen,  
Gene Terry,  
and Pat  
Allen.

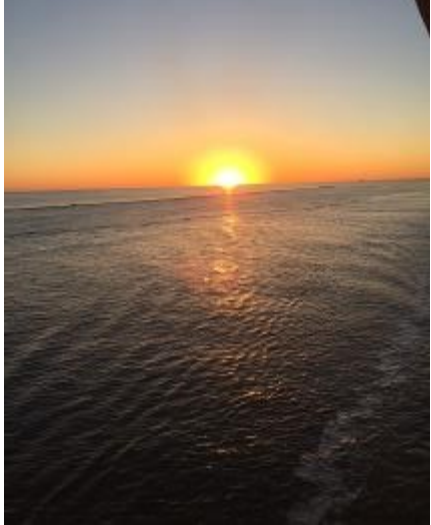




# Fun in the Sun Cruising



Photos by Pat Allen, Susan Terry, Kathy Patterson, and Jan George.





# What's Been Happening...

## Turfgrass Specialist Training

- Gail Christian

Several members attended the Turfgrass Specialist Training the first week of April. There were 23 students in the class with 13 students from other counties and 10 students from Bell County. The presenter was Dr. William Casey Reynolds.



Photos by Gail Christian

## April General Meeting

- Sylvia Maedgen

At April's General Meeting, we had a spring time spread of refreshments, and Mary Ann Everett and Karen Colwick presented a workshop on bulb chipping.



Photos by  
Randy Brown





# What's Been Happening...

## “Career Day” at Cavazos Elementary School in Nolanville on April 7th

- Marjorie Gillmeister

We had an amazing turn out for "Career Day" at The Cavazos Elementary School in Nolanville on April 7th. Marjorie Gillmeister inspired and educated 109 students on "How to Eggshell Garden" and by recycling the eggshells and decreasing their eggshell landfill footprint; each student learned how to sow a seed in an eggshell pod to take home and nurture. We had a wonderful group of New Class Master Gardeners of 2017 and Master Gardeners supporting us this day and are most grateful for them.

Photos by Marjorie Gillmeister



# What's Been Happening...

## Salado Earth Day 2017

- Gail Koontz

Marjorie Gillmeister and I journeyed to Salado again this year to each set up an information booth at Salado's Earth Day event. This year's event was more about the run and clean up community service. But we did have some visitors come by to gather information from us.

In the pictures below are Susan Terry, Master Gardener, who coordinated the run and Gail Jacobsen, who introduced herself as class of 2009 but no longer active. I am pictured on Friday, set up day, ready to share information on rainwater harvesting. Marjorie, who was assisted by Wolfgang Gillmeister and Kellie Hussmann, is pictured on Saturday, event day, sharing information on eggshell gardening and selling plants and vegetables from the Gillmeister Farm.

We had help decorating our booths from the ladies of the Keep Salado Beautiful committee. They made us look really good!



Photos by Gail Koontz





# What's Been Happening...

## Bell County Safety Day 2017

- Gail Koontz

Coordinated by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Bell County, over 600 sixth grade students and their teachers from Academy, Audie Murphy and Eastern Hills (both from Killeen) middle schools gathered at the Expo to hear small group presentations on safety in categories such as ATVs, bicycles, chemicals, fire, lawn equipment, guns, passengers, water and weather. Upon arrival on Thursday, April 27, the groups together heard Rusty Garrett give his Project Tornado presentation. They then split up into small groups and rotated through seven different stations.

Master Gardeners Marjorie Gillmeister and Barbara Ishikawa presented one tract of Look-A-Like Chemical/Medicine Safety in the Dome. Carol Morisset and I presented a second tract in the Assembly Hall. As you can see from the pictures below, Carol does not like to have her picture made.

Master Naturalists Phil and Mary Ann Everett presented gun safety.

Many thanks to Lyle Zoeller, Tonya Elliott and Sheryl Long for taking such good care of us and keeping everyone in line. Well, almost everyone. . .

Bell County Safety Day is a one-day annual safety and health program designed to be age-appropriate, hands-on fun and safety for students.



Photos by Gail Koontz, Barbara Ishikawa, Carol Morisset, and Marjorie Gillmeister.





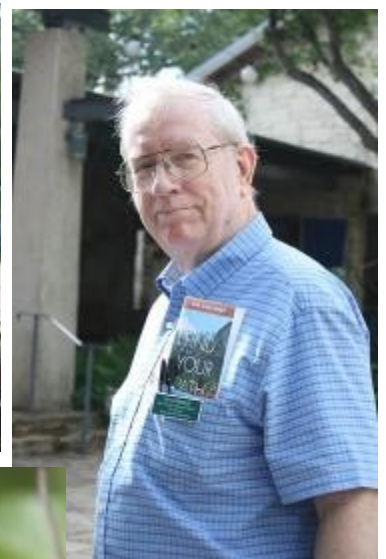
# What's Been Happening...

## Intern Field Trip

- Mary Ann Everett

The BCMGA class field trip traveled by bus to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the Hill Country Water Garden on April 19th near the Austin Area.

Photos by Daisy Klassy





# What's Been Happening...

## Second Graders Here, 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders There, Second Graders Everywhere . . .

- Gail Koontz

. . . and what a great time we all had on Tuesday, April 25, when three bus loads of 120 lively second-graders joined 21 Master Gardeners for a garden tour through the gardens, greenhouse, education building, and meeting room of the AgriLife Extension Center. The children and their teachers divided into five groups and rotated through five different learning, hands-on, fun stations. Karen Colwick and her helper Daisy Klassy taught them about all things water: conservation, rainwater harvesting, the water cycle. They joined Carla Harmon in the greenhouse to learn about plant life cycle and plant growth.

On to the education building to hear Kathy Love and her assistant Christy Reese talk about the cute little bat face cuphea and container gardening. Each kiddo got to take a small container with a small bat face home with them. Over to the meeting room where Mary Ann Everett and Louann Hight were set up with insects and worms. And the last station was manned by Wayne Schirner and Mike Butts who talked about raised bed gardening, veggie and flower, observed caterpillars, and just enjoyed the aroma of the herbs.

Leading each group from station to station were master guides and their assistants: Stacye Parry and Art Carr, Joyce Richardson and Jan Upchurch, Jo Carlsen and Barbara Ishikawa, Joan Bumgarner and Sandi Lenedhan, Sylvia Maedgen and Carol Morisset. Jan George was our time keeper, and she was great with that whistle. Carol was also our nurse with a basic first aid station set up. To my knowledge, no one visited that station. Jan Upchurch also had BCMGA lanyards with a garden map for each child. At the completion of each station, each kiddo received a sticker for that station. That plus each presenter's magic word was aimed at helping and encouraging the children to listen.

And Many Thanks to Alan Colwick who stepped up and helped direct the three buses in and out. Hats off to Elizabeth Longorio who orchestrated things on the Chisholm Trail Elementary end. I think she and I are now best friends.

A successful event like this demonstrates Master Gardener teamwork! Well done.



Photos by Gail Koontz and

Sylvia Maedgen





# This and That

## Killeen Municipal Court Community Gardens

- Photos by Randy Brown





# What's Happening in Your Yard

## In Love with Lovage!

- Kathleen Ramey

If you haven't tried lovage, *Levisticum officinale*, then you have a treat in store for you! Lovage is a tall, erect perennial that tastes a bit like peppery celery, and it is so very easy to grow. I began growing lovage about 5 years ago and it remains a staple in my garden. Be sure to give it a large space, as it expands but upwards (without pruning over 5 feet tall) and outwards (without pruning about four to five feet). It is very cold hardy and fairly drought tolerant. I have grown it in full sun and partial shade and it did very well in both situations. I prune it aggressively to keep it at a reasonable size and to keep it looking nice in the garden. This is my first year to grow it in Texas, so we'll see how much it loves the heat and the sun in July and August.



Lovage can be harvested at any time, even when the plant is tiny. It is very generous with its leaves and vigorous enough that you can almost chop it back to the ground and it will still return vigorously. I use the leaves in salads, and they add a peppery taste. I rarely buy celery any more as I use lovage for all my cooking needs, especially in soups and stews and stir fry. I know some people use the stems, but I find them woody and not nearly as nice as the leaves, which are always in good supply on the plant.

So, if you are looking to try something new in your herb garden, give lovage a try. I don't think you'll be disappointed!

## Herbs

- Elaine Passman

Oregano in bloom.



## Bees abuzzing!

- Crystal Fisher

Before the Coral Vine blooms.



## Spring Flowers

- Sylvia Maedgen

I purchased this Triumphant Lily plant at the Herbal Forum in Round Top in March. The flowers bloomed while I was cruising at the State Conference. They are beautiful and colorful and the flowers have a sweet fragrance.



## Spring Flowers

- Randy Brown

Angel Trumpets



# Announcements

## Grounds Workdays

- Johnny Jones and Tom Rennels

Here is the Workday schedule for April:

May 3, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday  
10:30 a.m. Burger Wednesday

May 10, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

May 17, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

May 24, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

May 31, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

In the event of rain, there will be No Workday.

## May General Meeting

- Mary Ann Everett

The May general meeting will be on May 10th. The presentation will be provided by Dennis Bigg and the topic will be on Cornish Gardens. Social Time is 10:00 a.m. Meeting at 10:30 a.m. The members that attended the Herbal Forum in Round Top back in March will be providing the refreshments, featuring the herbs cilantro and coriander.

## Master Gardener Tree Care Specialist Training

- Jayla Fry

Tree related questions are one of the primary things that make the phone ring in an Extension office. This training is designed to teach Master Gardener volunteers about landscape trees and troubleshooting common tree problems so they can serve county residents and extend the outreach of Extension programming into the community. The training is designed to go above and beyond what you learned in the Master Gardener Training Course. Highly qualified instructors will provide advanced training in the classroom as well as outdoor demonstrations of tree care practices.

Major topics include: Tree Benefits, Biology and Function, Site Selection, Tree Species Selection, Proper Planting Techniques, Proper Training and Pruning, Tree Nutrition, Common Stress Factors, Alleviating Soil Compaction, Abiotic Tree Problems, Common Pests and Diseases, and more. A final course agenda will be available prior to the training.

Dates: Wednesday, May 17 through Friday, May 19, 2017

Location: Myers Park and Event Center, 7117 County Road 166, McKinney, TX 75071

Cost: \$175 per person. This fee covers all instruction, educational materials, two meals, and refreshments.

Deadline: Registration deadline is April 24, 2017. Please note that as we must order supplies and refreshments in advance, no refunds can be given after May 8, 2017.

To learn more and apply, visit the online registration page at <https://goo.gl/EUEv5R>

For more information contact the Collin County Extension Office at 972-548-4233 or [collin-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:collin-tx@tamu.edu)

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



# Announcements

## Gardening in Bell County

- Carol Morisset and Jan Upchurch

We are proud to present the following educational opportunities for our neighbors and fellow gardeners:

May 11	Native Plants
June 15	Living With or Without Insects
July 20	Controlling Fire Ants
August 17	Growing and Cooking with Herbs
September 21	Fall Gardening
October 19	Trees and Shrubs
November 16	Composting

Location: Bell County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Offices  
1605 N. Main  
Belton, TX

Time: 6:30-8:00 pm

Cost: \$5.00 per seminar (Payment is due the week BEFORE the scheduled seminar)

Seminars are limited to 25 participants so register early.

For Information Contact one of the following: [j-upchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j-upchurch@sbcglobal.net) OR [carol.j.morisset@gmail.com](mailto:carol.j.morisset@gmail.com)

Hello,

Let me introduce myself for those of you who do not know me. My name is Sylvia Maedgen and I graduated from the Master Gardener Class of 2016. I am the new Editor of "*The Blooming Bell*" newsletter for our organization. This is my first issue, so please be patient with me. I will strive to make it as good as Terrie did for the past 7 years.

I look forward to receiving your announcements, articles, stories and photos in the future. Please send them to my email address at: [txbikerchic7@gmail.com](mailto:txbikerchic7@gmail.com) and no later than the 25th of the month. Your articles should be in Word, and your photos in the JPG format. Please do not send me any PDF documents. Please make sure you submit the who, what, when, where, and why information with your articles. Also, let me know the photographer's name if someone else took any pictures that you provide.

I am counting on each of you to provide me with information to make the newsletter a great read.



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### Editor:

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*Please submit articles of less than 500 words for the Blooming Bell as Word Documents with **photos** separate as **JPG files** to Sylvia Maedgen at:*

**txbikerchic7@gmail.com**

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

*Photo by Daisy Klassy*



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