



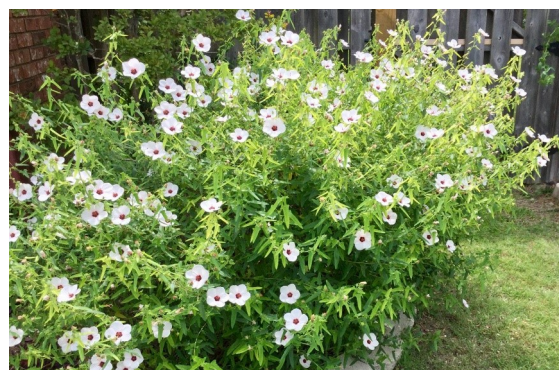
Photo by Terrie Hahn

# The Blooming Bell

## August 2017



Photos above and to the right by Randy Brown



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***Enjoy the  
rest of your***



**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b>	<b>2 Work Day - 8 am*</b> <b>Burger</b> <b>Wednesday 10:30</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9 Work Day - 8 am*</b> <b>Social - 8:30 am</b> <b>General Meeting - 9 am</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16 Work Day 8 am*</b>	<b>17 Gardening in Bell County – Fall Garden - 6:30 pm</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23 Work Day 8 am*</b> <b>BOD Meeting - 9 am</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30 Work Day 8 am*</b> <b>Whistle Stop Playground Clean-up - 7:30 am</b>	<b>31</b>		

**Upcoming events:**

- ♦ Gardening in Bell County, Fall Garden, Aug. 17
- ♦ Hummer Fest, Rockport, Sept. 14-17
- ♦ Fall Plant Sale, Sept. 30
- ♦ Fall Plant Swap, Oct. 11
- ♦ 20th Anniversary BCMGA Party, Oct. 26
- ♦ Christmas Party, Expo, Dec. 1

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

**Remember to record volunteer/education hours.**

Photo by Randy Brown

# The President's Corner

## - Wayne Schirner

Whew. In case you hadn't noticed, summer has arrived. Spring planted tomatoes are way past being able to produce, but tomatoes for a fall crop should be planted soon, if you haven't already planted them. The demonstration gardens are slowly turning fallow. Speak to Don Wyatt if you want to take over one of the unused beds for a fall garden. If you had one of the beds this spring, and don't plan to use it for fall, let Don know about that too so another member can have access to that bed.

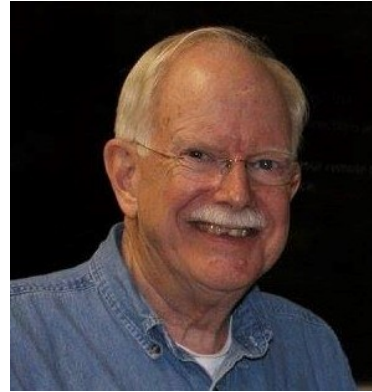
The Board of Directors has approved four new service projects over the last 3 months. Graduates of the 2017 class are championing three of these projects. I am excited about these service opportunities, and I have asked each project champion to present a short outline of their project at the August General Membership meeting so that the membership can have a better understanding of the projects and perhaps find at least one of these projects that they want to help with. Come to the meeting to learn more, and to also hear Gary Slanga give his talk on stems.

Thanks to Wayne Zieschang and Charles Newsome, we now have an air conditioning/heating unit that hopefully will help make the education building more comfortable in either the summer or winter months. We will have a chance at the August meeting to find out how much of a difference it makes. As Charles frequently reminds me, it is tough to condition a room with four large un-insulated doors.

Announcements have gone out about the next TMGA State Conference 4-6 April 2018. I know that seems like a long time away, but I suspect that rooms at the conference hotel will go quickly. This conference will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the TMGA, and will also celebrate the opening of the new Gardens at Texas A&M. Make plans now to attend so we can have a large contingent from the BCMGA.

Speaking of anniversaries, we have mentioned several times that this is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BCMGA. Recognizing that any excuse for a party is a good excuse, a planning committee has started working on how we can celebrate this momentous occasion. Save the date of Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 PM for this event.

The fall plant sale is only 2 months away. That means lots of opportunities for members to increase their service hours is present. The September general meeting will have more information about some of the plants we will be featuring this year.



Thanks again for all the great work you are all doing for the BCMGA and for the community.

That's it for this month. Remember to stay cool.





# 1 More Thing...

## Best Time to Water Landscape Beds or Turfgrass

- Wayne Schirner

Since most home irrigation systems use spray heads, which are only about 50% efficient, we must do everything we can to maximize their efficiency. Spray heads tend to cause misting and more vaporization of the water. If irrigation occurs during the hottest parts of the day, evaporation may occur even before the water hits the plants that need to be irrigated. Landscape irrigation tends to take longer than garden irrigation, because there is usually more of it, but it is still best to try to finish irrigation before the sun is heating everything up. Irrigation systems should be run to minimize pooling of water and runoff, while also minimizing the amount of time that the leaves of turfgrass or plants remain wet to reduce the risk of fungal diseases. Avoid irrigating your turfgrass in the evening, since that will leave blades of grass wet for a longer period of time. Once you have determined how long you need to irrigate your turfgrass, set the controller to run during the night in time to finish before 9:00 AM. The typical clay soil in Bell County will only absorb 0.25-0.5 inches of water per hour. This is the amount of water that most zones with spray heads or rotors will put out in about 10 minutes of operation. Set the controller to irrigate each zone for 10 minutes per zone, and then start over when at least 1 hour has passed. If you want specific instructions on how to set up your controller to a cycle and soak system, send me an email at [docwas@me.com](mailto:docwas@me.com) and I will send easy to follow instructions.

We are in the hot part of the summer, when it will probably be necessary to irrigate at least 30 minutes total for each zone twice a week to make up the ET – rainfall gap. Use a moisture meter to determine how frequently irrigation is necessary. Monitor each zone to determine when the soil at the 4-6" deep level is dry, then set the controller to irrigate the next day. After doing this for several weeks, the frequency needed to irrigate will become apparent. Some lawns will only need irrigation every 4-5 days, while others might need irrigation every 3 days. The general principle for irrigating turfgrass is to water infrequently but deeply. Watering small amounts more frequently will result in a shallow root structure that won't do well in our hot summer weather.

Landscape beds are best watered with drip irrigation, which is 90% efficient. Beds should have a layer of at least 3" of mulch over the drip lines and any bare soil, which will nearly eliminate water loss due to evaporation. As a result, the time of day to run drip zones isn't as critical as it is for zones with spray or rotor heads. If landscape beds don't have drip, then those too should be irrigated during the cooler times of the day to reduce water loss to evaporation while also minimizing the amount of time the plant leaves remain wet. Converting zones from spray to drip provides a more efficient irrigation system, and also one that is better for plants by reducing wet leaves and therefore reducing the risk of fungal diseases. Converting a landscape zone with spray heads to one with drip lines is something that most homeowners should be able to do. However, if this is too much of a challenge, call one of the local irrigation businesses.

If irrigation is done with a sprinkler at the end of a hose, it will be more difficult to irrigate during the night when loss by evaporation would be the lowest. Confining irrigation to the early morning hours or late afternoons will at least reduce the loss. Homeowners should invest in a simple manual timer that can be used to control how long the sprinkler runs, which avoids the common mistake of turning the water to the hose-end sprinkler on and forgetting to turn it off. If you have specific questions about irrigation, feel free to contact me to discuss your circumstances.





# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Lace Bugs

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Adult lace bugs are small, about 1/8 an inch, and highly sculptured on the upper surface. The thorax and front wings are expanded and have numerous transparent cells that look like lace. Nymphs, or immatures, are wingless, smaller, and often covered in dark spines. Eggs are inserted into leaf tissue and covered with dark excrement. Lace bugs are found on the underside of leaves.



Lace bug adults and nymphs have piercing-sucking mouthparts and suck juices from plant tissue. Feeding damage causes yellowing, stippling, and bleaching of the leaves, but damage usually isn't seen until late summer. The insects' dark excrement can also be unsightly both on the plant as well as surfaces underneath the plant.



While lace bugs are typically not a problem for healthy plants, when populations are especially high or last for a long period of time, it may cause leaf drop or a reduction in plant growth. Since healthy plants usually do not die from lace bugs, try to keep plants in top health using cultural control methods (right plant/ right place, proper watering & fertilizing, etc.). Damaged foliage will not repair, so will either need to be replaced with new growth or pruned from the plant. Conserve beneficial organisms to help naturally reduce pest populations.

Any pesticide treatment that you choose will need to be targeted to the underside of the leaves. Less toxic options would include things like insecticidal soap, azadirachtin, or pyrethrins.

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





## - Gail Koontz

### Tu(r)f Love Principle #1

Water deeply and only when needed.

Water is important to a healthy lawn. Remember that water is a limited resource in Texas, becoming more limited as our population grows. So it's important to know how to water our lawns properly in order to conserve water with no loss to grass quality.

Water seeps slowly into clay soil, moderately into loam, faster into sandy. So in our clay soils, sprinkler heads that apply water faster than it can seep into soil cause significant water loss as runoff. Use sprinklers with low application rates or irrigate to the point just before runoff, stop, let water seep in (30 minutes to an hour), then begin watering again.

Grass species vary significantly in their water needs and drought resistance. So do your homework if you are putting in a new lawn. In our already established lawns, it's important that we know how to care for them properly.

Water deeply; wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches to establish deep roots. Early morning, before 10 a.m., is the best time to water. Use a garden spade, soil probe or moisture meter to check how deeply the water has penetrated. Shallow watering produces weak, shallow rooted grass that is more susceptible to drought stress. DO NOT water again until your grass shows signs of drought stress: discoloration (blue/gray color), wilting, footprints that do not bounce back (again early morning). Daily check this plant just like you check your veggies or flowers. When you observe one of these signs, you have 24 to 48 hours to water before damage occurs to your grass.

When plants enter drought stress, they close their stomata to prevent losing excess water vapor. This causes wilting and inability to bounce back when walked on.

Check your irrigation system on a regular basis to be sure it is working properly. I do not set my system on automatic. When I observe that my grass is thirsty, I set my system to come on early the next morning. And I am watering more often now that the triple digit temperatures are upon us.

My system makes two rounds to avoid runoff because of clay soil and a sloping front yard.

The way you care for your lawn affects the amount of water it will need.



Stacye Parry and I enjoyed presenting our Tu(r)f Love Principles to the Gardening in Bell County group last month. In the coming months, I'll be sharing them again in this column.

Thank you, Randy Brown, for photographing us and putting us on Facebook.

## Vegetable Quiz - Answers

Can you identify the vegetable plants that produce the flowers below?



#1-bell pepper



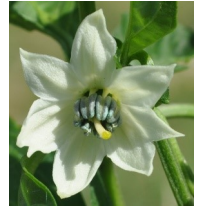
#2-cucumber



#3-eggplant



#4-green beans



#5-jalapeno



#6-okra



#7-tomato



#8-yellow squash



#9-zuccinni squash

What variety of tomatoes are these below?



#1-Better Boy



#2-Rutgers



#3-Celebrity



#4-Roma



#5-Super-sweet 100



# Recipe of the Month - Fresh from the Garden

## Tomato Basil Jam

Recipe from "Canning" by Better Homes & Gardens  
Special Interest Publication, 2011

This recipe was presented at the Herbal Forum in Round  
Top, Texas this past March.

### PREPARATION

1. Place the whole tomatoes in boiling water for about 2-3 minutes until the skin ready to peel.
  2. Then remove from boiling water and place the tomatoes in a bowl of iced water to cool.
  3. Remove and discard the skin peel, seeds and core.
  4. Chop the remaining meat of the tomatoes in a food processor.
  5. Measure 3½ c. of tomatoes and place in a 6 or 8 qt. heavy pot.
  6. Bring to boiling, stirring occasionally; reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes, stirring often.
  7. Again, measure 3½ c. tomatoes and return to pot.
  8. Stir in lemon juice, and pectin.
  9. Bring to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly.
  10. Add in chopped basil and sugar mixture at this time.
  11. Bring jam back to full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Boil hard for 1 minutes. Quickly skim off foam and ladle into hot, sterilized jars.
  12. Cap and process in hot water bath for 5 minutes (start timing when water returns to a boil.)
- Makes 4 - 8 oz. jars.

Serve on top of cream cheese and dip with pita chips,  
or use as a breakfast jam.



Photo by Sylvia Maedgen

### INGREDIENTS

- 2½ lbs. ripe tomatoes peeled
- ¼ c. lemon juice
- 1 c. hard packed, snipped fresh basil (chop up with sugar in food processor)
- 3 c. sugar
- One 1.75 oz. pkg. powdered fruit pectin for low-sugar recipes

- Sylvia Maedgen

I used Roma tomatoes and made 3 batches of this recipe, one just as is, the 2nd batch with 2 jalapenos which was a little hot, and the 3rd batch with 1 jalapeno with just a little kick.

# What's Been Happening...

Photos provided by the  
Un-included Club

## New Approved Service Projects

- Janice Smith

The Un-included Club is a nonprofit organization that provides after-school and summer programming for at-risk kids in east Temple. Their mission is "to create a positive learning environment that fosters improved self-confidence and self-esteem". Among other things, they focus on building math and science skills, leadership, and urban agriculture. These kids are highly motivated, enthusiastic, and anxious to learn more about gardening and nature, and we have a great opportunity to help!

They already have in place a successful micro-greens project, where they raise and sell sunflower micro-greens to local restaurants (and enjoy them as afternoon snacks themselves). This project has been featured recently in the Temple Daily Telegram, and they had a showcase at the Mother Earth News Fair this year. That was so successful, they were invited to showcase their project at other Mother Earth fairs around the country.

The program is anxious to expand their urban agriculture program, and have invited the BCMGs to help. Plans include expanding and improving their vegetable garden in a plot of land leased to them through a USDA grant near the Blacklands Research area in Temple. Rotary has provided equipment, fencing, a greenhouse and storage shed, and they have a basic irrigation system in place (see photos)

Volunteers are needed to help teach basic gardening principles, using the Learn, Grow, Eat, Go Jr. Master Gardener curriculum, and to provide garden/nature related educational activities as part of their after school program. The classroom activities would be held at the main club site at 306 East Adams, while hands on gardening experiences would occur at the Blacklands site. Produce will be harvested by the kids and shared with their families, and cooking classes will be included to show them how to use the produce they raise. (insert photo from TDT). They are also interested in raised bed gardening and experimenting with different crops.

In addition to this project, the Un-included Club in partnership with Impact Temple, is planning a multi-use Community Garden in east Temple, adjacent to the club's headquarters. Plans are being developed, which include raised vegetable beds, a meditation garden, herb gardens, wheelchair accessible keyhole gardens, an education center, and outdoor worship space. The gardens will be open to the public, and will specifically benefit the at-risk and low income population in that area. They are specifically interested in providing healthy eating choices for this population, as well as a safe, beautiful environment in this distressed part of Temple. They have received 2 grants, one from Seeds for Change for \$10,000 for fencing, and another from the City of Temple for \$31,000. Specific needs for this project are still being developed, but would include assistance with planning the various spaces and providing education to youth and adults, as well as local community groups.

If you are interested in volunteering for either of these projects, or would like more information, please contact Janice at:

[jmksmith5@gmail.com](mailto:jmksmith5@gmail.com) or (254) 939-3016



# What's Been Happening...

## New Approved Service Projects

### - Kellie Hussman

School Garden Advisory Project for the Waco ISD was approved. Master Gardeners will serve as advisors to teachers in the Waco ISD school district for a school garden curriculum. Serving in this capacity could include answering questions remotely, teaching a class on basic or specialized gardening techniques or compiling relevant information.

If you would be interested in helping with this project, please contact Kellie at:

Kellie@WorldHungerRelief.org

Or (254) 294-7457

### - Mary Ann Everett

Growing Healthy Communities using the Junior Master Gardener Program Learn, Grow, Eat, Go at St. Mary's School in Temple was approved. Using the LGEG Program, I taught this as an elective to 5th grade students, covering the fall semester. It incorporates gardening, exercise, and cooking and eating. This will be taught for one semester in the fall of 2017.

If you would be interested in helping with this project, please contact Mary Ann at:

Everett.maryann4@gmail.com

Or (254) 254-721-0931

### - Rebecca Burrow

Helping Hands Project was approved. Rebecca Burrows presented a project she is working on in Temple to create a community garden that would raise food for Helping Hands. She requested that this be an

approved project so individuals who work on it can receive volunteer hours. Rebecca explained that Helping Hands and students from UMHB would provide the labor and the association would serve primarily in an advisory capacity. If you would be interested in helping with this project, please contact Rebecca at:

burrowpermaculture@gmail.com

Or (254) 319-6031

### - Kathy Love

Staffing of the Master Gardener office one day a week on Wednesdays was approved. Volunteers will answer gardening calls, coordinate home visit requests and answer emails. If you would be interested in helping with this project, please contact Kathy at:

lkathy021@gmail.com

Or (972) 672-0999

Additional information on this project are explained in more detail on the following 4 pages.





# New Service Project

- Kathy Love

## BCMGA OFFICE STAFFING SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

The MG office at the Extension Office is now manned every Wednesday from 9:00 a.m.-noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. I am heading up this project and staff the office Wednesday during these hours to work with members interested in handling citizen calls, emails and walk-ins at the Extension Office.

So far Master Gardeners Jane Van Praag, Amazon Muldrow Roberts, Stacye Parry and Wayne Schirner have joined me to staff the office. Barbara Ishikawa and Sophia Gomez have signed up to work on future dates.

We have handled walk-in questions like:

### WHAT IS THIS AND HOW DO I GET RID OF IT?

Do you recognize this critter right off? Jane, Wayne and I certainly didn't, but using [insectidentification.org](http://insectidentification.org) we were able to advise this Salado citizen that the tree on his back deck was hosting Hardwood Stump Beetles which in the adult stage (above), are actually more beneficial than harmful since one of their favorite foods is ants. However, in the larval stage, they are boring pests so we provided information on how to treat a boring insect problem.



Then there was this one that Stacye and I tackled:

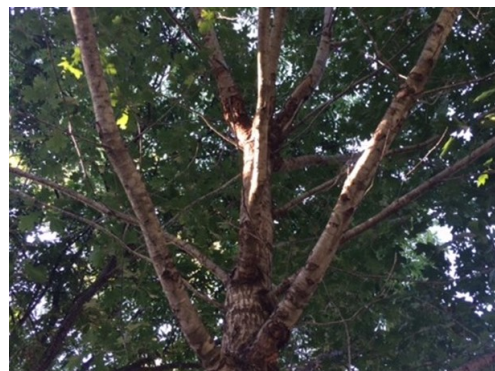
### WHAT IS THIS BUG THAT HAS INVADDED MY CARPET:

This one we couldn't find in the [insectidentification.org](http://insectidentification.org) but after considering various ideas and looking at several websites, we found that this little home invader is a weevil, though we couldn't determine for sure if it was a cotton boll weevil or any of the other numerous members of the weevil family. Vacuuming the carpet and disposing of the bag was the recommendation here.



For those of you who are squeamish around bugs, not all our work deals with these fellows. Sometimes we deal with emailed photos rather than walk-in questions. For instance, the below tree photo was forwarded to us by Scarlot with the question: "... We have two Red Oaks that have this on them. We would like to know how to treat it."

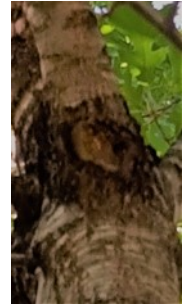
So this is perhaps one of those times that a picture is NOT worth a 1,000 words. I really had no idea what I was seeing so I took advantage of another one of the tools in the office staffing toolbox and texted the photo first to Ann Wagner and then emailed it to Gary Slanga, both far more informed on tree problems than I am likely to ever be! From the photo, Ann thought the tree might be experiencing bacterial wet wood (slime flux or phytophthora root rot). Gary thought it could possibly be the same as he had just diagnosed a tree with that condition that morning.



# New Service Project

So now comes my August Site Visit Lesson. I called the citizens and asked a few questions, e.g. Ann felt those conditions would be most likely if the trees were standing in wet conditions but Gary said that was not entirely necessary and they confirmed there was no drainage problem. When I decided I wasn't getting anywhere with the answers I was getting, I scheduled a site visit at the end of my office staffing Wednesday, a fairly regular event if you are interested in site visits.

Here is one of the photos I took when I got to the site:



Turns out those black sooty looking areas we were seeing in the owner's photos was actually black pruning paint! I never thought to ask the question! Lesson learned! These Shumard Red Oaks had experienced rub damage, possibly from original staking, but most likely from limb rubbing on limb. All of the areas I saw at the site were well healed. I have since had a similar call on Shumard Red Oaks with the same finding. Something to take note of for future calls.

If you are interested in adding to your service hours and more importantly, adding to your Master Gardener knowledge base, please sign up to help. Due to the small size of our office, it will generally be best if only one person signs up to help each Wednesday, and you can sign up to help with either the a.m. shift or the p.m. or both. Below are the calendars for July-August; September-October (partial). The dark highlighted areas are available spots. Contact me at [lkathy021@gmail.com](mailto:lkathy021@gmail.com) or call 972/672-0999 to reserve your spot.

BCMGA OFFICE STAFFING CALENDAR – JULY-AUGUST					
Wednesday July 26			Wednesday August 2		
	NAME	NUMBER		NAME	NUMBER
8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999	8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999
9:00			9:00		
10:00			10:00		
11:00			11:00		
12:00			12:00		
1:00	Barbara Ishikawa	817-716-5604	1:00		
2:00			2:00		
3:00			3:00		
4:00			4:00		




# New Service Project

BCMGA OFFICE STAFFING CALENDAR – JULY-AUGUST					
Wednesday August 9			Wednesday August 16		
	NAME	NUMBER		NAME	NUMBER
8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999	8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999
9:00			9:00		
10:00			10:00		
11:00			11:00		
12:00			12:00		
1:00			1:00		
2:00			2:00		
3:00			3:00		
4:00			4:00		
Wednesday August 23			Wednesday August 30		
	NAME	NUMBER		NAME	NUMBER
8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999	8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999
9:00			9:00		
10:00			10:00		
11:00			11:00		
12:00			12:00		
1:00	Stacye Parry	254-289-2010	1:00		
2:00	↓		2:00		
3:00			3:00		
4:00			4:00		





# New Service Project

	BCMGA OFFICE STAFFING CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER				
	Wednesday September 6			Wednesday September 13	
	NAME	NUMBER		NAME	NUMBER
8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999	8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999
9:00			9:00		
10:00			10:00		
11:00			11:00		
12:00			12:00		
1:00			1:00		
2:00			2:00		
3:00			3:00		
4:00			4:00		
	Wednesday September 20			Wednesday September 27	
	NAME	NUMBER		NAME	NUMBER
8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999	8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999
9:00	Sophia Gomez	254-220-9736	9:00		
10:00			10:00		
11:00			11:00		
12:00			12:00		
1:00			1:00		
2:00			2:00		
3:00			3:00		
4:00			4:00		
	Wednesday October 4			Wednesday October 11	
	NAME	NUMBER		NAME	NUMBER
8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999	8:00	Kathy Love	972/672-0999
9:00			9:00		
10:00			10:00		
11:00			11:00		
12:00			12:00		
1:00			1:00		
2:00			2:00		
3:00			3:00		
4:00			4:00		

# This and That

## Salado Gardens

- Susan Terry

Photo by Susan Terry

This is one of the many butterfly benches that have been placed along Main Street in Salado. Project of the Main Street Committee.



Submitted by  
Charles Newsom





## Ranching

Natural Resources




### What Plant Is Important in May? Common Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

**N**erium oleander, or simply oleander, is a shrub or small tree that was introduced from the temperate Mediterranean area of the Old World. It was widely utilized and is still a component in landscaping projects throughout the southern U.S. and Mexico because of its showy, brightly colored, odorless flowers of many colors.

- Has opposite or whorled, leathery leaves that can reach 12 inches long and 1 1/2 inches wide. They have a prominent midrib with secondary veins that parallel each other, extending to the leaf margins.
- Produces various colored flowers, ranging from white to red, in clusters at the end of the branches.
- Often found on ranches around old homesteads that have long since disappeared from the landscape.

Oleander contains a highly toxic chemical known as a cardiac glycoside and is perhaps the most toxic plant in Texas. It can be lethal in very small doses and causes cardiac failure. The plant is toxic to all animal species.

The leaves are very bitter in growing plants and are usually not consumed by grazing animals. However, dead leaves or clippings can still be a problem because they remain highly toxic even when dried — a single leaf can kill an adult.

Poisonings have been reported from simply handling the plant, inhaling the smoke of burning trimmings, and coming into contact with the milky sap or water used to keep the flowers fresh in vases. The plant and its sap have been used in Africa as a poison to soak dart and arrow tips and used as a weapon in tribal warfare.

Oleander does have one use that may be beneficial to society: There is a species that produces medical alkaloids that are used in cancer treatments.

If oleander is found on farms and ranches, it should be identified and noted to avoid poisoning of livestock and pets. ■

**Editor's note:** Kent Ferguson, retired rangeland management specialist from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is providing us with plant identification photo stories to help ranchers identify those forbs, forages and species growing in the pastures. Additional photos provided by USDA NRCS.

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### Kelp and Molasses Fertilizer

Fertilizer containing molasses, kelp, powdered fish and apple cider vinegar supplies roses with a balanced dose of nutrients that promotes foliage and flower growth. To make the fertilizer, 3 cups of water should be combined with 2 tablespoons of molasses, 1 tablespoon of Epsom salts, 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar, 1 tablespoon of kelp extract and 2 tablespoons of powdered fish. In the summer, 1/2 gallon of the fertilizer should be applied in the evening after roses have been watered. A repeat application in six to eight weeks, near the end of summer, helps encourage blooming until fall or winter.



### Coffee Grounds and White Vinegar

Coffee grounds and white vinegar, when added to soil, give roses the acidic conditions they need to thrive. Coffee grounds also provide roses with small amounts of potassium, nitrogen and magnesium. A handful of dry coffee grounds should be sprinkled on the surface of the soil around the roses. White vinegar adds acid to the soil, but it does not provide many nutrients, so an additional fertilizer is required. To make an acid-boosting solution for roses, 1 tablespoon of white vinegar should be combined with 1 gallon of water. The vinegar solution should replace one regular watering every three months.

## Homemade Rose Food

- submitted by Crystal Fisher

(source—<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/homemade-fertilizers-roses-31073.html>)



# What's Happening in Your Yard

- Gail Christian

Photos by Gail Christian

Last year some Mississippi Kites had nested in one of our oak trees, and they had one baby Kite. They came back to the same nest this year, and this year have two babies. They do not normally nest in this area. They go to South America for the winter. In the spring we had 6 adults in a tree in our back yard. There should be some more nests around the lake somewhere.

We find them interesting to watch. The babies are big enough to get out of the nest and stand on a limb waiting for the parents to come feed them. They will stretch their wings. I think they will be flying in another week or 10 days.

The first picture is of the adults before the eggs hatched. The last two are the babies I took this week.



- Jan George

Photo by Jan George

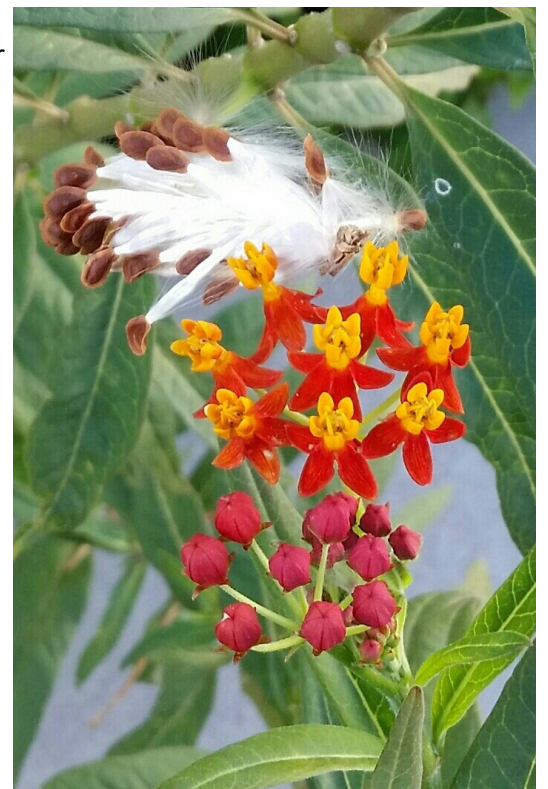
Succulents are thriving in the summer heat!



- Elaine Passman

Photo by Elaine Passman

Tropical Milkweed from flower bud, open flowers, to open seedpod.





# What's Happening in Your Yard

- Sylvia Maedgen

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

Clockwise from left: The light showers in July were a nice relief from the heat and the rainbow was a pretty sight. The sunflower was growing in my compost pile. My cast iron pot is still in full bloom. I had a good crop of beets earlier this month. I have never seen this black and white bug before. Any guess on what it is?



- Shellie Downing

This little creature is enjoying my Passion Vine. The other little creature is enjoying my parsley.





# What's Happening in Your Yard

- Kathy Love

Photos by Kathy Love

## TRY SUN DRYING YOUR TOMATO BOUNTY

Last month I reported on the awesome productivity of my Dwarf Cherry Surprise tomato vine. Production has dropped from 60+ every two days to more like 12 but still blooming & setting fruit. However, my 2 Juliets are still producing at over 30 every other day. I've blanched and frozen some, boiled some into tomato sauce and frozen it, and lately, I've tried my hand at sun drying. If you haven't tried sun drying, now is a good time (works best at temps over 90—no problem these days). Most sites recommend Roma for sun drying, but I've found it works well with Juliets too as they are meaty enough, especially the larger ones. If you haven't tried it before, here's how it works for me:



**STEP 1 & 2:** WASH & DRY YOUR CHOSE TOMATOES (MY DRYING RACK HOLDS ABOUT 70 HALVES).

**STEP 3:** HALF & DESEED; DRYING IS QUICKER WITHOUT THE SEEDS.

**STEP 4:** PLACE HALVES SKIN SIDE DOWN ON A DRYING SHEET THAT ALLOWS AIR CIRCULATION ABOVE & BELOW. I'M USING A FRENCH FRY BAKING SHEET.

**STEP 5:** SET THE DRYING TRAY IN FULL SUN WITH AIR CIRCULATING BELOW (I USED A COUPLE OF BRICKS). SEASON TO TASTE-DRIED BASIL/GARLIC SALT AND HERB MIX WERE MY CHOICES.

**STEP 6:** COVER THE TOMATOES WITH SOMETHING THAT ALLOWS AIR TO CIRCULATE (I USED AN INVERTED COIR HANGING BASKET-NO COIR!) AND CHEESE CLOTH TO PROTECT FROM INSECTS & BIRDS. CHEESE CLOTH SHOULD NOT TOUCH THE TOMATOES.

**STEP 7:** ABOUT 6-8 HOURS LATER OF 90+ TEMPS IN FULL SUN, YOU'LL HAVE A HALF PINT OR SO OF SUN DRIED TOMATOES (THIS WAS TWO DRYINGS OF 70 TOMATO HALVES PER BATCH. TOMATOES SHOULD BE TOTALLY DRY/LEATHERY TO THE TOUCH).

**TIPS:** IF NOT DRY AT NIGHTFALL, BRING THEM IN AND PUT OUT AGAIN NEXT DAY. NIGHT TIME TEMPS WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT DRYING.

I PLAN TO STORE MY FIRST COUPLE OF BATCHES IN THE FREEZER BUT WILL STORE MY NEXT IN OLIVE OIL IN THE FRIDGE. THESE GUYS WON'T LAST INDEFINATELY IN OIL SO PLAN TO USE IN A MONTH OR SO. GREAT IN PASTA DISHES. TRY THIS DRESSING ON YOUR FAVORITE PASTA DISH.

Combine the sun-dried tomatoes, vinegar, olive oil, garlic, capers, salt, and pepper in a food processor until almost smooth. Pour the dressing over the pasta, sprinkle with the Parmesan and basil, and toss well.

5 sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
6 tablespoons good olive oil  
1 garlic clove, diced  
1 teaspoon capers, drained  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan  
1 cup packed basil leaves, julienned

# Words of Inspiration

- Gail Koontz

Photos by Gail Koontz

Lucinda Berry Hill is my Facebook friend. Every day she posts a scripture and a poem. Today's poem seems like a good and encouraging one to share with my Master Gardener friends. Lucinda has given me permission to submit to The Blooming Bell.

## Plant A Garden Of Love

Sow seeds of greatness  
Like pansies of praise.  
Plant virtuous violets  
And weed out the hate.

Plant right-minded roses  
And tulips of trust.  
Plant seeds of unity  
And fertilize with love.

Take hold of the weed roots  
That wrap around peace,  
Preventing good growth  
And sweet harmony.

Plant seeds of faith,  
Acceptance, and grace.  
Flush out the weeds  
Or they'll take over your space.

Plant a love garden  
And weed out the hate.  
Protect the good soil  
With God's Word every day.

Lucinda Berry Hill,  
author of "Coffee with Jesus"  
& "A Second Cup with Jesus"

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Design by Linda Palmer

<https://hearthungerblog.wordpress.com/>



# 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:

August 17                Fall Gardening

September 21        Cooking with Herbs

October 19            Fruit and Citrus Trees

November 16        Composting

Location:        Bell County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office - Conference Room  
1605 N. Main, Belton, TX

Time:              6:30-8:00 pm

Cost:              Our seminars are free of charge but the BCMGA will accept donations of up to \$5.00 per class  
Seminars are limited to 25 participants so register early.

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



## Grounds Workdays

- Johnny Jones and Tom Rennels

Here is the workday schedule for August:

Aug. 2, 2017    8:00 a.m. Workday  
                    10:30 a.m. Burger Wednesday

Aug. 9, 2017    8:00 a.m. Workday

Aug. 16, 2017   8:00 a.m. Workday

Aug. 23, 2017   8:00 a.m. Workday

Aug. 30, 2017   8:00 a.m. Workday

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

## August General Meeting

- Mary Ann Everett

The August general meeting will be on August 9th.  
The presentation will be provided by Gary Slanga and the topic will be on "Stems". Social Time is 8:30 a.m., meeting at 9 a.m. in the learning center building.

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

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

# Announcements

## 2018 Texas Master Gardener Conference



- Ilene Miller

The 2018 Texas Master Gardener Conference will be held in College Station, April 4-6, 2018 at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center. Join us as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Master Gardener Program in the state of Texas and unveil the Earth-Kind® Gardens within The Gardens at Texas A&M University. The Theme is Celebrating 40 Years...Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, and Embracing the Future. The hotel is located at 801 University Drive East, College Station, TX 77840. Phone is 979-693-7500. They are holding a block of rooms for TMGA, so be sure and ask about the conference rate if you call.

The website will be: [www.2018tmgaconference.com](http://www.2018tmgaconference.com). The group code is: TMGA18 at [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com).

★ The Texas Master Gardener Association is already making plans for next year's state conference in College Station in April 2018. They want to feature as many Master Gardeners for an exclusive video to be featured at the conference. Send them your photos with identification to:

[2018tmgaconference@gmail.com](mailto:2018tmgaconference@gmail.com).

Examples include:

- a selfie with you in MG attire
- a photo of your association
- a photo of a project your association is involved with or has completed
- and a photo showing what you do outside of working in the dirt

## Concho Valley Master Gardeners' 6th Annual Fall Landscaping Symposium

Saturday, September 9th

8:30 am - 3:15 pm

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Center, San Angelo

Cost \$30

Deadline to register - September 6th

For info - 325-659-6522 or [txmg.org/conchovalley](http://txmg.org/conchovalley)

For registration - <http://squareup.com/store/cvmg>

Topics and Presenters:

Landscape Water Features - Steve Kainer

Tomatoes & Other Edibles *and* Garden Photography - Bill Adams

Slow Gardening *and* Yard Art - Felder Rushing

# Announcements

## Upcoming Specialist Training

- Sept 18-21 Master Volunteer Entomology Specialist Training  
Dallas  
Deadline to register, July?  
Cost \$200
- Oct 17-19 Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training  
San Antonio  
Deadline to register, Oct 5  
Cost \$200
- Oct 30-31 Master Gardener Plant Propagation Specialist Training  
Kerrville  
Deadline to register, Oct 1  
Cost \$225

## Native Landscape Certification Program given by the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT)

There are three classes currently in the program, given throughout the state at different times. The all-day classes includes indoor lecture and a 2-hour plant walk, with time for lunch. If you take all three classes, you will have learned 135 native plants and 15 invasive exotic plants to avoid. Please go to <http://npsot.org/wp/nlcp/about/> to learn about the program.

Registration cost is reduced for NPSOT members.

Go to <http://npsot.org/wp/nlcp/> for course schedules, descriptions, and to register. They schedule classes in spring and fall sections.

The Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP) is a four level certification program developed by the Native Plant Society of Texas that teaches the value of including and preserving native plants in landscapes.

Level 1: Introduction to Native Landscapes

Level 1 registration fee is \$37

Level 2: Design and Development with Native Plants

Level 3: Installation and Maintenance of Native Landscapes

Level 2 and Level 3 registration fee is \$37 for Native Plant Society members or \$52 for non-members.

## Central Texas College Education Classes taught by Rebecca Burrow

### Ecological Landscaping: Form, Food, and Function,

Monday, Sep 11 - Dec 11 (12 weeks with no class on Oct 16 and Nov 20), 12 hours, \$99

### Creating a Home Orchard or Food Forest (offered twice)

Saturday, Sep 16, 10-12pm, 2 hours, \$19

Saturday, Oct 21, 12:20-2:30pm, 2 hours, \$19

### Soil, Compost, and Worms (offered twice)

Saturday, Oct 21, 10-12pm, 2 hours, \$19

Saturday, Nov 18, 12:30-2:30pm, 2 hours, \$19

### Water Conservation Techniques (offered twice)

Saturday, Sep 16, 12:30-2:30pm, 2 hours, \$19

Saturday, Nov 18, 10-12pm, 2 hours, \$19

Email [smylcraine@ctcd.edu](mailto:smylcraine@ctcd.edu) for more information or go to:

<http://www.ctcd.edu/students/continuing-education/> to download the catalog and learn how to pay and register.

Courses are held at the CTC campus off of Hwy 190 and Clear Creek.





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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 Sylvia Maedgen*



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