

The Blooming Bell

September 2017

Photo by Randy Brown



Photo by Sylvia Maedgen
Solar eclipse on Monday, August 21, 2017



Bell County

Master Gardener

Association

Photo by Terrie Hahn

Terrie and a group of women traveled to Pennsylvania and visited the Longwood Gardens.



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Work Day - 8 am* Burger Wednesday 10:30	7	8	9 Rain Barrel Workshop 8:30 am
10	11	12	13 Work Day 8 am* Social - 8:30 am General Meeting - 9 am	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Work Day 8 am*	21 Gardening in Bell County – Fall Garden - 6:30 pm	22	23
24	25	26	27 Work Day 8 am* BOD Meeting - 9 am	28	29	30 Fall Plant Sale 8 am

Upcoming events:

- ◆ Texas Fruit Conf., Oct. 2-3
- 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

Boy, time sure flies when you're having fun, and every day as a Master Gardener is fun.

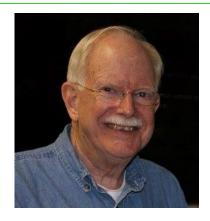
I'd like to give a huge BCMGA thanks to Bill Walker, Class of 2017. Bill is in the process of replacing the drip tape irrigation at his farm, and arranged for his supplier, Irrigation Mart in Louisiana, to donate a drip tape irrigation kit for use at the Killeen Municipal Court Garden. The kit includes 2000 feet of drip tape and the necessary connectors to layout the system. Bill is now working with the KMCG committee to get the system installed and set up. When you see Bill, give him a big BCMGA hug.

The Fall Plant sale preparation is in full swing, getting ready for sale day on September 30th. The education portion of the September membership meeting will focus on some of the trees and berry plants that will be offered at the plant sale, so be sure to come to learn more about those plants. Kathy Love has emailed the list of plants that can be preordered by members. Select what you want, and send it back to her by email, or print it out and give it to her at the September meeting. There remain many opportunities for volunteer service hours connected with the plant sale, so just ask how you can help.

Carla Harmon and a team of Mike Butts, Johnny Jones, Glenn Melton, and Tom Rennels have been diligently working on the pergola that is being erected over the granite table and benches. They hope to be finished by the September meeting, so come and check out this work of art. Once it is finished, we will schedule a ceremony to dedicate it to Ursula Nanna.

The committee organizing the 20th Anniversary Party has been hard at work. An anniversary T-shirt has been designed and will be available for pick-up at the September meeting. We would like to do a group photo that day to send to the TMGA. They have asked for group photos to use in their slide show for the TMGA State conference celebrating their 40th anniversary. Come and join us for that photo, even if you aren't getting one of the new T-shirts.

Gail Christian, Kathy Love, and Gary Slanga and I traveled to the TMGA BOD meeting, where we joined Pat Allen, to represent the BCMGA. Registration for the State Conference April 4-6 is not yet open, but reservations for the Conference Hotel can be made now. This conference will cover a full three days. Half of the reserved rooms at the Hilton are already booked, so if you want to stay there, I encourage you to book your reservations now.



The next few months are extremely busy with several different specialist-training opportunities. I believe that we have at least one member signed up for each one. At the TMGA BOD meeting, they announced that they will try to start posting the available specialist-training offerings for an entire year to help us better prepare.

In case I didn't mention it before, the September membership meeting is on the 13th. I've given at least three reasons to come, so hope to see you all there.

That's it for this month. Happy Gardening.





1 More Thing...

Strawberry Plants Can Be Grown in Central Texas

- Wayne Schirner

Have you ever thought, "Can I grow strawberries in Central Texas?" Every March, at numerous stores in the area, I see strawberry plants available for sale. Several years ago, I gave in to that temptation and it was a horrible failure. I don't think I got even two berries from the 16 plants I placed in a raised bed. That was before I became a Master Gardener, and learned how critical it is to plant the right varieties at the right time for any food crop. The plants available in the spring are all "everbearing" varieties, and those won't survive our Texas summer heat. If you want to grow strawberries here, you need to plant "spring-bearing" varieties in late September or early October, protect them from any freezes in the winter, and then harvest in the spring. The recommendation is to then pull those plants, and replant the following fall. The varieties that are known to do well in our area are Chandler, Sequoia, and Douglas. The conventional recommendation is to plant strawberries in "deep fertile" soil and space them 12 inches apart. As many of you know, I follow the Square Foot Gardening method. The late Mel Bartholomew said you only need 6 inches of Mel's Mix and you can plant them 6 inches apart. That difference was another experiment waiting to happen.

Last September, I built two 4'X4' beds. One bed was 6' deep and the other was 12' deep. I filled both with Mel's Mix (1/3 peat moss, 1/3 coarse vermiculite, and 1/3 blended compost), placed a grid to divide each bed into 16 squares, and set up a drip irrigation system. I chose to plant Sequoia and Chandler varieties, since each was reported to give large, great tasting berries. Each bed had eight squares of Sequoia and eight squares of Chandler. I further divided the beds so that each bed had half the squares with one plant per square and the other half had 4 plants per square. My goal was to not only compare the difference between 6" and 12" of Mel's Mix, but to also compare how well the two varieties grew, and if closer 6" spacing produced as well per plant as 12" spacing.

I learned several things. (1) You CAN grow great tasting strawberries in Central Texas if you plant the right varieties at the right time. I covered them with frost cloth during the two periods of freezing weather

we had in December and January, and I didn't lose any plants. (2) In my opinion, the Chandler variety produced berries that were firmer and stored better than the Sequoia variety. The Sequoia variety had to be eaten the same day they were picked or I ended up with soft, mushy berries the next day. (3) The output from the 6" deep bed was equal to the output from the 12" deep bed. (4) The output per plant was just as much when planted 6" apart as when planted 12" apart. (5) And finally, the part of my study that is still in progress: I didn't pull my plants in June after they were done producing. Those plants are continuing to thrive and haven't yet been affected by the 100degree days we have had this month. My drip irrigation system continues to keep them watered. I won't know until next spring if I get as good a crop as I did this spring, but I will be anxiously waiting to see.

Let me know if you have any questions about growing strawberries, and I will be happy to share.





Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Lace Bugs

Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

It's hot. It's dry. It's time to look for spider mites! You'll need to head into the garden for this task as these pests are small and often found on the underside of leaves. Feeding can cause leaves to discolor, causing a speckled appearance. With severe infestations, leaves discolor to a silver or bronze color which may result in the leaves dropping from the plant. While mites feed on the underside of leaves, damage is more apparent on the tops.

Spider mites are arachnids, closely related to spiders and ticks, and are able to produce silk. They often cover leaves with webbing, especially in large populations. Webbing helps protect the mites and their eggs from natural enemies and harsh environmental conditions, and may sometimes protect them from pesticides.

There are many predatory arthropods that feed on spider mites. Some of these include predatory mites, spider mite destroyers (a type of ladybug), minute pirate bugs, big-eyed bugs, and predatory thrips. Proper watering of plants may help to reduce spider mite outbreaks as it can reduce stress brought on by drought. Using strong jets of water to hose plants can also help to dislodge spider mites. Miticides or acaricides can be used to manage spider mite outbreaks. Look for active ingredients such as horticultural oils (watch temperature when you use oils), insecticidal soaps, abamectin, bifenthrin, dimethoate or acephate.



For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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Spider mites lay their eggs along the leaf vein during the growing season. Eggs are round and large in size when compared to adult mites. Some species of spider mites peak during warmer months of the year while others become more active in the cooler months of the year. The mites are able to develop more quickly when temperatures are warmer, with some spider mites going from egg to adult in less than 1 week. Spider mites thrive in dry conditions while their natural enemies require more humid conditions. Dry conditions allow spider mite populations to grow with little predation or parasitism that would help to keep the population at an acceptable level.





- Gail Koontz

Tu(r)f Love Principle #2 Soil testing is a homeowner's best friend. Soil test every three years.

The purpose of a soil test is to supply information that will help a homeowner to wisely choose and apply soil amendments and sources of nutrients. Without a Soil Analysis Report, you really do not know what kind of fertilizer to shop for. Maybe you do not need to fertilize. Be an informed consumer.

A basic \$10 soil test conducted by the TAMU AgriLife Extension Service Soil, Water and Forage Testing Laboratory will provide information on soil pH, salt content, and available nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, and sulfur. Upon request, with additional fees, it will include information about the micronutrients copper, iron, manganese, and zinc.

The results of the soil test are mailed to the homeowner with recommendations as to which nutrients and how much of each should be applied to healthy plants in the landscape.

Soil sample bags and information sheets are available from the County Extension Office. Soil test information is available on the web at soiltesting.tamu.edu.

The accuracy of a soil test is a reflection of the quality of the sample taken. Be sure the sample is representative of the area to be treated.

- Use a clean shovel or other sampling tool to sample the soil from 10 random areas in the lawn (front and back) to a depth of 6 inches
- 2. Place the samples in a clean plastic container and mix thoroughly.

 Place about a pint of the mixed soil in the sample bag, fill out the form, and send it to the indicated address. If you cannot obtain a soil sample bag, use a Ziploc sandwich bag and double bag the sample.



Never dry the soil samples in an oven or microwave because this changes the potassium chemistry in the soil. If the soil is wet, place it on clean white paper, turn it morning and evening until it is air dry, then ship it to the lab that day or the next.

Results are normally mailed to homeowner within 2 to 3 days after the sample is received. I received my results in April. My pH is 7.9 (mod. alkaline). What to do? Live with it. Conductivity (amount of salts in my soil) and Nitrogen are low. Phosphorus, Potassium, Calcium and Magnesium are high. So fertilizer recommendations for me are 0.6 lbs. N/1000sqft.

At the bottom of my soil analysis report is information about a new online fertilizer calculator on the laboratory's website to help people like me who don't do math well: soiltesting.tamu.edu/webpages/calculator/html.



What's Been Happening...

Solar Eclipse of 2017

- Sylvia Maedgen

What an exciting day! The US had not seen a solar eclipse in 99 years. It started about 11:40 am CT in Central Texas and peaked at approximately at 1:10 pm CT. Here are a few of the pictures that I took.

Mark your calendar for April 8, 2024. The US will experience another solar eclipse and this will travel right up I-35.







April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse





What's Been Happening...

Building the Pergola

- Johnny Jones

The work on the pergola has started with projected completion before the September General Meeting. Mary Lou Edmondson is stirring the concrete that was used for setting the cedar posts in the ground. The pergola is being built in memory of Ursula Nanna.





Photos by Sylvia Maedgen left, and Johnny Jones above.

Fall Gardening Workshop Photo by Randy Brown

Presenters were Jerry Lewis and Bob Gordon.



General Meeting -**Education Hour**

Gary Slanga's presentation was on "Stems".



Photo by Randy Brown

I've Always Wanted To Go There... Ireland

- Susan Terry

Photos by Susan Terry

I recently traveled to Ireland and we visited the Glenveagh Castle Gardens in County Donegal.















I've Always Wanted To Go There... Pennsylvania Treasure

- Terrie Hahn

Photos by Terrie Hahn

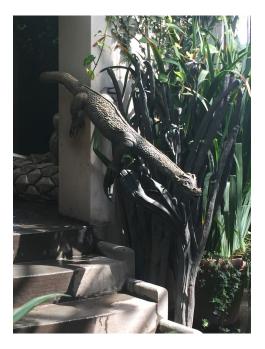
Longwood Gardens right outside of Philadelphia is one of the garden treasures of the U.S. The beginning of August, I traveled there with BCMG, Diane Calderwood, former BCMG, Susan Firth and Bell County Master Naturalist, Linda Mahaffey. We spent the day wandering through the amazing Flower Garden Walk (our favorite) where both sides of the long walkway were lined with at least 8 feet of gorgeous flowers blooming. As you walked, the colors gradually changed from purple to red to orange to yellow to white. We talked with a volunteer who spent her morning deadheading a small area. She said there were over 800 volunteers and 400 full and part time staff. They were going to be removing most of the flowers in a month's time and replacing them with fall season flowers.

The property is 1,077 acres founded by Pierre du Pont. The 4 acre conservatory is filled with separate rooms of tropicals, succulents, trees, perennials, water lily ponds, vegetables, fruit trees, a concert hall with a grand piano and a magnificent organ and a children's room which was my second favorite spot. The children's room has 17 fountains/waterfalls for kids to walk through and play and get soaked. It had fun things like a huge lizard hand railing at some stairs and a scavenger hunt.

The fountains outside were pretty amazing with shows that have music and lights timed to go along with the water. And the Italian Garden fountains were quite a sight. If you're ever in Pennsylvania, you should make sure to make this one of your stops.



4 acre Conservatory



Kid's area hand railing and pelican fountain





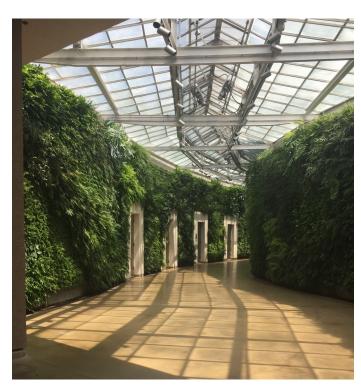
Wall of white hydrangeas at Longwood Gardens, Philadelphia Pennsylvania

l've Always Wanted To Go There... Pennsylvania Treasure

- Terrie Hahn

Photos by Terrie Hahn





Whether you have to use the restroom or not, you must see where they are located within the "Green Wall!"









MG Diane Calderwood enjoying the Longwood Gardens.

This and That

Salado Gardens

- Susan Terry

Photo by Susan Terry

Another butterfly bench and renovated Bike Fence at the Green Bridge Pocket Garden in Salado. Project of the Main Street Committee. What a great photo op!



August General Meeting

Photos by Randy Brown









What's Happening in Your Yard

Killeen Municipal City Court Gardens

- Randy Brown

Photos by Randy Brown



















In Memoriam Judy Herrmann

-July 31, 1943 - July 30, 2017

- Gail Christian



Judy Elaine Shipp Herrmann of Harker Heights passed away Sunday, July 30th, 2017 in Arlington, Texas at the age of 73 after a lengthy illness surrounded by family.

Graveside services were held at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Nolanville on Sunday, August 6th at 10AM. A Celebration of Life was held Sunday August 6th from 2-4 PM at Shilo Inn Suites Hotel in Killeen.

Judy was born July 31, 1943 in Hanford, CA, to Harold Shipp and Constance Cheney Shipp. As the daughter of an Air Force officer, she graduated high school in Great Falls, MT.

She went on to complete her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor while juggling being a military spouse with three young children. She then taught chemistry for 30 years at Killeen High School in Killeen, TX, where she was loved by her students and received numerous awards. She also taught science methods to future teachers for more than a decade while teaching and also obtaining a PhD from Texas A&M University. After retiring from teaching at Killeen ISD in 2004, Judy taught nursing chemistry at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor and fulfilled her dream of becoming a master gardener in 2006. She was BCMGA treasurer for several years and also taught the propagation classes.

Judy was a loving wife and mother, a passionate educator, an avid master gardener, and a great cook and baker, who never let the cookie jar or bread drawer run empty of homemade goodies. Many a high school friend dropped by for her cookies.

She was preceded in death by her parents and a grandson. Judy leaves behind her husband of 53 years, William George Herrmann II, her three children, Rick Herrmann and wife Suzanne Herrmann of Mansfield, Texas, Katrina Herrmann Emoto and husband Todd Emoto of Spanaway, Washington, Theresa (Herrmann) Stroumpos and husband George Stroumpos of Friendswood, Texas and eight granddaughters.



Announcements

Fall Plant Swap - October 11, 2017

- Jane Van Praag

Gentle reminder to Master Gardeners that our Fall Plant Swap takes place before and after our general meeting on Wednesday, October 11th, which is only six weeks away! Whatever you have spare that you want to share, whether extra seed or already-growing plants, identify what it is and who is the donor...this way, if whoever receives what you are giving has questions s/he knows whom to ask! The simplest way is to use a Sharpie to mark on a strip of masking tape, affixed to the container...and in the case of seedlings, mark the pot with an R to indicate if the roots are ready for transplanting. Those extra 4-inch and larger pots your previous nursery purchases came in are ideal for this purpose!

Committee members Carol Morisset, Jan Upchurch, Rose Harris, Sylvia Maedgen and yours truly will have extra Sharpies and masking tape, etc. in our MG apron pockets to provide last-minute assistance while helping you in placing your items in the proper category (annuals, grasses, perennials, shade lovers, shrubs, succulents, trees, vegetables, vines).



These swaps are such a swell time for visiting and learning, not to mention expanding your garden variety. Bring all you want, take all you want! Trust me--and all previous participants--you'll be glad you did!



Photos by Terrie Hahn

There are the orange Esperanza that I got at the plant swap last fall.

Gardening in Bell County

- Carol Morisset and Jan Upchurch

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

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 carol.j.morisset@gmail.com

Announcements



- Jan George

Even though it may seem early, our Christmas Party committee has been hard at work planning the party. It will be held on December 1, 2017, at 6:00 pm in the upstairs room at the Expo Center. We will be having a traditional Christmas dinner consisting of either ham or turkey with all the trimmings for \$15.00 per person. Joan Bumgarner, Charlotte Jones, and I will be taking reservations and payment for the party starting at our September meeting. There will also be sigh up sheets for salads and desserts. After our November meeting, the cost of the meal will be \$25.00.

September General Meeting

- Mary Ann Everett

The September general meeting will be on the 13th. There will be two presentations with the first provided by Gary Slanga and the topic will be on "Raising Berries" and by Bill Walker on the topic 'Orchards". Both topics will be beneficial, especially before our plant sale. Social Time is 8:30 a.m., meeting at 9 a.m. in the learning center

Grounds Workdays

- Johnny Jones and Tom Rennels

Here is the workday schedule for September:

Sept. 6, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

10:30 a.m. Burger Wednesday

Sept. 13, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

Sept. 20, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

Sept. 27, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

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

BCMGA 20th Anniversary Party

- Jan George

Excitement is Mounting! Committees are well in to planning decorations and refreshments for a spectacular event! Our 20th Anniversary Party will be held at the education building on October 26, 2017, from 2:00 pm-4:00pm. We will be burying a time capsule so if you have any pictures or articles to go in it, please get them to me. We will have a group picture taken after our September monthly meeting. Kathy Love is having T-shirts made for us with our 20th Anniversary logo on them. They will cost \$15. We will have our group picture taken in them. The refreshment committee will have sign up sheets at the meeting asking for help in providing specific refreshments. We also need help in pulling weeds and making our grounds beautiful. The pergola honoring Ursula Nanna and water fountain honoring Judy Herrmann should be completed by party time. Thanks in advance for helping make our 20th Anniversary a very special occasion.

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. The group code is: TMGA18 at 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.

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

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

Advanced Learning

Upcoming Specialist Training

Sept 18-21 Master Volunteer Entomology

Specialist Training

Dallas

Deadline to register, July?

Cost \$200

Sept 25-27 Landscape Design School

Series XXV, Course III

College Station

Deadline to register, Sept 1

Cost \$135

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

Upcoming Conferences

Oct - 2-3 Texas Fruit Conference

New Braunfels

Deadline to register, Sept. 10

Cost \$65

Upcoming Workshops

Sept 9 Rain Barrel/Rainwater Harvesting

Workshop

Belton

Deadline to register, Sept. 1

Cost \$50

Class size is limited to first 25

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

<u>Creating a Home Orchard or Food Forest</u> (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 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



