

The Blooming Bell

November 2017







Bell County Master Gardeners celebrated their 20th Anniversary with a party on Thursday afternoon, October 26th. The party culminated with the burying of the time capsule.

Photos by Randy Brown



Bell County
Master Gardener
Association

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Work Day - 8 am* Burger Wed. 10:30 am	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Work Day - 8 am* Social - 9:30 am General Meeting - 10 am	9	10	Veterens Day
12	13	14	15 Work Day 8 am*	16 Gardening in Bell County – Bokashi Composting	17	18
19	20	21	22 Work Day 8 am*	23 Thanksgiving Day	24	25
26	27	28	29 Work Day 8 am* BOD Meeting - 9 am	30		

Upcoming events:

- Christmas Party, Expo, Dec. 1, Belton
- New MG Intern Orientation Class, Jan. 3
- 2018 TMGA Annual Conference, Apr. 4-6, College Station

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

Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

Photo by Daisy Klassy

The President's Corner

- Wayne Schirner

The 20th Anniversary Celebration was FANTASTIC! Look later in this issues for photos, in case you couldn't attend. The committee that worked for months on this event went all out and it showed. We buried a time capsule and will place a marker where it is buried so that at some point in the future BCMGA members can see what we did "way back when." Thank you and kudos for everyone who worked to make this a tremendous success.

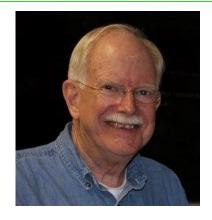
The Bell County Water Symposium will be held on November 15th from 8:00-4:00 at the Texas A&M – Central Texas campus. The BCMGA will be well represented with 13 members already signing up to attend. We will have a booth to distribute information and will also be offering plants for door prizes. Thanks to all who have agreed to help man the booth.

Remember early this year when the Board decided to reduce the service hour's requirement from the previous 50 hours to 12 hours, matching the requirement of the TMGA? There were concerns raised about how that would affect the total hours of volunteer service by members of the BCMGA. With two months to go, we have already exceeded the hours reported for all of last year, and over 40 members have recorded over 100 hours of volunteer service. I'd like to give a huge thank you to all of the members who continue to loyally support our mission. There will be lots of service hour awards handed out at this year's Christmas Party-meeting on December 1st. Don't forget to continue to report your hours for education and service. These hours get reported to the TMGA, and we'd like to see the total keep climbing.

Make sure you come to the general membership meeting on 8 November and vote for the BoD Officer and Director positions that are up for election this year. The installation for these elected officials will be held at the December 1 Christmas Party-meeting.

Have I mentioned that we are having our Annual Christmas Party-meeting on 1 December at the Bell County Expo Center? The deadline for signing up with the \$15 per person payment is the November 8th general membership meeting. After that, it will cost \$25 per person to sign up. We have already received over 110 reservations. I'd like to see us fill the room to maximum capacity.





The monthly Board of Directors meeting for November and December will be a combined meeting again this year, and held on November 29th. The BoD meeting is usually held on the 4th Wednesday of every month, but this year that is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Remember that if you have anything that you would like to bring up for consideration of the Board, send an email to Stayce Parry so she can put it on the agenda under new business.

We have 11 people signed up for the new class starting in January. We expect to have a full class of 25 trainees, and are well on the way to that goal. All 20 members of the class of 2017 have become Certified Master Gardeners. Congratulations to them and the class mentors who helped them along the way. Last year was the first time that we had individual mentors for each trainee, and I think that was a great addition to the program.

As we pause this Thanksgiving Day to celebrate our blessings, I want all of you to know that becoming a member of the BCMGA is one of my personal blessings. I appreciate the fellowship we have together and the service that we all provide to our community. Thank you to everyone for all that you do, every day.



1 More Thing...

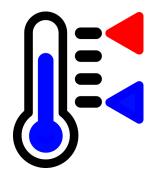
Things to do, now that cold weather is upon us:

- Wayne Schirner

In case you hadn't noticed, this past week reminded us that winter is on it's way. Temperatures at my house only got down to 34 F, but that was enough to let me know I needed to do some garden chores before I would have to do them in a coat with gloves. If you aren't planning to grow anything in your garden over the next couple of months, now is a great time to add compost to your garden so that it is ready for planting for the spring garden. Remember that for us, spring gardening starts in January. Of course, if you follow the Square Foot Garden method, you are continuously adding compost to your soil after every harvest. Remove any debris remaining in your garden. If it is free of diseases or pests, put it in your compost pile, along with all the free leaves your neighbors will have bagged up for you and left at their curb.

Once you are finished using any gasoline-powered equipment for the year, drain the gasoline and run the machine until it quits. This will reduce the build-up of sticky substances in the carburetor and possibly keep you from an expensive service bill next spring when it won't start. Many newer machines have shut-off valves in the fuel line, so all you have to do is turn the valve off and run the machine until it quits. If you are leaving gasoline in the tank, make sure you have treated it with a fuel stabilizer.

Be ready to move any frost sensitive plants indoors as soon as the temperatures are predicted to fall below 32 F. In my case, I have several citrus plants in containers that I move into my woodshop. That means I had to clean out my woodshop to make room for them when the time comes. The last thing I wanted to do was to be doing that some night at 11:00 when a sudden, unexpected cold front arrived. For any frost sensitive plants in your garden, be prepared on a moments notice to cover them with some protection. You don't need to purchase frost cloth, but you should accumulate now whatever you are going to use. I've already placed hoops of ½" pvc over my strawberry beds so I can cover them quickly when the need arises.



Be prepared to harvest any green tomatoes and other cold sensitive crops the night before the first frost. Even though our average first frost date is during the last week of November, that is just an average and that first frost can come at any time.

I guess I could summarize the above by simply stating the Boy Scout motto I learned 60 years ago: "Be Prepared."





Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Widow Spiders

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

There are four species of widow spiders found in Texas, the best known being the black widow. Coloration can vary dramatically, but black widows are typically jet black with two reddish-orange triangles on the underside of the abdomen, forming an hourglass shape. The triangles sometimes do not touch each other creating a broken hourglass shape. Males and juveniles are smaller and often show more color, with bright markings on their sides or back.



Females lay eggs in an oval sac which can hold from 25 to over 900 eggs. Depending on temperature and time of year, eggs usually hatch after about 20 days. Spiderlings stay near the egg sac for several days where they consume their brothers and sisters. Survivors throw a thread of silk to the wind and are carried off in a process called "ballooning". They eventually locate a sheltered spot where they build a loosely woven web and remain for the rest of their lives. As time progresses, widows build larger webs to capture larger prey. Males eventually leave their webs to find females for mating. In a natural setting, most females do not eat males after mating.



Widow spiders do not like being in the open. They can often be found outside in protected areas such as rainspouts, shrubbery, firewood piles or unused BBQ pits. It is also possible to find them in garages, cellars, attics, furniture, or electric or water meter boxes. Widows are shy creatures and often people are bitten when they accidentally disturb a web.

The bite of a black widow sometimes is not noticed, but when it is, it often feels like a pin prick. The bite location will have two red marks surrounded by redness and swelling. The bite reaction is systemic and intense pain usually occurs within 1-3 hours and continues for up to 48 hours. Other symptoms include tremors, nausea, vomiting, leg cramps, abdominal pain, profuse perspiration and rise in blood pressure. It is also possible for breathing difficulties and unconsciousness to occur. If bitten by a black widow, immediately seek medical attention.

When working around the house or in the yard, it is best to wear leather gloves to avoid being bitten by venomous arthropods.

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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Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy -Nature Masks

- Gail Koontz

Photos by Gail Koontz

On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings of the first week of October, my team of Marjorie Gillmeister, Judy Hoelscher, Jo Carlsen, Suzanne Boyer, Sandi Lenehan, Karen Colwick and Joan Bumgarner joined me at Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy to help nine different classes make nature masks. We began each session with the reading of The Mixed Up Chameleon and teaching a new word: camouflage. Each of the children brought in their bag of nature items collected at Lions Park. My team also brought in nature items from their yards, as the children tended to gather rather large items (too big to glue on their nature masks). So each went to work on their nature mask as we continued to talk about camouflage. We saw a great deal of creativity in these four year olds. We ended each session with activity songs. Thanks, team, for helping make this activity fun and informative for the kids. I truly believed each of you was blessed by being a part of this activity. We saw many happy faces and some sad faces. We received and gave lots of hugs. Remember, if any more of you want to come and be a part of this world of four year olds, you must complete a Temple ISD Volunteer Application and DPS Computerized Criminal History (CCH) Verification Form and provide a copy of your driver's license. Please contact me for more information (gkoontz@hot.rr.com or 254.718.8313).





















Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy -Sowing Seeds & Planting Herbs

- Gail Koontz

Photos by Connie Rivera and Sylvia Guajardo

On Wednesday morning of the first week of October, Marjorie Gillmeister and Connie Rivera joined the Nature Explore Teacher Sylvia Guajardo and helped the children sow seeds and plant herbs in their raised beds. Master Gardeners provided the seeds and herb plants. Dennette Gardner, Family Engagement Coordinator, shared with us during our planning sessions that Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy strongly believes in the need to get children outside, dirty and sweaty in nature. So in this, their year of introduction to the public school system before they go to kindergarten, this school has chosen the Nature Explore outdoor classroom concept, which began a year ago. Marjorie and I will be meeting with Dennette again next week to plan our next activity and are anxious to see how the plants are doing. We received one picture from Sylvia of the seeds sprouting.















Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy -Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom

- Gail Koontz

Photos by Gail Koontz and Sylvia Guajardo

When I first saw and learned about the Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom at Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy with its emphasis on nature and natural products, I thought about my friend J.R. Shumate who handmade thousands of little wooden cars. On mission trips around the world, he took these wooden cars to the children. Until his death, he always had wooden cars in his car and gave them to children all over Temple and Bell County. The remaining cars are now in the possession of his son Joel Shumate. He and a team are in Tanzania now; I'm sure they have a supply of cars for the children where they are ministering. When I told Joel about our involvement at MDECA, he decided those four year olds needed some cars. In September, I had the privilege of delivering them and watching the first class play with them. I am pictured with Dennette Gardner, Family Engagement Coordinator, Sylvia Guajardo, Nature Explore Teacher, and some of the children who first got to play with the wooden cars. "Thank you, Mr. Joel. We love the cars!"

Yes, as you can see, Master Gardeners who adopted this school this year are highly involved already in many ways. Dennette has this message for Master Gardeners: "We are all about growing wonderment, curiosity and vocabulary. The more adults who come and just talk to the children, the better."

This is posted in front lobby as you enter MDECA: You are now entering the world of four year olds. If our chairs are too small for you, remember they fit us just fine. If you must walk around our games and toys, remember it is through this kind of interaction that we learn. If we are too noisy, it is because we are learning to live with each other. If we seem to be talking too much, remember that is the way we learn our language. If we come up and talk to you, don't be surprised as we are open, friendly and curious, and we

want to know you as our friend. Enjoy our world and when you leave, we hope you carry with you some of our enthusiasm for living and learning.

Those of us who have entered the world of four year olds have been blessed. I hope more of you will join us for coming activities. Feel free to call, text or email me for more information. (gkoontz@hot.rr.com) (254.718.8313)





Meredith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy -Nature Walk

- Gail Koontz

Photos by Marjorie Gillmeister

During the last week of September, Marjorie Gillmeister, Janice Smith and I enjoyed walking, talking and playing with six different groups of four year olds from Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy, along with teachers and parents. We attempted to help the children use their senses to touch, smell, see and hear the world of nature. As some of them picked up pecans, we talked about the sense of taste and how good that pecan will taste when it is ready to crack open. Each of the children had a bag to collect items of nature, which we used the following week in making nature masks. And we ended each session with some play time.



























October General Meeting

- Sylvia Maedgen

Photos by Randy Brown, Claudette Hawkins, and Daisy Klassy

After the October general meeting, we hit the road and toured 4 member's gardens: Wayne Schirner in Belton, Bill Walker in Holland, Joyce Richardson in Salado, and Mary Ann Everett in Temple. Thank you for sharing your gardens. They were truly inspiring.























Linda Farmer completed her hours and received her certification and Master Gardener name tag. The 2017 Master Gardener class members are all certified.





BCMGA 20th Anniversary Party

Photos by Daisy Klassy, Randy Brown, Cheryl Hassmann, and Sylvia Maedgen





BCMGA 20th Anniversary Party - cont'd

Photos by Daisy Klassy, Randy Brown, Cheryl Hassmann, and























BCMGA 20th Anniversary Party - cont'd

Photos by Daisy Klassy, Randy Brown, Cheryl Hassmann, and Sylvia Maedgen























BCMGA 20th Anniversary Party - cont'd

Photos by Daisy Klassy, Randy Brown, Cheryl Hassmann, and Sylvia Maedgen



























This and That

Salado Museum & Gardens and Serena Fest

- Susan Terry

Photos by Susan Terry







Thank You on Behalf of Food For Friends

- Jane L. Van Praag



It was such heartening news to learn that BCMGA's holiday party committee selected Food For Friends as one of the three charities for member donations.

Food For Friends is a totally voluntary (no administrative overhead) 501 (3)c charity which prepares and delivers delicious/nutritious home-cooked meals (in portions generous enough for more than two servings each) every Friday to persons needing same in the Bartlett area (Holland to the north, Davilla to the east, Granger to the south, Walburg/Weir/Jarrell to the west). Supplemental food is delivered throughout the week to families with children and those who cannot cook themselves.

The effort began in late 2007 when my good friend/near neighbor Joyce White and her good friend Nellie Saage (sadly, since deceased) learned of a few Bartlett residents whose Social Security or SSI checks were not stretching through each month and were thus, toward each month's end, quietly going hungry. As the economy continues to decline in our rural region, this food assistance requirement has grown from a count you could take with fingers of one hand to presently closing in on 200. (I used to prepare desserts by myself every week until we surpassed 75; nowadays we must rely upon several bakers.)

Many recipients are the frail elderly; some are amputees or otherwise house-bound; some are lonely veterans suffering from PTSD; many are families with young children.

To respect and preserve the dignity and privacy of those whom we serve, outreach for this program is by word of mouth, In that vein Food For Friends does not hold formal fund-raisers but relies on word of mouth for voluntary donations and active help. To keep costs down, Joyce pays for the postage herself when sending notes of thanks and tax-deduction statements at each year's end.

You can be sure your contribution to FFF puts money where the mouths are!

What's Happening in Your Yard

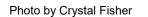


Bob Gordon's pumpkin bounty.

Photo by Bob Gordon



Monarch visitors in Crystal Fisher's yard.





Monarchs are fluttering in Sylvia Maedgen's pasture.

Photo by Sylvia Maedgen



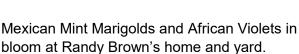


Elaine Passman's yard is in bloom with her Autumn Tryst bearded Iris rebloomer which blooms in the fall and spring. Her morning Glory's trail on her fence on the north

Photos by Elaine Passman

eastside of her yard.





Photos by Randy Brown

What's Happening in Your Yard

Killeen Municipal Community Court Garden

Photos by Randy Brown



















Announcements

Fall 2017 Plant Swap

- Jane L. Van Praag



BCMGA members brought in a great variety of very healthy plants to share; very few were left over and Crystal Fisher--who will coordinate the swaps for the next couple of years--took them home to care for over the winter. May she have as much fun as I have had! Of course, all was so easy for me because of our very congenial and innovative committee persons--Carol Morisset, Gena Winston, Jan Upchurch, Rose Harris, and Sylvia Maedgen--and each of you who participated! Thanks for the memories...

Help Wanted

Classroom Mentors for the 2018 Class

- Peg Fleet

It's almost here again! Orientation for the next class of Master Gardener interns will take place on January 3, 2018. Once again, the New Class Committee is asking Master Gardeners to volunteer as classroom mentors. This is separate from the Personal Mentor program, and it is a wonderful opportunity to meet and interact with the interns and to gain service hours. Classroom Mentor duties include setting up the classroom, checking and recording homework, setting out refreshments, providing assistance as needed during classes, and making sure that the room is returned to order afterward. Mentors should plan on arriving no later than 12:00 noon on class days and remaining until the end of that day's class. Signup sheets will be available at the October membership meeting. Master Gardeners who sign up will receive confirmation by e-mail. Because we want to give as many Master Gardeners as possible the opportunity to sign up, we request that you select no more than two signup dates. We will also have a Substitute Mentor signup list available. We hope that we will have the same outstanding response as we did last year. Please consider sharing your time and skills to help make this class the rewarding and enjoyable experience that it is meant to be.



Gardening in Bell County

- Carol Morisset and Jan Upchurch

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

November 16 Bokashi Composting

Location: Bell County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office - Conference Room

1605 N. Main, Belton, TX

Time: 6:30-8:00 pm

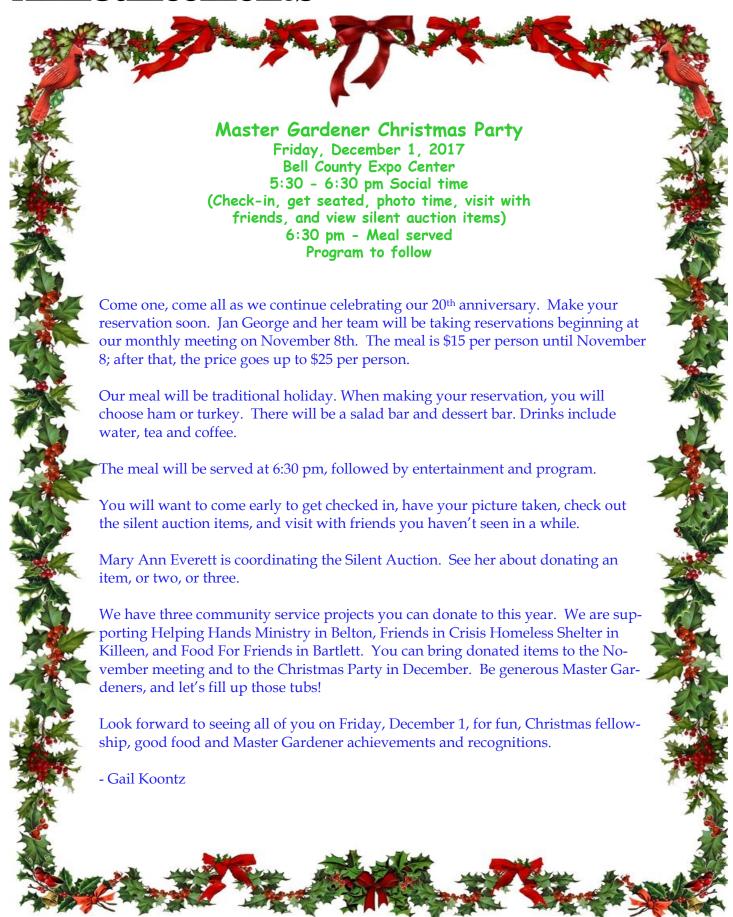
Cost: Our seminars are free of charge but the BCMGA will accept donations of up to \$5.00 per class

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

New classes will start in January 2018!

Announcements



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

November General Meeting

- Mary Ann Everett

The November general meeting will be held on the 8th. The education presentation will be on the Colonial Herb Gardens by Kim Pringle and the Herb Group. Social Time is 9:30 a.m., meeting at 10 a.m. in the learning center building.

Board of Director's Meeting

The November Board of Director's Meeting will held on Wednesday, November 29th at 9 a.m. in the class/meeting room of the AgriLife Building.

Grounds Workdays

- Johnny Jones and Tom Rennels

Here is the workday schedule for October:

Nov. 1, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

10:30 a.m. Burger Wednesday

Nov. 8, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

Nov. 15, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

Nov. 22, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

Nov. 29, 2017 8:00 a.m. Workday

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

CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK PAGE! GO TO

https://www.facebook.com/BCMGA

Advanced Learning

Upcoming Specialist Training

Feb 14-16 Master Gardener Vegetable

Specialist Training

Dallas

Deadline to register - ?

Cost \$250

Upcoming Conferences

TBD Coming soon in 2018

Upcoming Workshops

TBD Coming soon in 2018

Central Texas College Education Classes taught by Rebecca Burrow

Soil, Compost, and Worms

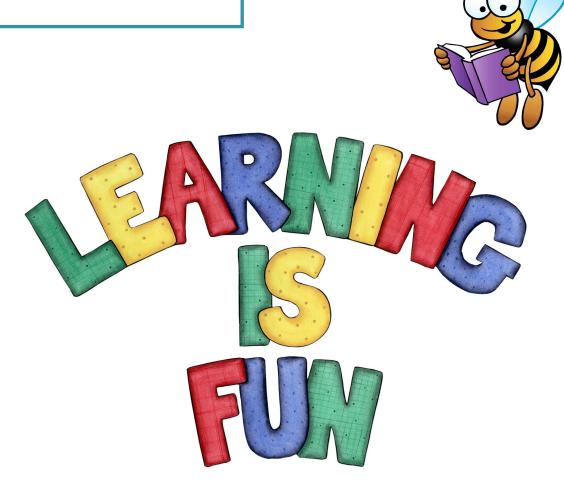
Saturday, Nov 18, 12:30-2:30pm, 2 hours, \$19

Water Conservation Techniques (offered twice) 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 do not send PDF documents.

Photo by Sylvia Maedgen



