

# The Blooming Bell

## February 2018



Above: Marjorie Gillmeister, BCMGA Youth Director and volunteers MG Susan Boyers, and MG Interns Kathy Harte and Sandi Remson at the Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy. They are teaching the 4 year old students about the Lifecycle of an Eggshell Plant. Photo by Marjorie Gillmeister

Upper Right: Sylvia Maedgen traveled to west Texas and stayed at the Gage Hotel in Marathon, TX and toured the Gage Gardens before her hiking excursion in Big Bend. Photo by Sylvia Maedgen



Happy  
Valentine's  
Day





**Bell County  
Master Gardener  
Association**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Work Day - 8 am* Burger Wed. 10:30 am	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Work Day - 8 am* Social - 9:30 am General Meeting - 10 am 	15	16	17 Rain Barrel W/S, Mother Earth Fair
18 Mother Earth Fair	19 	20	21 Work Day 8 am*	22	23	24 Home & Garden Show
25 Home & Garden Show	26	27	28 Work Day 8 am* BOD Meeting - 9 am			

#### Upcoming events:

- ♦ Rain Barrel Workshop, Harker Heights Activity Center, Feb. 17
- ♦ Mother Earth Fair, Belton Expo, Feb. 17-18
- ♦ Home & Garden Show, Belton Expo, Feb. 24-25
- ♦ Spring Plant Sale, Belton, Mar. 24
- ♦ 2018 TMGA Conference, Apr. 4-6, College Station
- ♦ Plant Swap, Belton, Apr. 11

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

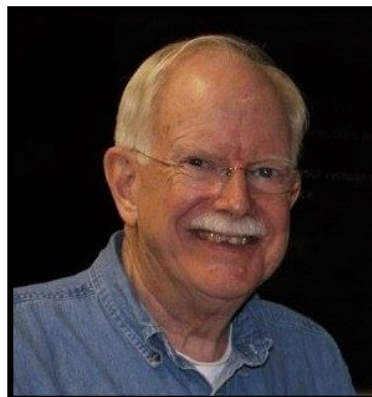
Remember to record volunteer/education hours.

Photo by Sylvia Maedgen



# The President's Corner

- Wayne Schirner



January was a busy month for members of the BCMGA. Thanks to all the volunteer assistance for the three conferences held by the Extension Office. The Crops conference had to be postponed to January 26<sup>th</sup> because of the freezing weather, but otherwise everything went off without a hitch. I know that Lyle appreciates our help in these annual conferences. If you didn't get a chance to volunteer this year, we'll be doing it again in January 2019. February will bring even more opportunities for volunteer service. The Bell County Youth Fair is a wonderful opportunity for us to help the youth of Bell County, and I am confident that we will again provide all the support they need. At the end of the month, the Temple Area Builders' Home and Garden Show will give us an excellent chance to interact with the public and educate them on seasonal horticultural topics.

If you need education hours, the Mother Earth News Fair will be held February 17-18 at the Bell County Expo Center. This two-day event offers many lectures on a variety of topics, and it is easy to get 8-10 education hours. This will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> year that this fair has been held here, and I have been told that it is one of the most popular of the fairs put on by MEN around the country. Tickets can be purchased at the door, or in advance online at a discount.

I would like to personally thank Kathy Love for all the hours she spent making sure we met the January 20<sup>th</sup> deadline for submission of award nominations to the TMGA. We were able to submit nominations in seven out of the eight award categories. Kathy took the write-ups submitted by various members and honed them using her journalistic skills to match the criteria established by the TMGA Awards Committee. She spent hours reviewing the winners from this competition in previous years, and I am confident that all seven of our nominations this year will be competitive to win. Winners will be announced at the TMGA State Conference in College Station the first week in April. Also, those members who have completed all requirements for advanced certifications will be awarded their certification certificates and pins at this conference. I hope that many of our members have already registered to attend this annual conference to support the BCMGA. We will recognize award winners and certifications at the April general membership meeting.

I'm very excited about a new project we have undertaken in conjunction with the audio-visual arts department at the Belton High School. They are taping

presentations of horticultural topics to be placed on YouTube. This benefits their students, and also provides us with another venue to provide education on horticultural topics to the citizens of Bell County. The first video on soil testing is done filming and in the process of being edited. They would like to be able to tape 2-3 of these videos per month until the end of the school year. If you have an idea for a horticultural topic that could be presented in a 10-minute YouTube video, talk to our project coordinator, Barbara Ishikawa. I expect that this project will be an excellent nomination for an award at the 2019 TMGA conference.

We have several other new projects that are in the approval process. Come to the general membership meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> to learn more about these exciting new volunteer opportunities. The social time starts at 9:30 and the meeting will start at 10:00. I'd also like to remind you that members are welcome to attend the BOD meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 to learn more about the behind the scenes operation of the BCMGA.

That's it for this month.

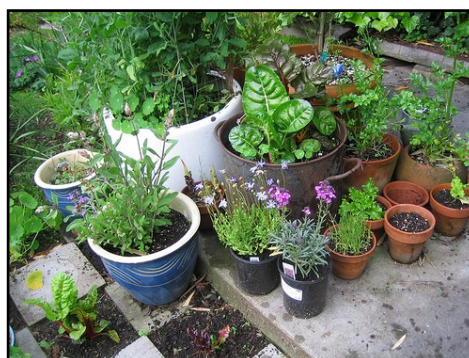


# 1 More Thing...

## Central Texas Winter Freeze

- Wayne Schirner

If there was any doubt before, we definitely know that winter has arrived. I was fortunate to leave town the day before it was 14F to spend 10 days in Palm Springs. I had moved most of my citrus trees into my garage, but left my Artic Frost on the patio, not knowing at the time that it was going as low as 14F. Artic Frost can survive to 19F, and at the time I left it was only predicted to go into the low 20's. By the time I returned, it was obvious that it had suffered damage from the hard freeze we received. I'm not optimistic that it will survive, but I'm not going to give up until I determine that there is no new growth in the next month or so. Meanwhile, I'm going to move it into the garage with my other citrus trees to avoid any more damage from the next freeze that we will surely get. Meanwhile, I'm starting new vegetable seedlings to be transplanted as soon as we are into March. The average last frost date is around March 10<sup>th</sup>, but that is only an average. The way things went in January, this might be the year that we get a late frost/freeze, so be prepared to protect anything you have planted in early March.





# Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

## Green Lacewings

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Green lacewings are considered beneficial insects and are predaceous in all larval and some adult stages. Larvae are well-known for consuming aphids and are sometimes referred to as “aphid lions”, but they feed not only on aphids, but a variety of soft-bodied insects as well as mites and insect eggs.



Eggs are laid singly or in small groupings on top of a thin stalk. Since lacewings eat insect eggs, having the eggs off the plant surface allows them to reduce cannibalism from siblings. Larvae are mottled brown and white and can grow to ½ an inch in length. Larvae have bodies tapered on both ends with sickle-shaped mouthparts. Some larvae cover themselves with debris to camouflage themselves from predators. Lacewings spin a round, light colored, silken cocoon on the plant surface.



Adults are green and about ¾ inch in length. They have four wings of similar size and shape that contain numerous veins, cross veins, and cells. Adults can often be seen near porch lights at night. Some adults are predaceous while most feed on nectar, honeydew, and pollen.



While lacewing larvae are great when feeding on insect eggs and small insects, they can be a nuisance when they bite. While this does not happen often, it can leave a red, itchy spot on some people.

Encourage lacewing populations in your yard by providing pollen and nectar sources.

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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# Do You Know About...?

## To Do List - Fruit Trees

- Bill Walker

Let's consider February, March and April TO DO points for those who have mature peach, apple or plum trees.

- **PRUNING** - if not already completed, winter pruning should be completed by mid to late February. This point is critical to ongoing health and development of your much anticipated fruit. Remember, don't be bashful. Pruning out 50% of the tree is a reasonable objective. There are lots of good reading and uTube dormant pruning instructions on .edu and .org sites.
- **DORMANT SPRAY** - It's a solid practice to spray oil and sulfur when trees are dormant and have not broken spring growth. This application addresses scale and mite insects (oil) and fungal diseases (sulfur). It is best to have this completed by mid to late February. For those with organic concerns, both applications are organic compounds. You can have your choice of products at all local retailers. Neem Oil is the most popular dormant oil offering. Sulfur is usually available as lime sulfur or copper sulfate. As always, read and follow the manufacturers label for dormant applications specific to peaches, apples and plums.
- **ORCHARD CLEAN UP** - Rake and dispose of any of last year's leaves, twigs and fruit on the ground below the tree(s). Don't forget any 'mummies' or dried fruits hanging in the tree from last year. It's just brown rot waiting to happen.
- **THINNING FRUIT** - This should take place when the developing young fruit is the size of your little finger nail. The objective is to thin fruit to one per 10" in all directions and not to exceed 500 - 600 fruit per mature tree. Let's consider a mature tree being a 4 years or older.
- **TO SPRAY OR NOT TO SPRAY** - Spray applications past the dormant applications noted above are one's choice. If you choose an ongoing spray program or follow IPM practices, there are good organic and inorganic general purpose orchard sprays available from local retailers. There could be other critical times, but right at and just after

flower petal drop is critical. At this time, insect such as the Plum Curculio can do major damage that will effect the fruit's ongoing quality. As well, any prolonged wet period(s) can trigger fungal flare ups such as brown rot.

- **CONSIDER THE BEES** - It goes without saying, but let's say it anyway. Always be cautious of bee activity. Never spray trees when in bloom with bees working the flowers. When the trees no longer have available forage for the bees, they will move on to other forage leaving them for your spray management. Read the manufacturers label related to considerations for bees.
- **FERTILIZATION** - This is not a consideration at this time. Fertilization is usually addressed in May or June.





# Do You Know About...?

## Landracing—Breed Your Own!

- Rebecca Burrow

For most gardeners or veggie growers, the thought that they can breed their own cultivars seems an impossible task. There is this mystique about breeding plants. It seems like a lot of people think breeding plants is an extremely scientific, difficult, and complicated process that can only be performed by licensed professionals and plant labs. If you think about it, it makes no sense. How do we think a single plant in Europe, *Brassica oleracea*, got turned into broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, kale/collards, and cabbage? Ordinary farmers selectively bred the plant for what they wanted, simultaneously designing plants that grew in their regions (otherwise the plants would not survive) and with their cultivation methods.

Landracing is one of the most powerful, yet somehow forgotten, tools the gardener possesses. Breeding plants is actually quite easy. Much easier than breeding animals. The turnaround time for most vegetable plants is really quick.

This is because plants have three really nice traits:

Plants produce seeds.

Seeds can be saved for planting next year.

Offspring tend to resemble their parents and grandparents.

It takes about 3-5 years to produce a landrace. That may seem like a long time, but it really isn't. That is 3-5 growing seasons. In the whole scheme of things, that is lightening fast compared to breeding cows.

This simple process is called landracing. Landracing is the method by which genetically diverse open-pollinated plants are bred to withstand local environmental and personal conditions.

A landrace is a plant that undergoes landracing, bred to successfully produce for particular growing conditions and secondary characteristics, like fruit longevity (think red onions versus sweet onions), flavor (so many different peppers!), and other purposes (Germans have bred some cabbages specifically for sauerkraut).

The goal of landracing is to produce a plant that works for you, with whatever growing conditions you put them in and the traits you want them to have. This way, you do not have to worry about your massive tomato plants actually producing tomatoes. Anyone who had this happen to them knows what I am talking about. It is tragic and unnecessary.

The key to landracing is seed promiscuity and viability. The ability to produce genetically viable seeds that are capable of reproducing is a requirement for breeding. But not necessarily for growing. You cannot breed most commercial hybrids or any cell fusion cytoplasmic male sterility (CF-CMS) hybrids. CF-CMS is a genetic engineering process where the nucleus and the cytoplasm of the parent seed are from different plant species, producing a transgenic seed. The cytoplasm comes from a sterile female seed, while the nucleus is that of a fertile male seed. This resultant F1

hybrid seed will produce a product with known characteristics, but no viable seeds.

For today's seed companies, this is purely a business decision. Most hybrid seeds produced in today's market are also CMS, because the company needs you or the farmer to keep buying seeds and they want to ensure no one else has their particular seed line. No one can save seeds to market themselves if the plant doesn't produce any. The process is also really cheap.

Obviously, you cannot save seeds from a sterile plant. Therefore, if you want to landrace, the plant must be genetically viable and capable of reproducing, or "open-pollinated." Now, while CMS can occur naturally in nature and sterility is a thing to keep an eye on when breeding plants, cell fusion CMS is not a natural process and that really does require a scientist in a lab.

A note about landraces and "heirloom" vegetable plants. Heirlooms get a bad rap for being unproductive or useless, particularly the tomatoes. Logically, this makes complete sense when "heirloom" is replaced with "landrace." If a landrace is a plant for highly specific growing conditions, what makes anyone think it would work as well outside of those conditions? It should be no surprise that a tomato bred for Russia would do poorly in Texas. Or a tomato designed for growing in a greenhouse would not perform as expected in the typical home garden.

Now, some plants are intrinsically easier and faster to landrace than others due to their breeding system. Highly promiscuous outcrossing plants like corn, melons, squash, spinach, and most Brassicas interbreed easily. Onions also outcross well, but take longer because they are biennials. Keep in mind that all hybrid onions are sterile, and even many of the heirloom varieties are contaminated, as well as carrots, cabbage, broccoli, and many beets. Tomatoes and peppers are self-pollinating, but do outcross sometimes. Plant several cultivars together to increase chances. Purely inbreeding plants like beans, peas, and garlic are more difficult because crossing is rare under normal conditions. They are slower to adapt. Crossing can be improved by manually pollinating flowers and marking with colored string. Save the seeds from those flowers. Potatoes, sadly, are almost all sterile even the heirlooms, and are generally impossible to landrace unless you are willing to sacrifice 95% of your potato genome to find the rare fertile one.

Also, what to do with a plant that produces for you just fine, like an open-pollinated zucchini? Use the STUN method to landrace it. Sheer total utter neglect. Do not do anything to do that you do not want to. If you do not want to have to fertilize it, don't. If you do not want to give it extra water, don't. If squash vine borers kill it or powdery mildew attacks it, rip it out. Do not tolerate weakness. Give it the care you reasonably want it to produce with. You might be surprised by the difference in resilience and productivity after a few seasons. You will have selected for not just "really good," but the best of the best.

# Do You Know About...?

## Landracing—Breed Your Own! - con't.

- Rebecca Burrow

### How to Landrace

Generally, you select purely for survival and the ability to produce any fruit for the first 3-4 growing seasons. Obviously, if the plant cannot even survive and produce fruit, it is useless. During this time, you force it to adapt to your habits and conditions. If you do not like watering, they will adapt to withstand drought. If you grow in a greenhouse instead of outdoor raised beds, they will adapt to your greenhouse. If you do not use pesticides, only the survivors will live to make seeds and then they will be pest resistant. After that is established, you can begin selecting for your desired traits, but the ability to make viable fruit (or leaves or bulbs) is necessary and should be the first prerequisite. It ensures regional and horticultural adaption. Hardiness is primary. Be ruthless.

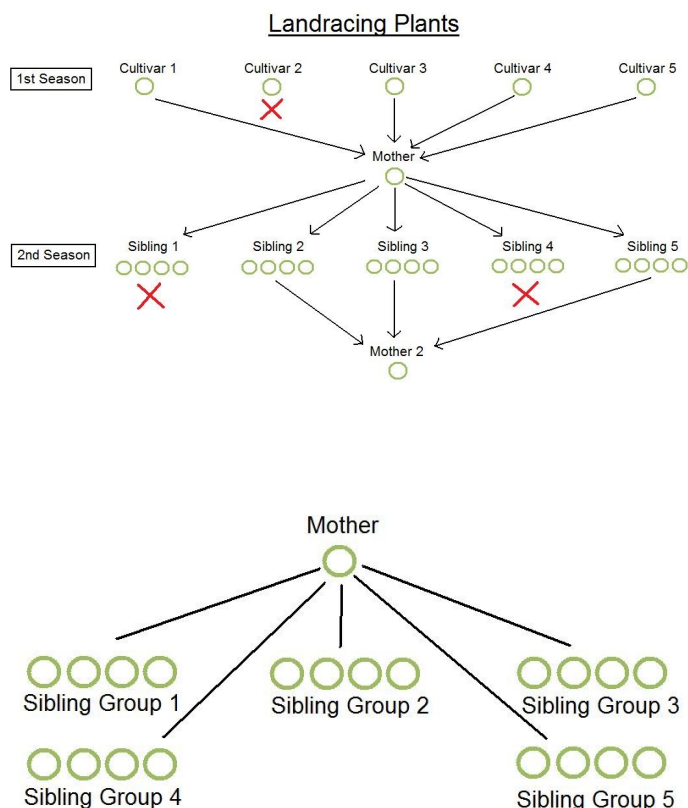
This is how you make a landrace, using tomatoes as an example.

1. Get 15-30 open-pollinated varieties of tomato that you think have a reasonable chance. Grow 1-5 plants of each variety. Interperse cultivars to maximize crossing and label everybody. If space is a consideration, still start with at least 5 cultivars of what you think will work best. Your landrace will not have the sheer genetic variability of using more cultivars, but a decent landrace is better than not having a landrace at all.
2. Do not give them special treatment. If you want them to survive without X, Y, or Z, then don't give it to them.
3. If a plant is attacked by pests or disease, kill it. If a plant dies, remove it. If they wilt because their water needs are too high, rip it out. If they do not actually make fruit, kill them. Be heartless.
4. Save seeds from whoever survives and put them all in a nice paper bag. This is your "mother" bag. (End of Season 1.)
5. Start of Season 2 (F1 generation). Plant mother groups.\*
6. Save seeds from the best groups. (End of Season 2.)
7. Season 3 (F2 generation) will exhibit maximum diversity and expression. Cull heavily and before undesirable plants produce pollen. Cull at least 80%.
8. Save seeds only from the best. (End of Season 3.)
9. Season 4. You have achieved survivability. Now you can select for whatever you want to select for. Taste. Shelf life. Heat tolerance. Anything.
10. Save seeds from the best of the best.

Now you can select for secondary traits by repeating steps 9-10 every season forever. You can also begin diverging strains, meaning that you take one strain and split them up into different needs. This is how you get sweet corn versus flour corn, or hot spicy peppers versus sweet, thick-walled peppers. You can do this because you started with an incredibly diverse population (20-30 varieties at least) that people use for all sorts of things. The genetic variation is there. You just have to select for what specific genes you want to be expressed. You will get uniformity when you select for 1-2 required traits, with all others negotiable. You have to know what you want.

\* Mother grouping is a planting technique where you take the seeds from one mother plant and plant short rows. You make little groups. This allows you to see the changes present between groups and how they perform against each other. It is easier to pick out a particularly nice plant when they are planted in short rows. It is also easier to tell lineage.

Landracing works even for plants that may perform terribly for you at first. There was a man in the dry, high mountains of Arizona. It took him six seasons just to get a melon that would produce a viable fruit at all. It took him longer to select for sweetness, pest and disease resistance, and fruit size. His melons are now coveted by the people in his area as the sweetest, juiciest, most delicious melons they ever had. His customers will not buy anyone else's melons. That is the power of landracing.





# What's Been Happening...

## Meridith Dunbar Early Childhood Academy - Seed Activity

- Marjorie Gillmeister

Photos by Marjorie Gillmeister

On January 22, 23, and 26, beautiful children at the school learned the "Lifecycle Of A Chicken" and then the "Lifecycle Of An Eggshell Plant."

A total of 266 students and teachers sowed seeds in eggshell pods and only four eggs were broken. The children learned the word and spelled out loud "magnesium" a nutrient that plants and growing children need in order to grow big and strong. The children did smashing of eggshells in a bowl for part of their activity, handling of an eggshell plant, feeling textures of different eggshell plant seedlings on display, sang songs, and were read "The Little Red Hen" story book. Special thanks to our President, Wayne Schirner for providing a grow light for the research project with two classes participating comparing growth from seed to harvest; seedlings grown in eggshell pods and cylinder newspaper pots.

We had an amazing day and I would like to thank our New Class Interns; Brenda Britton, Laura Ladd, Laura Pope, Ann Miller, Michael Pointer, Elaine McSpedon, Sandi Remson, Kathy Harte, and Kathy Lovelace for supporting our youth programs! Many thanks to all of our MG volunteers; Jo Carlsen, Sandi Lenehan, Sylvia Maedgen, Elaine Passman, Gail Koontz, Dee Seely, and Suzanne Boyer. Special thanks to Miranda Rhodes of TISD Menu/Nutritionist for being a part of this magical day. "We improve the quality our youths' lives through horticultural education."





# What's Been Happening...

## Montessori School

- **Marjorie Gillmeister**      Photos by Marjorie Gillmeister

We are happy to announce a newly approved BCMG Youth Program at Montessori School of Temple, TX. Project: Temple Montessori School Gardening (apply to project when entering volunteer service hours in VMS). Our first activity is February 8th, Thursday 8:00-11:00am. Activity: Seed starts in Eggshell pods/ Lifecycle of An Eggshell Plant

We will have three classes to work with as follows:

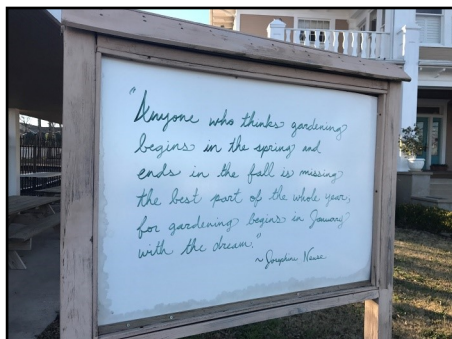
1) Toddler : ages 2-3 yrs. old - activities would consist of garden education visual learning, reading, and sensory such as touching plants/lessons on plants.  
Volunteer Service Hours: (30 min class/ 11 children)  
8:30am-9:00am

2) Primary I : ages 3-6 yrs. old - activities will be hands on gardening, reading, lessons in various topics on gardening/environment.  
Volunteer Service Hours: (1 hour class/ 23 students)  
9:00am-10:00am

3) Primary II: ages 3-6 yrs. old - activities will be hands on gardening, reading, lessons in various topics on gardening/environment.  
Volunteer Service Hours: (1 hour class/ 24 students)  
10:00am-11:00am

\*This project will be ongoing throughout the year and there will be activities at the school once a month for three hours on a Thursday (8:00am-11:00am)

If you are interested in working with our youth please contact me via email. Look forward to working with many of you this year! Thank you for your continued support with our BCMG Youth Programs!





# What's Been Happening...

## Harker Heights Spring Fling

Photos by Randy Brown





# What's Been Happening...

## 2018 Intern Class

- Sylvia Maedgen

The latest member of the new class of Master Gardener interns joined the class on January 17. That brings the total number of interns to 24 for the 2018 Class.

Photo by Sylvia Maedgen

**Kelby Kosel**

Resides in Cyclone and is originally from Bell County. Currently a full-time student.

Became interested in gardening through her family who gardens and farms. Favorite outdoor activities include running, softball and tennis. Other interests include writing, reading, photography and running marathons.

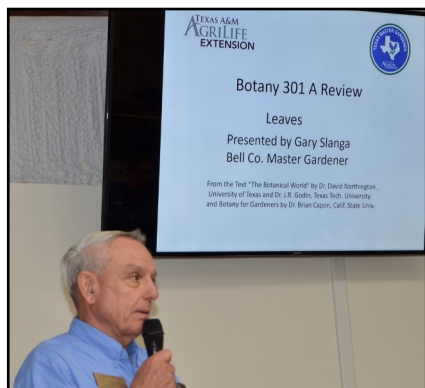


## General Meeting—January

- Sylvia Maedgen

Photos by Randy Brown

The presentation was given by Gary Slanga and the topic was on leaves. Several awards were given out to the following: Brenda Smith, 10 year service pin; Louann Hight, 100-199 Service Hour Certificate; Pat Johnson, 200-299 Service Hour Certificate and Golden Trowel Award; Tom Rennels, 200-299 Service Hour Certificate and Green Thumb Award; and Terrie Hahn, Meritorious Service Award for her dedicated service of 7 years as the Blooming Bell Newsletter Editor.







# Member Spotlight

- Larry Causey

## **Kathy Lovelace, 2018 MG Intern**

Kathy Lovelace's gardening background goes back a long ways. "When we were growing up, Mom would have a garden at every house we'd move into," she said. "She'd landscape, and do the garden. We were the slave labor," she said, meaning herself and her brother, Howard Sprague. "That was back in the day when you grew food because you had to. I think I learned more than I thought I did." She liked growing things, and seeing the whole process, she said. She considered majoring in horticulture, but chose a teaching degree at Tarleton State University, to better coincide with her husband Tommy Lovelace's career in the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For her early childhood and elementary classes, she always had a garden. And she's been gardening and landscaping at the old home place in Belton since 1993. She's had a compost bin for years, and used it in teaching children about the full growth cycle.

So why did someone with a generational green thumb join the 2018 Master Gardener's class? "Because I retired," she said. "I could finally have the time to devote to it, and further my knowledge." Then there's the aspect of giving back. "You can't teach others or help others if you don't know it forward and backward."

She's been impressed with everyone involved in Master Gardeners, and the course is reinforcing her knowledge. "You never learn everything," she said. "It's kind of like a self-check to me. What I've learned and what I need to work on."

At home, her 75 by 100 foot garden is surrounded by rose bushes. "It's pretty," she said. "It's right by the house. I'm going to make it prettier."

She had success with vermiculture, and her son liked having worms for fishing. She builds compost of leaves and turkey manure, and uses that and whatever she has to sheet-mulch the garden. "If you keep it mulched year around, you'll get worms," she said.

Her daughter, Kallie is an animal science trainee with the Farm Service Agency in Hamilton. Her son, Garrett, is pursuing a career in wildlife management. Now that her children are gone, she is trying to change her overall gardening plan. She's thinking of adding a small greenhouse and is looking at raised beds.

"I'm trying to figure out how I can reduce my size and still grow what I want to," she said. "Gardening is personal. It's very creative."

As for advice to anyone else, she said start small and go from there. Read, research, listen to radio programs, talk to old timers at the feed store, ask a Master Gardener. "You'll never learn it all," she said.

# I've Always Wanted To Go There... Again! Big Bend National Park

- Sylvia Maedgen

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

My husband Tommy and I traveled back to Big Bend National Park, not on our motorcycles this time, but in a truck, to go on our first hiking trip with friends in January. We first treated ourselves to an overnight stay at the historic Gage Hotel in Marathon to celebrate both our birthdays. We toured the Gage Gardens the next morning and even though everything was dormant, you could tell it was a well cared for garden and I want to go back in the spring to see it in full bloom. I liked their wooden rain barrel tank in the middle of their garden. Our next stop was in Alpine to tour the Big Bend Museum. It was very interesting to learn about the development of that area, how many movies have been made in that area, and learn the founder of Sul Ross University was from Bell County. Our next stop, the mountain basin at Big Bend. We had a great time hiking in the mountains and the desert. The weather could not have been any better, 30-40's in the mornings and 60's during the day. Our first day we hiked 6 miles at the Hot Springs Canyon Rim and then another 1/2 mile crossing the border on a flat bottom boat to Boquillas, Mexico and riding burros into the little village. That day I walked 35K steps. Our second day we hiked from the basin on the Windows Trail down to the main road, and then the Burro Mesa Pourroff Trail for a total of 10 1/2 miles or 40K steps. Our third day we took it a little easier and hiked only 6 miles or 25K steps that included the Burro Springs Trail, Tuff Canyon Trail, Santa Elena Canyon Trail, Sublett Farm, and the Homer Ranch.





# This and That...

## Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden

- Randy Brown

Photos by Randy Brown

No students worked on January 6,...but dedicated Master Gardeners got several onion varieties planted and asparagus cut back, and topped with bio-soil. The Director arrived with onion slips so work can begin. Turnips almost ready for harvest. Dave had just worked on irrigation system with David Carpenter. Workers included Kathy Patterson, Betty Gilmore, Edie Campbell, and Bob Gordon.





# Announcements

## 2018 TMGA Conference - Celebrating 40 Years

Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, Embracing the Future



- Sylvia Maedgen

The 2018 TMGA Conference is scheduled for April 4-6, 2018 in College Station. The conference will be held at the Hilton Inn with a room rate of \$139 per night and online reservations can be made at 979-693-7500 or - <http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/C/CLLCHHF-TMGA18-20180403/index.jhtml>  
The group code is: TMGA18.

There will be seminars and tours (additional costs) throughout the 3 days. Regular registration is from January 11 - February 15 at a rate of \$285. Late registration is from February 16 - March 30 at a rate of \$315. You can register online at - [https://texasmastergardeners.formstack.com/forms/2018\\_tmga\\_conference\\_registration](https://texasmastergardeners.formstack.com/forms/2018_tmga_conference_registration)

FULL REGISTRATION includes access to all six Keynote sessions plus options for six additional Educational Sessions, three lunches, (Wednesday through Friday, April 4-6, 2018), as well as both receptions and dinners on Wednesday and Thursday, April 4 and 5, 2018! Leadership Training, Parking Passes, Workshops, Tours, Guests and Merchandise incur additional fees. The complete schedule can be found at - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oLCMrS90CCKGLxRUARMUP9IHxpaDZgld/view>

Don't forget to send photos of yourself for the video they are creating for the conference. Email your photos with identification to - [2018tmgaconference@gmail.com](mailto:2018tmgaconference@gmail.com)

## 2018 Herbal Forum at Round Top, TX

- Kim Pringle

The 23rd Annual Herbal Forum at Festival Hill in Round Top is scheduled for March 16-17, 2018. The theme is "The Spicy World of Gingers." The cost of the Herbal Forum on Saturday is about \$80 with optional workshops on Friday. Many of us book accommodations at Festival Hill for Friday evening, with the cost about \$90 including continental breakfast. We average about 18 people in our group. I usually collect funds for accommodations and individuals must call or register on-line directly with Festival Hill for the Herbal Forum and the optional workshops. You can also drive down for the day on Saturday. The plant sale is open to anyone.



Many of us bring a sack lunch for Friday noon so we can spend more time at the plant sale and touring the grounds at Festival Hill. There is shopping in downtown Round Top and Royer's Cafe offers lunch and their famous pies if you would prefer. We arrange carpools to the Herbal Forum. We hold our traditional gourmet picnic on Friday evening. Each person brings an herbal dish to share - for those who have not attended, this is really a sampling. We do not have kitchen facilities, a refrigerator or stove, so if you need refrigeration, you will have to bring a cooler. And you are welcome to bring wine or your favorite beverage.

If you are interested in attending the Herbal Forum or have questions, please email me at [kimberpringle@earthlink.net](mailto:kimberpringle@earthlink.net) or call or text 254-421-2593.

Herbal Forum Update: 7 reservations and 11 spaces open. Festival Hill requests payment about mid January for reservations.

# Announcements

## Home & Garden Show

- Marjorie Gillmeister



It's that fun time of the year again! Master Gardeners are invited back again which is the third year to participate at The Kidzone at The Home and Garden Show at The Bell County Expo Center where we educate the community and have an amazing activity for children of all ages! We will have two booths like last year's show:

### Master Gardener Booth (Kidzone)

Activity: using a recyclable material to plant/sow seeds in a plastic water bottle for the children to take home and educate them on how the roots thrive within that water bottle which is visible as they watch/nurture their seedling to grow.

### Wolfgang's Garden Booth (Kidzone)

Activity: How to Eggshell Garden and sow seeds in an Eggshell pod to take home. There will be various Eggshell plants at different stages of growth for display, educational material and a PowerPoint screen playing information on Eggshell Gardening.

I will have a sign up sheet available at the General Meeting and at the New Class Session. You can also email me with the day and times you are available to volunteer and I will send a follow up reminder email closer to the date of the show with all the details.

Volunteer Hours available:

February 24th, Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm

February 25th, Sunday 12:00pm-5:00pm

We look forward to another amazing show this year and for you to be a part of this wonderful journey! Last year we had over 100 kids at The Kidzone Master Gardener Booth making newspaper hats and 146 kids at Wolfgang's Garden Booth that painted an Eggshell pod and sowed seeds in an Eggshell pod to take home!

## Master Gardener TV Celebrity - Marjorie Gillmeister

- Sylvia Maedgen

Our very own Marjorie Gillmeister was a guest on the Central Texas Living show on the KXXV - 25 station in Waco on Wednesday, Feb. 7th. The interview can be seen by clicking on the following links:

Pre-Show introduction - <https://www.facebook.com/annharderkxxv/videos/1778705082174117/>

News Interview - <https://www.facebook.com/annharderkxxv/videos/1779074322137193/>

The interviews can also be seen at the BCMGA Facebook page.





# 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:

- |            |                                   |                |                                      |
|------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| • March 15 | Plant Selection                   | • August 16    | Propagation of Plants                |
| • April 19 | Hummingbirds, Butterflies, & Bees | • September 20 | Greenhouse Basics                    |
| • May 17   | Water Efficiency                  | • October 18   | Texas Native Gardening in the Winter |
| • June 21  | Insects in Your Garden            | • November 15  | Raised Bed Gardening                 |
| • July 19  | Fall Gardening                    |                |                                      |

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](mailto:j-upchurch@sbcglobal.net) [OR carol.j.morisset@gmail.com](mailto:carol.j.morisset@gmail.com)

## Rain Barrel Workshop - Mark your calendar!

Saturday, Feb. 17th, 9 am—12 pm, Harker Heights Activity Center, Room A, 400 Indian Trails, Harker Heights, \$60

Saturday, April 21st, 9 am—12 pm, Bell County Extension Building, 1605 N. Main St., Belton, \$60  
Payment due in advance. Contact Karen Colwick for info @ 254-913-4459 or [kcolwick@hotmail.com](mailto:kcolwick@hotmail.com).

## Refreshment Roster for General Meetings

- Jane Van Praag

Valentine's Day will be the theme chosen by Karen Colwick, Jo Carlsen, and Joan Bumgarner for our general meeting on February 14th.

On March 14th Larry Causey has signed up for an Easter theme and could use a few more helpers.

Our Herbal Group, fresh from the Herbal Forum at Round Top a few weeks before, will take care of April 11th.

Sylvia Maedgen selected Spring for the May 9th theme and could benefit from a few more volunteers.

For June 13th, Marjorie Gillmeister will bring goodies reminiscent of her family trip to Lubeck, Germany, and is gladly open to other helpers.

I'm doing September 12th, to coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month beginning on the 15th, Diez y Seis-- anniversary of Mexican independence--and reflecting on my time in Mexico.

July 11th and August 8th are vacant; so too, October 10th and November 14th are up for grabs. Some of the rest of you want to fill in these blanks, I can sense those creative juices flowing through your brains(!), so contact me soonest at [jvanpraag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jvanpraag@sbcglobal.net) !!!

# Announcements

## February General Meeting

**- Kathy Love**

The February general meeting will be held on the 14th. The education presentation will be on "Flowers" by Gary Slanga. Social Time is 9:30 a.m., meeting at 10 a.m. in the learning center building.

## Board of Director's Meeting

The February Board of Director's Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 28th at 9 a.m. in the class/meeting room of the AgriLife Building. Please submit your agenda items to Stacye Parry, Recording Secretary by Friday, February 23rd.

## Grounds Workdays

**- Johnny Jones and Tom Rennels**

Here is the workday schedule for January:

Feb. 7, 2018 8:00 a.m. Workday  
10:30 a.m. Burger Wednesday  
Feb. 14, 2018 8:00 a.m. Workday  
Feb. 21, 2018 8:00 a.m. Workday  
Feb. 28, 2018 8:00 a.m. Workday

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

## Upcoming Conferences

Apr. 4-6 TX MG State Conference  
College Station  
Cost \$285 reg. registration 1/11-2/15  
Cost \$315 late registration 2/16-3/30  
Workshops/Tours/Parking - extra \$\$

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

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

# Advanced Learning

## Upcoming Specialist Training

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Feb. 8-9       | Master Gardener Plant Health and Diagnostics Educator Specialist Training<br>Gonzales - Cost \$185<br>Deadline to register - Jan. 16                |
| Feb. 14-16     | Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training<br>Dallas - Cost \$235<br>Deadline to register - Jan. 31  |
| Feb. 19-20     | Master Gardener Earth-Kind Specialist Training<br>Bastrop - Cost \$225<br>Deadline to register - Feb. 9   |
| Feb. 26-27     | Master Gardener Landscape Design School Series XXV, Course IV<br>College Station - Cost \$165, Book \$40<br>Register - after Feb. 1                 |
| Feb. 27-Mar. 1 | JMG National Leader Training<br>College Station - Cost \$280<br>Deadline to register - Feb. 16<br>Register between Feb. 17-21<br>Cost will be \$325 |
| Mar. 23-24     | Propagation Specialist Training<br>Ft. Worth - Cost \$225<br>Deadline to register - Feb. 26   |
| Mar. 26-28     | Irrigation Efficiency Specialist Training<br>Dallas - Cost \$250<br>Deadline to register - Mar. 19  |
| Apr. 30-May 2  | Rainwater Harvesting Specialist Training<br>Dallas - Cost \$250<br>Deadline to register - Apr. 24   |
| May 23-25      | Greenhouse Management Specialist Training<br>Kerrville - Cost \$185<br>Deadline to register - May 1   |



## Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Wayne Schirner</b>
<b>First Vice President</b>	<b>Kathy Love</b>
<b>Second Vice President</b>	<b>Louann Hight</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Stacye Parry</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	<b>Mary Lew Quesinberry</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Gail Koontz</b>

## Directors

<b>Grounds</b>	<b>Johnny Jones Tom Rennels</b>
<b>KMCCG</b>	<b>Edie Campbell</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Kathleen Ramey</b>
<b>New Class</b>	<b>Fran Sheppard</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Sylvia Maedgen</b>
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Carol Morisset Jan Upchurch</b>
<b>Youth Programs</b>	<b>Marjorie Gillmeister</b>

## Committee Chairpersons

<b>Awards</b>	<b>Kathy Love</b>
<b>Plant Sale</b>	<b>Sylvia Maedgen</b>
<b>Webmaster</b>	<b>Pat Johnson</b>
<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	<b>Lyle Zoeller</b>

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Tom Rennels  
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Bill Walker

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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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