

The Blooming Bell

July 2018



Happy 4th of July!

Photo by Wayne Schirner

BCMG's traveled to College Station on June 15th to tour the new Leach Teaching Gardens on the campus of Texas A&M University.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Happy July 4th	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Work Day 7 am* Social 8:30 am General Meeting 9 am	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Work Day 7 am*	19 Gardening in Bell County - Fall Gardening 6:30 pm	20	21
22	23	24	25 Work Day 7 am* BOD Meeting 9 am Blooming Bell deadline	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming events:

- ♦ Gardening in Bell County, Propagation of Plants, Belton, Aug. 16
- ♦ Fall Plant Sale, Belton, Sept. 29

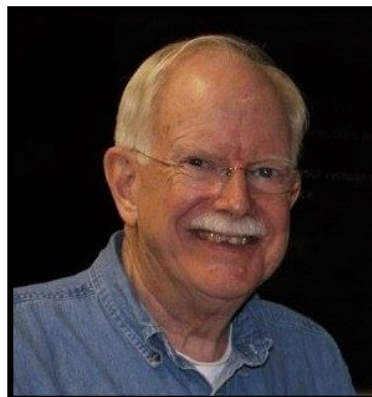
* In the event of rain, there will be No Workday.

Remember to record volunteer service hours and education hours separately each month. You may include your travel time to meetings and work projects as service hours.

Photo by Judy Hoelscher

The President's Corner

- Wayne Schirner



June 15th was a great day as 25 members of the BCMGA traveled together by bus to attend the Grand Opening of the Leach Teaching Gardens at The Garden's at Texas A&M. We had a wonderful time while touring the 7 acres of gardens now open. A total of 40 acres has been set aside for the entire Gardens at Texas A&M, but the Leach Teaching Gardens are expected to be the major focus. The BCMGA was one of many Master Gardener Associations in Texas that contributed a total over \$150,000 towards this project. Big hugs are due to Jan George for arranging the bus transportation and RSVPing for all of us. Look for photos and an article later in this issue.

Insecticidal soap is a frequently recommended pesticide for use against many soft-bodied pests that affect the garden and landscape. It has no residual effect and is considered safe for humans, pets, and most beneficial insects. I see many posts on some gardening Facebook pages that I follow that give recipes for homemade insecticidal soap using common dish soaps. Unfortunately, many recipes aren't for insecticidal soap at all, they are for insecticidal detergents since most dish "soaps" are actually detergents. There is a big difference between soaps and detergents and how they affect our plants. A soap has long and short chain fatty acids, and it is the fatty acids that work against most soft-bodied insect pests. True insecticidal soaps only have the long-chain fatty acids. Detergents are mostly synthetic chemicals that are designed to breakup oils and grease. That's what makes a detergent superior to a soap for cleaning dishes. However, that property of a detergent is what makes it bad for plants. Detergents can remove the natural protective oils on plant leaves and make the plant more susceptible to pests and diseases. There are some liquid soaps that can be purchased to make your own homemade insecticidal soap, and individuals are welcome to do that. However, as a certified Master Gardener we should never recommend that something be used as a pesticide if it is not properly labeled for use as a pesticide. There are numerous products that are commercially available either as a concentrate or a ready to use spray, and these are all properly labeled for pesticide use. The main thing is for you to be aware of what you are spraying on your plants and keep the Dawn under the kitchen sink where it belongs. Visit this TxA&M Agrllife Extension site for more information: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/misc/insectsoap.html>

We are already in the hot days of summer, even though summer only officially began on June 21st. However, it's not too early to start planning for your fall vegetable garden. If you haven't had a fall vegetable garden before, you might be amazed at how well many of the crops we grow perform in the second half of the year. I've always gotten better tomatoes from my fall garden than I ever got from the spring garden. The Gardening in Bell County series will present a talk on "Fall Gardening" on July 19th, so that will be a great way to get information on this topic.

That's it for this month. Stay cool, but also stay connected with the BCMGA. There are always a few of us at the Extension grounds every Wednesday, in addition to the meeting days. See you around.



vs.

Detergents!!

1 More Thing...

- Wayne Schirner

We are now officially halfway through the year, and 32 of our members have logged zero hours in the VMS system. I suspect many of these have actually accumulated education or volunteer service hours, but they haven't yet logged them in. We provide a monthly report to our County Extension Agent, Lyle Zoeller, and he in turn reports these to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Gone are the days

when we reported everything at the end of the year. Anyone who has difficulty getting their hours logged into the VMS can simply ask for help and we will make it happen. Let's make this a year where we lose very few members because they just didn't get their hours reported. Your hours are important to us, and we want to help you capture them. Thanks for everything you do in supporting the BCMGA.



Garden Myth: Do Eggshells Stop Slugs?

- Written by Robert Pavlis, author of two books, [*Garden Myths*](#) and [*Building Natural Ponds*](#).

[Article for Garden Myths Partner Program](#)

Date: June 2018

Slugs can be a real problem in the garden and many home remedies have been suggested to control them. One of the most common is eggshells. Spread the crushed eggshells around your plants and slugs will not cross the barrier because the sharp edge on the shells cut their bodies. This sounds like a good organic solution to the slug problem, but does it work?

Simple to Test for Yourself

Testing this theory is very easy to do. Get some eggshells and let them dry. Then crush them into various size pieces. Most people suggest that small pieces work better than large ones since small pieces produce more sharp edges.

Take a tray or plastic container and make a ring of shells in the center as shown in the picture for testing Diatomaceous Earth. Place some slugs or snails in the center of the ring and wait to see what happens. If this method of slug control works, they will stay inside the ring. If eggshells don't work they will escape.

When I did this experiment, the slugs took off and crossed the eggshells without any hesitation. The idea that eggshells stop slugs is a complete myth.



What Does Work?

For the most part, home remedies do not work well for controlling slugs. But you can try to use nature to control slugs.

Slugs prefer to eat dead vegetation, not your plants. Don't clean up your garden as much so slugs find food on the ground and don't need to climb plants to get a meal.

Mulch on the ground keeps moisture in the soil which slugs like. But it also makes a great home for predators like beetles which feed on slugs and slug eggs. Litter left on the ground cultivates a biodiverse mixture of animals that control slug populations.

Encourage snakes and toads in the garden by providing places for them to hibernate. They love escargot. If none of this works for you try a slug bait containing iron phosphate. It is considered organic, and less harmful to animals than metaldehyde baits. Contrary to popular belief, iron phosphate can harm dogs and the more common chelated form of iron phosphate is harmful to the environment since it contains EDTA.

Wizzie's Wonderful World of Insects

Robber Flies

- Wizzie Brown, Travis County AgriLife Extension Entomologist

Robber flies, while often startling to see in the garden, are some of the good guys. These flies feed on a wide variety of other arthropods, helping to manage pest insects in the landscape. They are a generalist predator, so capture and eat whatever insects they can.

Robber flies have elongated bodies with a tapered abdomen. Eyes are large, prominent, and have a divot between them. Size can vary from 1/16"- 2" in length. These flies have long, bristly legs that help them capture prey.



Robber flies have a complete life cycle- egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Egg masses are often laid in crevices in soil, bark, or wood, or on low lying vegetation. Larvae can be found in soil or other organic material and are predatory. Larvae feed on eggs, larvae, or soft-bodied insects. Pupation takes place in soil. A complete life cycle can take 1-3 years depending on species and environmental conditions.

To feed, robber flies often perch in high, open locations to spot prey. Robber flies capture prey while in flight. They inject a paralyzing toxin that also liquefies the prey's body and makes it easy for the robber fly to eat.

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.

This work is supported by Crops Protection and Pest Management Competitive Grants Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27188 /project accession no. 1013905] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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Do You Know About...?

Lawn Maintenance Safety

- Fran Sheppard

Are you one of those who take lawn maintenance with a shrug of the shoulders? Or do you take it seriously? Did you know that more than 230,000 people are treated for injuries from lawn and garden tools, per year? Those tools include lawn mowers, trimmers, edgers, and other power equipment. Injuries can include minor to severe burns and lacerations, broken bones, eye injuries, and loss of fingers and toes! Death is even included, when involving lawn mowers and garden tractors. There was one of our early Bell County Master Gardeners who died when his tractor pinned him and ran over him.

Let us take a look at some very basic safety measures that you can do to prevent injury to both yourself and others, including pets.

Walk-Behind Mowers

1. Do not remove any safety guards.
2. Do not operate mowers in a manner or in an environment that is unsafe.
3. Take a look at where you will be mowing, and remove any debris. Also locate those sprinkler heads, and any electrical wires or cords, and remove them.
4. Do not put your hands and feet near the blade when the mower is running.
5. Don't try to clear the discharge chute of clogged grass when the mower is running, because.....maybe you will lose a finger or two?
6. Mow back and forth along the side of a steep hill, not up and down. (I saw this recently, and could not believe what I saw!)
7. Wear flip flops. Oops, that is a no-no. Best to wear boots or closed toe shoes to avoid slipping and falling.
8. Beckon your little one to walk along side you, with the family pet, for company. Now, what is the matter with this picture???? Never allow children or pets to do this nor to operate a walk-behind mower, because they cannot control it
9. Use a funnel when fueling, and clean up any spills. Hmmm, maybe I can prevent that spill from going into the drain, or my soil.
10. Puff, puff, puff that cigarette! Not. Never smoke when servicing, operating, or fueling/refueling a mower. You might go up in smoke....
11. Wear the shortest shorts possible, along with the

flip flops and those new glasses, along with the ear plugs to the radio so to listen to the latest hits. And what is wrong with that picture? Best to wear long pants, boots or closed toe shoes, safety glasses, and if the engine is loud, ear plugs.

12. Before cleaning, inspecting, adjusting or repairing the cutting blade, be sure the engine is off. You don't want to go through life with missing fingers, do you?

13. Don't mow a wet lawn, because you might slip and fall. This is the leading cause of injuries when using a mower.

14. Never leave a mower running unattended, especially when children are near.

Riding Mowers

A lot of the same basic safety measures apply to a riding mower; however here are a few more safety hints:

1. Invite others to come aboard! The more the merrier! No, do not allow extra riders.
2. Read the manual, become familiar with your new riding mower.
3. Always look behind you when you back up. Too bad they don't have the back-up screen like that new model car you own.
4. Disengage the mower blade when on pavement, sidewalks, or gravel lanes. The reason is obvious. Duck, incoming flying object.....
5. When drinking alcohol or taking drugs, impairment of judgment follows. Best not to operate while under the influence.
6. Children should not be playing on the lawn when you mow, either with a walk-behind or riding mower.
7. Don't let children operate a riding mower until they have been properly instructed, and can operate the mower safely.

As you can see, it does not take rocket science to operate either a walk-behind or a riding mower. What it does take is some common sense and just following some very basic safety rules.

For more information of Lawn Maintenance Safety, please refer to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension pamphlet E-356



What's Been Happening...

Killeen Municipal Community Court Garden

- Gail Pierce

Photo by Gail Pierce

Century Cactus Goes Boom on Thursday, June 21st. I was harvesting at the Killeen Community gardens when I heard a cracking sound. I turned around to see the cactus just as it hit the ground. Needles to say, I was surprised. This was an Agave Century Cactus planted about 10 years ago.

Agave Century Cactus dies after flowering, but produces suckers shoots from the base, which continue its growth. The average lifespan is around 10 years.



June General Meeting

- Sylvia Maedgen

Photos by Daisy Klassy

Bill Walker presented the program on Blackberries and provided blackberries for part of the food preparations for the social time period. Art Carr received his Turfgrass Specialist certification from Wayne Schirner.



What's Been Happening...

Tour of the Leach Teaching Gardens at Texas A&M University

- Judy Hoelscher

The first phase of The Gardens at Texas A&M University opened Friday, June 15, with a ceremony for the seven-acre Leach Teaching Gardens. The Gardens are planned to be a 40 acre complex. The twenty-five Master Gardeners who traveled to Texas A&M enjoyed the camaraderie and the 21 themed gardens of the first phase, an outdoor classroom, an event lawn demonstration area, and pavilion.

Construction began in 2015 with the stabilization of White Creek and the installation of two bridges that connect the White Creek Apartments, School of Public Health and College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences to the rest of the campus.

The first seven acres of the Gardens is named the Leach Teaching Gardens and includes an herb, citrus and rose gardens, a fruit orchard, gardens with Mexican, German and Czech landscaping, a vineyard, a Texas Master Gardeners Earth-Kind Garden plus other elements.

The Leach Teaching Gardens will provide hands-on learning and demonstrations to teach water conservation, food and healthy living. The Gardens also will provide an outdoor laboratory for applied research to be used across colleges, departments and majors.

About \$11.6 million dollars have been invested in the seven acre initial phase of the gardens. Amy and Tim Leach from Midland are the lead donors with many others contributing finances, design, landscaping, construction, and plants etc.

Many of the wildflowers, plants and trees are taking root but promise to provide years of beauty to the campus and a living and learning environment to all who visit. Admission is free to all who visit.



Photos by Judy Hoelscher & Texas A&M

What's Happening in Your Yard

Mourning Doves

Photos by Bill Walker

- Bill Walker

Here are two interesting pictures I just took of two mourning dove chicks in and among ripe peaches in my orchard.



If we feel this way, can you imagine how the plants feel after being in the 100 degree hot sun all day!
Don't forget to water your plants.

Fig & Peach Trees

- Sylvia Maedgen

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

My brown turkey fig trees are producing figs this year. This is my fourth year and I hope to get enough figs to make at least one batch of fig preserves. Last year I only got a handful. My peach trees I planted last year are still alive and doing well. I got a really good crop of beets this year.



Current Master Gardener Certified Specialists

Report by Stacye Parry

Specialist	Name	Last Name	Date Received
Compost	Mary Ann	Everett	2013
Compost	Lou	Hight	2013
Earthkind	Mary Ann	Everett	2006
Earthkind	Mary Ann	Everett	2007
EarthKind	Gary	Slanga	2010
Entomology	Mary Ann	Everett	2006
Entomology	Gary	Slanga	2007
Fire Ant	Mary Ann	Everett	2002
Fire Ant	Ilene	Miller	2001
Fire Ant	Charles	Newsom	2001
Firewise	Mary Ann	Everett	2011
Firewise	Louann	Hight	2011
Firewise	Patricia	Maskunas	2012
Firewise	Charles	Newsom	2002
Firewise	Gladys	Newsom	2002
Firewist Landscape	Mary Ann	Everett	2012
First Detector	Gail	Koontz	2016
First Detector	Mary Ann	Everett	2013
First Defender	Jane	Van Praag	2015
Greenhouse	Gary	Slanga	2007
Greenhouse	Donald	Wyatt	2008
Greenhouse Management	Wayne	Baker	2008
Greenhouse Management	Wayne	Baker	2009
Growing Healthy Communities	Mary Ann	Everett	2018
Home Fruit Specialist	Gary	Slanga	2015
Irrigation Efficiency	Wayne	Schirner	2018
Irrigation	Gary	Slanga	2013
JMG	Mary Ann	Everett	2007
Oak Wilt	MaryAnn	Everett	2006
Oak Wilt	Bob	Gordon	2005
Oak Wilt	Jeanette	Karr	2005

FYJ .

Current Master Gardener Certified Specialists - con't.

Specialist	Name	Last Name	Date Received
Propagation	Mary Ann	Everett	2007
Propagation	Carol	Morisett	2018
Propagation	Charles W.	Newsom	2008
Rainfall Harvesting	Mary Ann	Everett	2006
Rainfall Harvesting	Violet	Okeson	2006
Rainwater Harvesting	Karen	Colwick	2011
Texas Superstars	Walter	Ponder	2018
Tree Steward	Mary Ann	Everett	2011
Tree Care	Gary	Slanga	2016
Turf Grass	Arthur	Carr	2018
Turf Grass	Karen	Colwick	2018
Turf Grass	Gail	Koontz	2018
Turf Grass	Kathy	Love	2018
Turf Grass	Stacye	Parry	2018
Turf Grass	Fran	Sheppard	2018
Vegetable	Patricia	Maskunas	2012
Vegetable	Mary Ann	Everett	2014
Vegetable	Larry	Moehnke	2017
Vegetable	Wayne	Schirner	2016
Vegetable	Gary	Slanga	2012



Announcements

Bamberger Ranch Tour - October 3, 2018

SELAH

Bamberger Ranch Preserve

- Jan George

This is probably one of the most educational tours we will have. It will teach us how to care for our environment and improve our natural resources. Bamberger ranch is a 5,500 acre educational and teaching facility located in Blanco County; therefore, it is very difficult to obtain a reservation. They can only take 40 people per tour. I will start taking reservations the first of Aug. The cost will be about \$50.00. I don't know exactly. I will have the exact figure in August. We will have to bring our lunch and eat on the bus since they do not allow food on the grounds. The tour will be from 9:30-1:00. You can visit the Bamberger Ranch web site at <https://bambergerranch.org/> to gain more information.



and Wine Tour - October 13, 2018

- Jan George

The Wildseed Farm located in Fredericksburg will have a Monarch butterfly release and give us a demonstration on how they band the butterflies. This should be a wonderful and unusual experience. We will also visit a couple of wineries. You do not have to wine taste. You can enjoy the beautiful grounds. You will be able to purchase a sandwich, drink, and ice cream at the Wildseed Farm or bring your lunch. Once again, food and drink is not allowed to be brought onto the property so you will have to eat on the bus. I will have all the details and prices by the first of August and will start taking reservations at that time.

Gardening in Bell County

- Carol Morisset and Jan Upchurch

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

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| • July 19 | Fall Gardening | • October 18 | Texas Native Gardening in the Winter |
| • August 16 | Propagation of Plants | • November 15 | Raised Bed Gardening |
| • September 20 | Greenhouse Basics | | |

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](mailto:carol.j.morisset@gmail.com)

Announcements

July is ... National July Belongs to Blueberries Month

New Class Committee Coordinator Needed

- Sylvia Maedgen

The New Class Committee for the 2019 Master Gardener Intern Class is in need of a Coordinator to replace Mary Ann Everett. She is stepping down as she has performed in this position for several years and has done a great job and will be a tough act to follow.

If you have been wanting to get more involved with our MG organization and are interested in volunteering to lead this committee, please contact Wayne Schirner as soon as possible so work can begin gearing up for next year's classes. Wayne can be reached by email or phone at - docwas@icloud.com or 254-541-9385.



New Approved MG Project

- Wayne Schirner

A new project, "How to Create a New Vegetable Garden" has been approved by the BOD and the CEA, Lyle Zoeller. This project is now listed in the VMS system. Look at the project description, and if you are interested, sign-up to volunteer for this project. No previous experience with vegetable gardening is required.



Refreshment Roster for General Meetings - Looking for a Few More Volunteers

- Jane Van Praag

The August general meeting still needs some additional volunteers to prepare refreshments. There is no set theme as of yet for August so whomever signs up will get to join Sharon Hardin and Kathleen Lester in developing one. Please let me know if you're willing to do your part! You can contact me at - jlvnpaag@sbcglobal.net.

Thank You!

Thanks to the dozens of you who have sent condolences and compassionate words of support over the loss of my beloved companion dog Vinny. In those first few days you all helped to fill the massive love void left in my life by his passing.

With heartfelt gratitude, Kathy Love



Announcements

July General Meeting

- Kathy Love

The July general meeting will be held on the 13th. The education presentation will be on "Growing Corn" by Bill Walker.

Social time is 8:30 a.m., meeting at 9 a.m. in the learning center building. If you have non-member friends whom you believe would be interested in this program, bring them along. Remember, our monthly education program is always open to the public.

Board of Director's Meeting

The July Board of Director's Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 27th 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, July 22nd.

Grounds Workdays

- Johnny Jones and Tom Rennels

Here is the workday schedule for July:

July 4, 2018 No Workday

July 11, 2018 7:00 a.m. Workday

July 18, 2018 7:00 a.m. Workday

July 25, 2018 7:00 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

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| July 24-26 | Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training
Corinth - Cost \$225
Deadline to register - June 26 |
| Sept. 4-6 | Vegetable Specialist Training
San Antonio - Cost \$200
Deadline to register - August 15 |
| Sept. 18-20 | Texas Superstars Specialist Training
Tyler - Cost \$200/\$225
Deadline to register - July 13/Aug. 24 |
| Sept. 24-25 | Landscape Design School Series XXVI, Course I
College Station - Cost \$135/\$145/\$165
Deadline to register - Aug. 1/Sept. 1/
After Sept. 1 |
| Dec. 5-7 | Composter Specialist Training
Rosenberg - Cost \$225
Deadline to register - Nov. 14 |
| Ongoing | Earth-Kind On-Line Master Gardener Training modules
Go to - https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/ |



**MINDS UNDER
CONSTRUCTION**

Officers

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First Vice President	Kathy Love
Second Vice President	Louann Hight
Recording Secretary	Stacye Parry
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Lew Quesinberry
Treasurer	Gail Koontz

Directors

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

Committee Chairpersons

Awards	Kathy Love
Plant Sale	Sylvia Maedgen
Webmaster	Pat Johnson
AgriLife Agent	Lyle Zoeller

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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



A publication of the Bell County Master Gardener Association sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension of Texas A & M University



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