

The Blooming Bell

March 2020



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Daffodil

Flower of the Month



Submitted by Jan Stanfield



Submitted by Jan Upchurch



Submitted by Sylvia Maedgen



Daffodils in midst of Snowdrops
submitted by Kim Pringle

March 2020

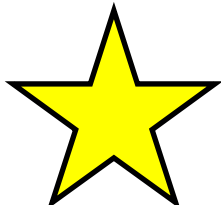
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Getting a Garden Ready— Sammons Community Ctr, Temple 5:30-7:30 PM	4 Burger Wednesday *Work Day-8 am Herb Study 9 AM AgriLife Classroom	5 Humming-bird Presentation to Retired Teachers Assoc.	6 Propagation Belton Horticultural Club 1:30-3:00 –Ext Office Classroom	7 Harker Heights Outdoor Expo 9:00-1:00
8 Daylight Saving Start	9 ☺Super Full Moon	10	11 BCMGA General Membership Meeting	12	13	14
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18 *Work Day-8 am	19 Gardening in Bell County-Soil Prep & Lawn Care 6:30-8:00 Learning Ctr.	20 Cavazos Elementary Career Day 8:00-2:30	21 Vegetable & Herb Special Sale Meadows Elementary Multi-cultural Fair
22	23	24 ☺Micro New Moon	25 *Work Day-8 am Board of Directors Meeting 9 AM Deadline for Blooming Bell Submissions	26	27 Rain Barrel Workshop Set Up	28 Rain Barrel Workshop 9:00-12:00
29	30	31 *In the event of rain, there will be no Workday.				

For more information on events this month, please see “What’s Coming Up!”, pages 34 to 37, and the calendar in the Volunteer Management System (VMS).

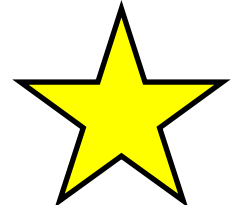
☺For details on Super Full Moon and Micro New Moon, check out this link: <https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/moon/super-full-moon.html>

Mark your calendar

- ◆ Plant Swap, Apr 8, Learning Center, 8:15
- ◆ Spring Plant Sale, Apr 11, Belton Expo
- ◆ TMGA State Conference, May 12-14, Waco



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



President's Corner

Glenn Melton



Another Home & Garden Show has come and gone, and we all had a great time, presenting classes and meeting with the public. I want to thank all the Master Gardeners who assisted in setting up, staffing, and tearing down everything, and for helping to make this annual event such a huge success. Saturday proved to be the busiest, not only in the Kids Zone but in the main area as well. Historically, Sunday is the slowest day, and this year was no exception. We need to take a look at our program for next year and perhaps schedule one or two more classes on Saturday and do away with them entirely on Sunday. We can explore this option more next year.

As Spring approaches and the days become longer, warmer, and wetter we will experience an increase in calls, emails, and walk-ins at the Help Desk. Requests for home/site visits will spike during Spring and last through late Summer. We can expect requests from local school districts, civic, and other organizations for assistance as they start planning their Spring gardening activities, horticultural, and educational programs. It is our mission to teach, guide, and help implement these programs, and I encourage all our members to step up and assist wherever needed.

Some of our members are anxious about speaking to a large group of people and may feel unqualified to provide any meaningful input at these events. I recommend two of our members team up to teach a few of these programs and develop a level of confidence that will enable them to participate in future events. This will also be helpful when conducting home/site visits throughout the county.

As some of our members already realize, when addressing citizens concerns about their home landscapes, you will meet some very interesting people and invariably learn something in the process. And, as always, members can contact me, and I'll help in any way I can. Addressing the increase in requests for assistance in this manner should enable us to continue providing the level of support our citizens have come to expect.

I hope to see you all at the Spring Vegetable & Herb Sale in March and the Spring Plant Sale in April. One last reminder: All Board of Directors meetings are held in the Learning Center, at 9a.m., and still the 4th Wednesday of every month. Thank you all for everything you do for our organization. I sincerely appreciate your support.....Glenn

Pollinator Conservation

*Newsletter article from Wizzie Brown
Extension Program Specialist- IPM
Texas AgriLife Extension Service*

There are numerous animal pollinators with the majority of those being insects. When most people think of pollinators, they think of bees and more specifically, honey bees. While honey bees are pollinators, they are only a small portion of the bee population around the world. The majority of bees are solitary and nest in the ground. Solitary bees are not aggressive so people should not be afraid of them, especially since many of them are also stingless.

Butterflies and moths are also important pollinators. Unfortunately, due to habitat destruction and other factors, their populations are on the decline. If you want to provide habitat for butterflies and moths, you need to ensure to fulfill the requirements of all life stages. Host plants are needed for eggs and caterpillars; nectar plants are needed for adults; and overwintering sites are needed for various stages.

Flies are an often overlooked pollinator. With their poor reputation for carrying diseases, many people think of flies as pests. Flies can be beneficial by fitting into food webs, breaking down waste material, and pollinating plants (including some food crops such as apples and peppers).

Ideas to conserve pollinators:

- ◆ Plant native plants that provide nectar blooms spring, summer, and fall
 - * Provide a variety of colors
 - * Provide a variety of flower/bloom shapes
 - * Provide multiple levels
- ◆ Reduce turf and replace with flowering plants
- ◆ Plant native bunch grasses which can provide food and shelter for insects
- ◆ Allow fallen leaves to remain on property to provide shelter
- ◆ Create areas of bare soil for ground nesting bees (choose sunny areas that will provide dry soil)
- ◆ Use IPM (integrated pest management) to reduce pesticide use
- ◆ Provide water in a SAFE manner for insects
 - * Use shallow dishes with rocks or stones

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.

What's Been Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden February 8, 2020

Photos and reporting by Randy Brown

Two 2020 Interns in garden; David Slaughter and Gary Williams. Four varieties of potatoes planted. Onions are coming along great. Tomato Fence Area mulched in and ready for planting. Lot of weeding and other maintenance done.



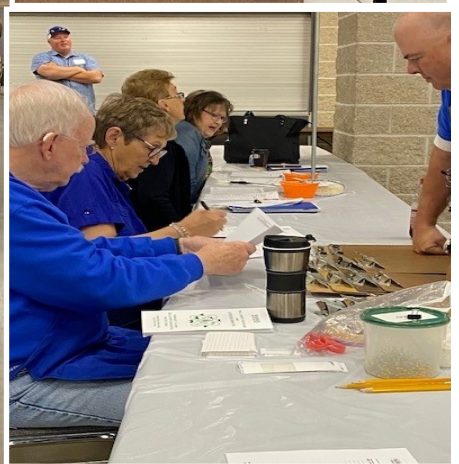
What's Been Happening...

Bell County Youth Fair February 1–8, 2020



The annual Bell County Youth Fair and Livestock Show was held at the Bell County EXPO Center. A huge thanks to the Master Gardener and Intern volunteers who assisted in the Family Consumer Science Division. There were **2,622** entries across all divisions!!

And thanks to the amazing team of Superintendent Betty Nejtek, Jackie McLaughlin, Bell County Family and Community Agent, and Assistant Superintendent Christy Reese for training us on our responsibilities and keeping us all moving in the right directions. It was a wonderful experience for all.



What's Been Happening...

Bell County Youth Fair February 1 through February 8, 2020



What's Been Happening...

Scenes from Mother Earth News Fair, February 15-16, 2020
Randy Brown



Kathleen Brown_ Melinda Arriola



Wayne Schirner presented
Square Foot Gardening



What's Been Happening...

Home and Garden Show February 22 and 23, 2020

Photos by Jason Johnson, MG Intern



What's Been Happening...

Workday at Montessori School, Temple, on February 13, 2020

Janice Smith and Marjorie Gillmeister worked with students ages 4-6 and 7-9 years.



Photos by Janice Smith

What's Been Happening...

Temple College Phi Theta Kappa Community Garden 2/19/2020

photos and article by Marjorie Gillmeister

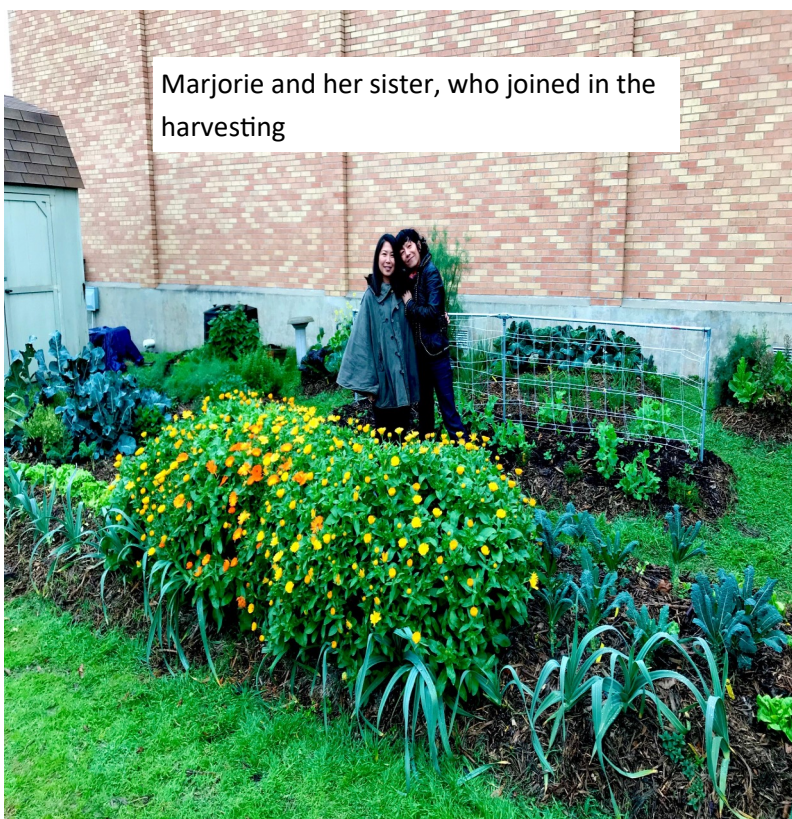
Special thank you to all who attended and participated in harvesting and cooking garden samplings of brussels sprouts, broccoli, escarole, fennel, and chives for all to enjoy. The garden is still reaping a bountiful harvest with all the love and dedication that is put into it by The PTK students and Bell County Master Gardeners.



Chef Carla Harmon

What's Been Happening...

Phi Theta Kappa Community Garden 2/19/2020 *cont'd*
photos by Marjorie Gillmeister



Marjorie and her sister, who joined in the harvesting



What's Been Happening...

What is Mushroom Compost?

Article by Marjorie Gillmeister

Mushroom compost is a type of slow-release, organic plant fertilizer. Often referred to as Spent Mushroom Substrate (SMS), Mushroom Compost is the growing medium that mushroom growers use it is made from organic agricultural materials, such as hay, straw, straw horse bedding, poultry litter, horse manure, corn cobs and hulls, cottonseed meal, cocoa shells and gypsum. Sphagnum peat moss adds to the organic nature of the substrate, providing a consistent, formulated and homogeneous Product.

The pH is also of importance since it is considered slightly acidic (6-7 pH) which is the ideal range for the solubility (availability) of most nutrients it is within a range that will help most plants thrive, and it has the rich, dark appearance of healthy soil, making it an attractive **compost** choice for **any** gardener. **Mushroom compost can** be used as a mulch or worked into your garden beds as a soil amendment.

Mushroom compost can supply nutrients and increase water-holding capacity of the **soil**.

Mushroom compost has a high ability to **retain** water, which means it improves the transmission of water through **soil** and helps to **keep** it **moist**. This makes it a great addition to the **soil** of plants which require a lot of hydration, and helpful to gardeners who **are** unable to water their gardens frequently.

Mushroom Farms Recycle

Mushroom farms rely on previously-used agricultural materials to create the substrate for mushroom production. This recycling process is key to successfully growing mushrooms.

Mushroom Compost is considered non-burning, so don't be afraid to let the material be right up against the stems of your plants. You don't want to plant directly into the compost, since it is much too rich for this type of application. It is only considered non-burning when you incorporate it into the soil, or top-dress existing plants that already have an established root system.

What About Weeds?

Weeds can be a major problem in most composted materials. Perhaps you've experienced this. As stated earlier, Mushroom Compost has to be completely sterilized before being placed into growing trays. Mushroom growers are extremely cautious and take every precaution to make sure there are no foreign weeds or bacteria in the growing medium. You won't have to worry about contaminating your flower beds, yard, or vegetable gardens with weeds when you use Mushroom Compost.

Resource:

www.mushroomcompost.com

www.mushroomcompost.org

What's Been Happening...

What is Mushroom Compost? *cont'd*

Article and photo by Marjorie Gillmeister

When purchasing mushroom compost always know your source and where it is being processed. I rely on lab testing of the compost before using. I take samples to The Grassland Soil and Water Research Laboratory in Temple, TX.

Taking soil samples, compost and ID for analysis at USDA-ARS
Address: 808 E Blackland Rd
Temple, TX 76502

Laboratory Phone [\(254\) 541-6542](tel:254-541-6542)

Rick Haney	rick.haney@usda.gov	
Buddy Faulkenberry	Buddy.Faulkenberry@usda.gov	(254) 770-6509
Chris Holle	cholle66@yahoo.com	(254) 770-6516



Mushroom compost beds at Temple College for the spring garden

What's Been Happening...

What is Mushroom Compost? *cont'd*

by Marjorie Gillmeister

MUSHROOM FARMS RECYCLE

Mushroom farmers help keep more than 230,000 acres of PA farmland in production.



SUBSTRATE PRODUCTION (Phase I) Wheat straw and hay, previously harvested and used in agricultural operations, (such as stable bedding from horse farms) is transferred to mushroom farms and placed on a wharf (concrete slab). It will be mixed and turned over several days as it decomposes.



COMPOST APPLICATION Compost can be re-applied to agricultural fields as well as mine reclamation projects, green roofs, storm water management basins, wetland material, greenhouses/nurseries, highway site remediation, erosion control and home gardens.



COMPOST is steamed, emptied and trucked away from the mushroom houses.



CASING/PINNING Peat moss is mixed with limestone and water and spread over the substrate. Small mushrooms (pins) push up and emerge through the peat moss.



CROPPING Mushrooms are harvested over several breaks or flushes. One break can last for six to eight days. Mushrooms are hand-picked, packed, refrigerated and sent to markets.

MUSHROOM HOUSE (Phase II)

Substrate is moved into mushroom houses, placed on beds and pasteurized. Mushroom spawn (seed) is then dug into the beds. With warm temperatures (75°F), the spawn will grow into thread like strands called mycelium.



What's Been Happening...

TABA Home & Garden Show Kidzone

by Marjorie Gillmeister

Special thank you to all the new class Interns and BCMG members who volunteered at the Temple Area Builders Association (TABA) Home & Garden Show Kidzone. Kids made "sprout heads" at the Master Gardener booth. Wolfgang's Garden eggshell gardening education & planting station were also fun filled activities. Total participants this year at our booths was 496! In 2019 we had 310 attendees.



Thank you to Laura Bridges and Marjorie Gillmeister for providing their time and all the materials for the activities.



What's Been Happening...

Field Trip to Temple College No Till Garden February 19, 2020

Photos and reporting by Charlotte Nunnery, MG Intern



It was so much fun and enlightening touring the no till garden beds at Temple College. We even ate some fresh vegetables from the garden sautéed and served gourmet style by Chef Carla.

The no till garden beds were absolutely amazing!!! Master Gardener Marjorie Gillmeister presented the no till process and also how she plants using the same process at their family farm in Rogers, including a slide show of her gardens.

I came away just amazed with a joyful heart of such a rewarding way to have a beautiful no till garden with mulch and mushroom compost without a lot of work. And another plus is this type of garden uses less water.



What's Been Happening...

Field Trip to Temple College No Till Garden February 19, 2020 *cont'd*
Photos by Charlotte Nunnery



What's Been Happening...

General Membership Meeting February 12, 2020

Photos by Randy Brown/Virginia Bargas

Dr. Craig Wilson of Texas A&M University presented an informative and lively program on the Monarch butterfly, "The Magic Journey", at the February 12 General Membership Meeting. Dr. Wilson was instrumental in bringing the butterfly garden initiative to Bryan-College Station and in motivating the mayors of College Station and Bryan to sign the Mayor's Monarch Pledge which requires significant city actions to protect the Monarch in their cities.

The Harker Heights, Belton, and Temple mayors are moving forward to sign the Monarch Pledge for their respective cities. The Harker Heights Mayor, the Belton Director of Parks and Recreation, and the Temple Director of Keep Temple Beautiful attended the presentation.



What's Been Happening...

General Membership Meeting February 12, 2020 cont'd

Photos by Randy Brown/Virginia Bargas



Barbara Ishikawa was presented the "Green Thumb Award".



Laura Bridges introduced us to her Sprout Pet.



Who is the masked lady who gave us the sage advice "thunder in February, freezing in April!"?



Refreshment Team: Virginia Bargas, Sylvia Maedgen, Carla Harmon, Kathleen Brown, Candy Morgan, Gail Christian, Jan George, and Debbi Harris. Not pictured is Jane Van Praag.



Community Outreach...

Grafting pecan and fruit trees and grapes was the topic of the February 15 Gardening in Bell County class presented by Master Gardener Gary Slanga, with special guest resident pecan grafter HR Schlinker.



Photos by Candy Morgan

Intern Projects....

Ruth Watkins, MG Intern, is preparing raised garden beds at her home.



Raised beds made of pallets, leveled and ready to be filled.



Beds are filled with a layer of pea gravel, and then a layer of hay.



Leaf compost is added over hay.



Mulch is topped with potting soil. Ready for planting!

Links of Interest...

Links to interesting reading submitted by Wayne Schirner

"Many gardeners deal with slugs and/or snails and there are many suggestions on the Internet on how to deal with them. This is a link to an article that attempted to look at the evidence behind many of these recommendations. I found it useful to be able to avoid things that have been shown to not work and thought it worthy of sharing." Wayne

<https://www.gardenfundamentals.com/get-rid-slugs-snails-garden/>

"Here's another link for something spinning around the Internet this week about diseases caused by soil borne pathogens. The specific meme is supposedly about someone who allegedly caught Legionnaire's Disease from potting mix. This is a link that discusses the issue of human diseases caused by pathogens in the soil and gives a good perspective." Wayne

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/soil-borne-diseases-gardeners/#more-6586>

In follow-up to the Monarch Butterfly program presented by Dr. Craig Wilson at the February 12 General Membership Meeting, here's a link to information from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

<https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/monarch-butterfly/>

And a link to Butterfly Gardening in Texas...

<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/butterfly-gardening/>



Internship...A View from Inside



**Victoria Ezagui
MG Intern**

The Continuing Journey of a Late Bloomer

Photo by Sylvia Maedgen

Well, it's January 29th and we've just finished our third week of class (four if you count orientation). I'm starting to get familiar with the routine, the top three being log your hours, hand in your homework and sign the thank you card. Seeing the same faces weekly (interns and Master Gardeners) is comforting to me realizing we are on the same journey. The Master Gardener/ Mentors are always helpful, friendly, fun, and welcoming. In turn this makes us all feel relaxed and accepted into the MG community.

This morning I completed my three hours at the Help Desk along with Penny McCormack, a very delightful lady to train with. Penny shared her thoughts about working at the Help Desk and like me she had some anxiety, not really sure what to expect. Glenn Melton was there to instruct us about how the Help Desk operated. He was very laid-back but covered the basics very well. Then he stepped back (not too far away, thankfully!) and allowed us to find our own way. We retrieved a voice mail, answered the phone and talked to two walk-ins and logged it all on the computer. Glenn was professional and knowledgeable as he answered their questions. Just sitting there and listening we learned some things about oak trees, roses, and pecan trees. So, the Help Desk is much more than just answering questions and solving problems. It's also about learning as you research for answers and listen to the advice being given.

Penny stated the one reason she liked the Help Desk was, well, helping people. It's very satisfying when you can help solve a problem, or give some helpful tips. At the end of our three hours, we felt confident this is something we could and would do. We can say we survived the Help Desk!

Susan Fogleman was out at Whistle Stop park cleaning up, then came back to help with transplanting tomato seedlings for the Home and Garden Show. She said she was really enjoying the course.

Ron Jones came by that day to sign up for the Help Desk and then was asked to help with some faucets (being an engineer he was familiar with the project). Afterwards he told me he helped cut some plastic bottles. So as you can see becoming a Master Gardener is more than knowing and growing plants. It's being creative, hard-working, flexible and willing to help when and where you are needed.

It's been a long day, but very satisfying. I'm looking forward to our next class as well as volunteering at the Bell County Youth Fair next week.

Another plus for today? We got our new, colorful books and our t-shirts which were created by a team from our class. Awesome job!

Marissa Decker, Penny McCormack, and Susan Fogleman wearing class of 2020 T-shirts.



Internship...A View from Inside



**Victoria Ezagui
MG Intern**

The Continuing Journey of a Late Bloomer— Feb 17

Photo by Sylvia Maedgen

Volunteering is the heartbeat of Master Gardeners and I got my first taste of this vital part of the program through the Bell County Youth Fair. This event was held at the Bell County Expo Center in Belton, the first week of February. I have never been to this event and wasn't really sure what to expect.

As I walked into the main room where the exhibits would be displayed, there were long tables in the center and smaller tables placed in front of each exhibit, whether candy, cookies, pies, crafts etc. There were several interns at various locations as well as some that came early to set up, along with many Master Gardeners helping in many areas. I found a place to serve the first few hours I would be there, as a runner for candies.

There were three steps in the process of accepting entries and placing them in the right category. The candy was brought to the first table where all the forms were checked to make sure the entries were in the right place and all paper work was in order. Then the candy and recipes were given to the table behind them, where the ingredients and instructions were looked over, making sure all the criteria was met. Once the candy was determined to have met the required standards, they were given to me, to place in the right category for judging later that evening.

There were Junior and Senior groups (age specific) to be placed on the table matching the correct categories, (i.e. fudge, hard candy, nougat, and so forth). It truly was a learning experience, and to think this process was happening all over the room for several hours was amazing. It was so heartwarming to see young people handing in items that they created with such enthusiasm and pride.

Later in the evening I was a judge for the drop cookies along with a couple of friends I knew. There were over thirty types of drop cookies that we needed to taste and evaluate. It was such fun, and I truly got a sugar rush! We had to determine if the cookies were well shaped, good color and if the texture was chewy or crispy, as well as how flavorful they were. With each entry, we had to write a few positive comments which we hoped would encourage these young men and women to continue to be creative and adventurous and to pursue bigger and better things in their lives. Who knows, perhaps there were some future Master Gardeners in the group!

At the end of February I've signed up to help at the Home and Garden Show in the Kids Zone area. I'm really excited to show children that growing things can be fun, educational and exciting, something I'm learning every week in class.

And the journey continues.

Internship...A View from Inside



Dave Slaughter
MG Intern

Gardens and Calendars



Looking at the photo of radishes to the left, it's not possible to discern where they're growing: It could be Texas or just about anywhere else in the world. Radishes, like many other vegetables grow just about anywhere, the difference is the planting date on the calendar.

This photo was taken in early February in my Texas garden, but I have grown radishes in Southern Michigan, Central Pennsylvania, Central Colorado and Western Washington. In Michigan and Pennsylvania, this photo would not be possible until early May, after the snow melt and culmination of the spring rains; in Colorado, this photo might not be possible until April, between the snow melt and the beginning of the hail and thunderstorm season. In Washington, hopefully this photo could be taken in June, between the early and late rainy season. Growing up in Michigan, the early months of summer were prime planting season, whereas in Texas, June is a busy harvest month. In fact, tomato production is peaking, and shade cloths begin to adorn the garden landscape to minimize the impact of the hot afternoon sun. Admiring a stand of sweet corn in Michigan with tassels gently waning back and forth in the wind, is no different than observing the same sight in Texas, just the calendar month is different. In Michigan it

might be late July, but in Texas, it's sometime in April. As a child growing up in Michigan, I remember the saying "make sure your corn is knee-high by the fourth of July" which translated to a plentiful harvest, later that fall.

July in Texas, implies the corn has been harvested, eaten or preserved and the space in the garden, where the corn once stood, is now being prepared for a fall garden. In Michigan, a fall garden consists of digging potatoes, harvesting the final winter squash and picking the last of the green tomatoes, before the first frost. And with any luck, planting a cover crop, before the first blanket of snow covers the ground.

From my non-scientific observation, vegetable gardens are basically the same everywhere. Sure, there are unique geographical differences; for example, you couldn't grow okra in Washington, there just isn't enough sun or heat. However, you could readily grow broccoli or cauliflower during the months of June or July, something you wouldn't attempt in Texas. Clearly there are differences in gardening geographically, but there are numerous similarities as well. It's truly about the day on the calendar, rather than the physical location of the garden.

In Texas, we are fortunate to have multiple growing seasons with plenty of sunshine and other resources to essentially garden twelve months of the year. Like many locations across the nation, we have challenges as well, such as heat, dramatic temperature swings and the perfect environment for an abundant insect habitat. But as gardeners we find ways to overcome the challenges and continually strive to create a bountiful harvest. Besides, what better place to play in the dirt than in the great state of Texas.

Master Gardener Class of 2020

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

1 of 5

Our eighteen interns in the 2020 Master Gardener class were asked to complete brief bios on Orientation day. What follows are their pics and information to help us get to know them.

Sal Alcasey, from Temple, is a retired Toxicologist, Veterinarian

Gardening is a hobby and he loves nature. Sal's unique skills or talents include landscape, research, teaching, golfing, and gardening.



Kris Alexander, from Belton, is a retired nurse. She states that she became interested in gardening out of "necessity".

Kris has a good sense of humor and she likes people.



Jamie Allen, from Belton, is originally from Arlington, TX. She is a landscape foreman and became interested in gardening through FFA.

Jamie's skills/talent are gardening and crafting.



Marissa Decker, from Belton, is originally from Austin, TX. Her interest in gardening comes from her grandmother and from being a beekeeper.

Marissa's skills/talent involve bees, gardens, and pollinator friendly native flowers.



Master Gardener Class of 2020

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

2 of 5

Victoria Ezagui, from Harker Heights, is originally from Ohio. She is a retired teacher who has “always loved growing things.”

Victoria’s skills/talents are painting (oil and acrylics) and writing.



Susan Fogleman, from Temple, previously lived in Virginia and Ohio. She is a dietitian. She has been interested in gardening since childhood and her father was a horticulturist.

Susan’s skills/talents are quilting and nutrition.



Jason Johnson, from Morgan’s Point, is originally from Colorado and has a career in real estate. His interest in gardening led him to build one in his yard and he has also started an herb garden.

Jason has a Masters in Business and his skills/talents are building, social media, and his love of plants and people.



Ronald Jones, from Belton, is originally from Waco. He is a retired engineer and his interest in gardening comes from his wife, Charlotte, who is a Master Gardener.

Ron’s skills/talents are troubleshooting and engineering design.



Master Gardener Class of 2020

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

3 of 5

Bill Kean, from Belton, is originally from Washington, DC. He had a career in Economic Development.

Bill's interest in gardening comes from his mother and grandfather.

Bill is bilingual having taken a course in Spanish in Nueces Co.



Rebekah (Becky) Lackey, from Moody, is originally from Evant, TX. She is a retired Administrative Assistant. Her interest in gardening is due to her family.

Becky describes herself as being "artsy fartsy" and she loves to be creative.



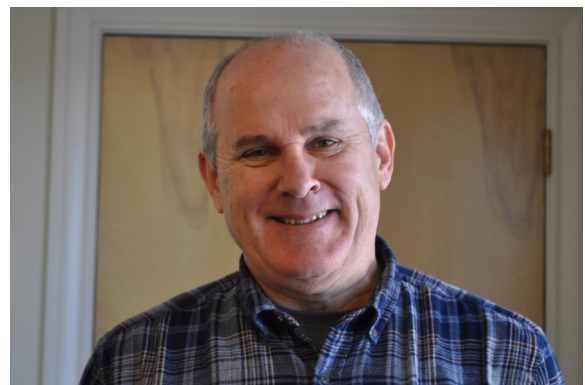
Penny McCormack from Temple, is originally from Louisiana. She is a retired Special Education Teacher and became interested in gardening through her mom.

Penny's skill/talent is decorating her home and helping friends decorate their homes as well.



Jack McSpedon, from Temple, is originally from Carmel, NY, and he is a mechanical engineer. Jack states he has tried growing vegetables for many years with "mixed success".

Jack's skills/talents are mechanical, carpentry, and spreadsheets.



Master Gardener Class of 2020

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

4 of 5

Crystal Mears, from Belton, is originally from Dallas. She is a retired Information System Analyst.

Crystal's interest in gardening comes from articles she has read. She is skilled in computers.



Charlotte Nunnery, from Belton, is originally from Houston. She is a retired Administrative Assistant and independent Financial Broker. Her interest in gardening is for the love of having a beautiful yard and having lovely plants for enjoyment.

Charlotte enjoys helping others and has "some" computer skills.



Walt Schneider from Killeen, is a retired Budget Analyst. He enjoys organic fresh fruit and this has led to an interest in gardening.

Walt is skilled at budgeting and mowing.



Dave Slaughter, from Killeen, is originally from Michigan and he has had a career in logistics management.

Gardening has been a lifetime desire.

Dave's skills/talents are management, logistics, and building.



Master Gardener Class of 2020

Photos by Sylvia Maedgen

5 of 5

Ruth Edwards Watkins, from Belton, is an elementary school Art & Music Teacher. Ruth's family has always gardened. Her talents include playing the French Horn and the Ukelele.



Gary Williams, from Killeen, is originally from Virginia Beach, VA. He is a retired contract painter.

Gary's father-in-law always gardened and Gary got into it as a hobby.

His skills include contracting and building.



Searching for a Master Gardener to Lead the Seed Saver Group

This position requires the person to provide guidance to the volunteers harvesting and providing the seed. The group leader may attend monthly Board Meetings to provide current updates. Seed collecting time can be counted towards needed hours. It's an excellent way for the more remote members to make hours at home.

The past Seed Saver group leader, Crystal Fisher, has compiled some helpful notes for the person who takes over. To volunteer, please contact Stacye Parry at stacye-1120@gmail.com or by phone (254) 289-2010.

March 2020 Herb Study

Betty Nejtek

This month's herb study will cover four traditionally Mexican herbs; epazote, hoja santo, Mexican Mint Marigold and Mexican Oregano. While Mexican Mint Marigold and Mexican Oregano are more familiar to us, epazote and hoja santo may not be.

Epazote is primarily used south of the border in Southern and Central Mexico. It is used in black bean dishes, moles and stews. Epazote also has medicinal uses. It is sometimes considered a weed because of its ability to grow just about anywhere in any conditions and can spread prolifically like a weed.

Hoja Santo is more commonly known as Root Beer plant because of the scent of its leaves. Its leaves are used to wrap tamales, and in many sauces of Mexican cuisine. It is probably used more in our area as a landscape plant. It usually grows to about 4 feet tall and has a spread of about 3 feet. The plant has heart shaped velvety leaves and, in the summer, cylindrical white flower spikes appear.



Mexican Mint Marigold is also known as Texas tarragon and is the herb of the year this year! It has a strong anise scent and flavor. If you're not a fan of this flavor (like me) grow it as a landscape plant. It is a perennial, deer resistant, and easy to grow. In the fall Mexican Mint Marigold has beautiful yellow flowers.



Mexican Oregano is also a more common plant in our area and is a wonderful landscape plant. It has pinkish lavender tubular blooms from spring until fall. Mexican oregano has a strong oregano scent and has many culinary uses. It is also drought tolerant and deer resistant.

For a more detailed discussion of these herbs, make plans to attend the herb study on Wednesday, March 4th. Be sure to sign up on VMS!

Future Herb Studies

On April 1, Carla Harmon and Marjorie Gillmeister will lead the class on Asian Herbs. Herb study classes are held in the TX AgriLife Extension Office Classroom. Come join us!

Thanks to all the Volunteers for the 2020 Herb Study!

Brenda Smith and I weeded and pruned the Extension Herb beds on February 13 to spruce up for the BCMGA Vegetable and Herb sale on March 21. Gail Christian and others made plant markers for the beds.

On February 20, Vivian Rush, Kathy Lovelace and I presented "American Colonial Gardens" to Belton Church of Christ Beacons.

Looking forward to herb study on March 4 and Herbal Forum on March 20-21!!

Kim Pringle

Advanced Training Scholarships Available

Gail Koontz

The Board of Directors has again approved \$2,500 in funds for Advanced Training Scholarships in 2020.

The purpose is to assist with the mission of The Bell County Master Gardener Association in providing high quality, research based horticultural education to the residents of Bell County and the state of Texas.

We currently have a number of active members who have received one or more specialist (now called advanced training) certifications. We continue to receive requests for speakers on various topics and requests from citizens for advice on horticultural issues. Advanced Training entails not only a commitment of time, but a significant financial commitment as well. Registration for the training ranges from \$130 to \$250. Additionally, travel, lodging (two or three nights), and meals are all costs incurred by the individual receiving the training.

Advanced Training Scholarships would provide reimbursement of the registration cost up to \$250 once the member has completed the 20 service hours to be certified. And this would be in addition to the \$50 currently reimbursed by Texas Master Gardener Association.

In 2019, two members (Carol Morisset and Glenn Melton) were reimbursed their registration fees for the Advanced Trainings they attended and then completed the 20 hours of service (documented and signed by Lyle Zoeller).

The following guidelines will apply:

A committee (Gail Koontz, Carol Morisset, Stacey Parry, Walter Ponder, Bill Walker) will receive/approve the applications and oversee the distribution of the funds and evaluation of the program.

Member must be certified and active in Bell County Master Gardener Association.

Members will complete a short application to include a statement describing how they will use the training to assist with the mission of the Association.

Application should be submitted prior to attending the Advanced Training.

The initial request for funds will be for the 2020 fiscal year as part of the 2020 budget.

The scholarships will not be retro-active.

At the end of 2020, the committee will evaluate the program and report to the Board of Directors.

If you are already attending/have attended a 2019/2020 Advanced Training Class, you may still apply.

Please see Gail Koontz for an application. Or find it on VMS or our website.

What's Coming Up!

Community Outreach: Getting a Garden Ready—Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Sammons Community Senior Center

2220 W Avenue D, Temple (254) 298-5403

This is a scheduled event through the City of Temple.

A \$5 donation is expected to register. Call the center to sign up.

For information, contact Kathy Patterson (254) 931-1661

Community Outreach: Hummingbird Presentation

Thursday, March 5, 2020

2:00-3:00 PM at Grace Presbyterian Church, Temple

Kathy Patterson is presenting Hummingbirds to Retired Teachers Association members in Temple.

Community Outreach: Propagation

Friday, March 6, 1:30—3:00 PM

Bell County Extension Office classroom

Carol Morisset will present propagation to the Belton Horticultural club.

Community Outreach: Harker Heights Outdoor Expo (formerly Spring Fling)

Saturday, March 7—9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Harker Heights Library Conference Room

400 Indian Trail, Harker Heights

We will provide 3 classes for attendees. Seeds are needed for distribution as giveaways. We will also have an "Ask a Master Gardener" and will man 2 booths plus classes.

This is free to the community and a great way to take our Master Gardener programs to Harker Heights. Contact Carol Morisset or Melinda Arriola for information

Your Help is Greatly Appreciated!

What's Coming Up!

March 19 Gardening in Bell County Soil Preparation and Lawn Care

Candy Morgan

Get your lawn ready for Spring! Dr. Wayne Schirner, one of our most experienced Master Gardeners, will show us how to prepare our soils and lawns for the best performance for the coming season!

Please preregister so that we can plan for ample supplies at bellspeakers76513@gmail.com or if you are a Master Gardener, you may register on the Volunteer Management System.

The class will be held in the BCMGA Learning Center and is free of charge. The BCMGA will accept a \$5 donation to help offset costs.

Cavazos Elementary Career Day

1200 N. 10th, Nolanville

Friday, March 20, 2020 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM

Contact Janice Smith, Event Coordinator, (409) 771-0072 jmksmith5@gmail.com for information.

5 Volunteers are needed to help with hands on classroom activities for Pre-K through 2nd graders. We will have 25 minutes with each class, and a total of 8 classes.

In VMS, please indicate in the notes on your reply if you are available all day, or for morning only or afternoon only. The afternoon classes start at 12:30.



25th Annual Herbal Forum at Festival Hill - Round Top

Registration for the 25th Annual Herbal Forum to be held March 20th and 21st in Round Top began on January 20. The Herbal Forum Registration fee is \$80 for Saturday sessions and \$94.92 per person for Friday overnight accommodations. Optional workshops on Friday are an additional \$40 each. The plant sale is open to everyone.

There are 16 confirmed reservations for overnight stay. There are 2 beds available.

If you are interested or have questions about the Herbal Forum, please email kimberpringle@icloud.com or text 254-421-2593.

What's Coming Up!

Meadows Elementary Multicultural Fair

Fort Hood

Saturday, March 21, 2020 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

6 Volunteers Needed!

Contact Janice Smith, Event Coordinator, (409) 771-0072 jmksmith5@gmail.com for information.

Rain Barrel Workshop

Saturday, March 28, 2020 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

BCMG Learning Center

Event Coordinator Karen Colwick

Teaching rain barrel building to the general public and Master Gardeners

4 Volunteers are needed to help set up on Friday, March 27. Please sign up in VMS.

Plant Swap

Carol Morisset is organizing our plant swap which will take place on April 8 from 8:15 to 9:15 am at the BCMG Learning Center before the General Membership Meeting.

6 volunteers are needed to be there early and prepare signs and tables for plants, etc.

The swap includes bulbs, seeds, trees, cuttings, etc., whatever you want to share.

Start getting your plants ready early! Mark all containers with names of plants and if rooted or not.

The general rule is to take the same number that you bring to the swap.

THANKS FOR VOLUNTEERING!

What's Coming Up!

BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENER'S



VEGETABLE & HERB SALE

Sat. March 21 st
8:00 a.m. to 12 noon

BCMGA Learning Center at the AgriLife Extension
1605 N. Main St., Belton
254-933-5304 ~ bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu
<https://txmg.org/bell>



Bell County Master Gardener's



SPRING PLANT SALE

Sat., April 11th
8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Bell County EXPO Center
301 W. Loop 121, Belton
254-933-5304 ~ bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu
<https://txmg.org/bell>



What's Growin'?

Photos from her garden submitted by
Crystal Fisher.

Pink Oxalis



Texas Mountain Laurel



Texas Mountain Laurel with lady-
bug



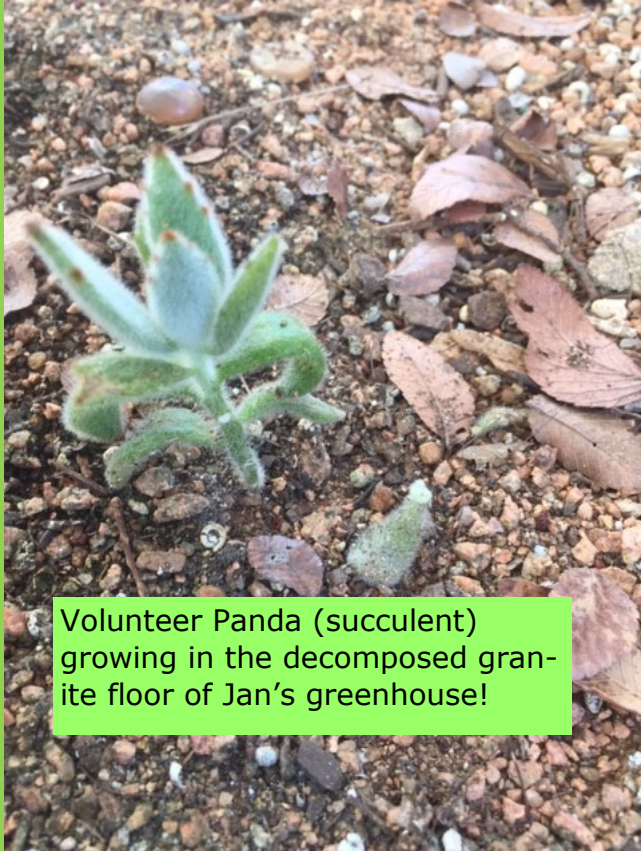
Firecracker Plant, *russelia equisetiformis*. 2 of 3 that are
less than a year old and insulated through every freeze.
"I hope it's blooming before the hummers show up."

What's Growin'?

Jan George found this Bromeliad Succulent blooming in her greenhouse!



Another look inside Jan's greenhouse :-)



Volunteer Panda (succulent) growing in the decomposed granite floor of Jan's greenhouse!



From Kim Pringle: This is my new gardening helper. Just showed up in my yard. Loves dandelions and keeps salad burnet neatly trimmed!

Got something growing that you would like to share? Send your pics for addition to the next Blooming Bell!

Announcements...

March General Meeting

When: March 11, 2020

Where: Harris Community Center
401 Alexander St, Belton

You may park either south or east of the building and enter from either direction. Please use the eastern entry to help maintain a comfortable temperature inside.

Time: Social starts at 9:30 am
Program starts at 10:00
Business meeting follows

Program Topic:

- * Development of New & More Disease Resistant Roses
- * Rose Rosette Disease
- * All Things Roses

Presenter: Mike Shoup, Antique Rose Emporium, Cooperative Research with Texas A&M University



Board of Directors Meeting

The March Board of Directors Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 25 at 9 a.m. in the Learning Center.**

Please submit your agenda items to Sylvia Maedgen, Recording Secretary, by **Friday, March 20.**

Grounds Workdays

Karen Colwick

The workday schedule for March:

March 4, 2020 8:00 a.m.

March 18, 2020 8:00 a.m.

March 25, 2020 8:00 a.m.



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

Refreshment Committee General Membership Meeting

March's refreshment coordinator is Susan Terry and the theme is **"St. Patrick's Day—All Things Green!"** Susan is assisted by Kathy Lester, Gail Christian, Gail Koontz, Christy Reese, Elaine McSpedon, and Jack McSpedon.

Members of the Herb Class are taking charge of refreshments for the April Meeting. 🧡



To volunteer for future meetings, please add your name to the calendar in VMS. You may also contact Virginia Bargas by phone at (512) 961-2680, or by email at bargasv@hot.rr.com.

Upcoming Events

Advanced Training

Apr 17-18	Plant Propagation	Fort Worth
May 5-7	Vegetables	San Antonio
May 26-28	Texas Superstars	San Antonio
Sep 24-26	Rainwater Harvesting	Fort Worth
Oct 15-17	Greenhouse Management	Fort Worth
Ongoing	Earth-Kind® On-Line Master Gardener Training modules	https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/

Extension Events



There are no upcoming Bell County Extension events at this time. Stay tuned!



Registration is open for the Texas Master Gardener State Conference hosted by the McLennan County Master Gardener Association in Waco.

<https://txmg.org/conference/>



Directors

Communications	Teri Marceau	2020-2021
Facilities	Paul Carter & Karen Colwick	2019-2020
Membership	Sherry Oermann	2020-2021
KMCCG	Edie Campbell	2019-2020
Outreach	Christy Reese & Carol Morisset	2019-2020
New Class	Gary Slanga	2019-2020
Projects	Barbara Ishikawa & Stacye Parry	2019-2020
Youth	Janice Smith	2020-2021

Executive Board

President	Glenn Melton	2019-2020
1 st Vice President	Jan Upchurch	2020-2021
2 nd Vice President	Bill Walker	2019-2020
Recording Secretary	Sylvia Maedgen	2020
Treasurer	Barbara Ishikawa	2020-2021

AgriLife Agent Lyle Zoeller

Contributing Writers and Photographers:

Glenn Melton	Sylvia Maedgen	Kim Pringle
Randy Brown	Crystal Fisher	Betty Nejtek
Jan Upchurch	Jan George	Candy Morgan
Carol Morisset	Marjorie Gillmeister	Ruth Watkins
Janice Smith	Teri Marceau	Charlotte Nunnery
Virginia Bargas	Jason Johnson	Jan Stanfield
Victoria Ezagui	Dave Slaughter	

Editor: Virginia Bargas

Please submit articles of less than 500 words as Word documents. Photos should be sent separately in a folder through a link using OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Photos, or in a zipped file. **Photos must be in the JPEG format.** Do not text your photos. (If texting is preferred, please let me know in advance.) Email your documents and pictures to Virginia at bargasv@hotmail.com.

Please do not send PDF documents.

BCMGA Webmaster

Rachel Glass - glass.rachel@gmail.com

Please send your updates for the BCMG web site to Rachel.

CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK PAGE! GO TO

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

Texas Master Gardener web site:

<https://txmg.org>

Bell County Master Gardener web site:

<https://txmg.org/bell/>

Texas Master Gardener Voluntary Management System

<https://texas.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm?logout=1>



1605 N. Main St.
Belton, Texas 76513
(254) 933-5305

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