

The Blooming Bell

November-December 2020



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Flowers of the Month



Holly

(*ilex* spp) photo credit Aggie Horticulture TAMU

Narcissus **(Paper White)**









Photo credit: Getty Images/Stock Photo

Holly is an evergreen that some say symbolizes hope.

Narcissus (bulb) is a genus of flowers. The plants that fall into this genus are commonly known as "Daffodils". Paperwhites are the winter growing variety. It is said that Paperwhites symbolize good wishes and respect.

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
						
6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9 National Pastry Day	10	11 Hanukkah Day 1	12  Poinsettia Day
13  Ice Cream Day	14	15	16	17	18 Hanukkah Day 8	19
20	21 Humbug Day	22	23	24  Christmas Eve	25  Merry Christmas	26 Boxing Day
27	28	29	30	31  New Year's Eve		

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, please continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask, and as much as possible STAY AT HOME! We will see you all soon.

Remember to record volunteer service hours and education hours each month.



President's Corner

Glenn Melton



Here we are at the end of another year and this one was exceptional. I want to thank all our members for their efforts in helping to make this year a tremendous success. Even during this pandemic, we were able to present several online classes as well as maintain a presence on social media. We have been holding our monthly meetings online and it looks like we have worked through most of the problems with the "GoToMeeting" application. We will probably continue holding meetings online for the foreseeable future. Please look for a meeting invitation in your email and, if for some reason you do not receive one, you will find the phone number and access code in the VMS Events Calendar. Keep in mind that no meetings will be held in December. The calendar should be updated soon to show meeting dates in January 2021 and beyond.

Remember that our Master Gardener class of 2021 starts next month. The class will be held virtually so we will not see much of the new interns at the Extension Office. But if you should run into any of them please say hello and welcome them into our organization.

The holidays will be a little different this year so if you are having loved ones visiting, please observe all safety guidelines recommended by Health Officials. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to seeing everyone again next year.

Here are the most recent guidelines issued by TAMU AgriLife Extension:

- No face-to-face meetings/gatherings December 9 – 23 (members should expect this to be in effect through January and likely beyond)
- No home or site visits
- Help Desk staff is reduced to one member per shift

The January Crops Conference and Grounds Conference will be held virtually; no Master Gardener participation is available

One last thing. We have received notice that the Home and Garden Show will be held at the Expo Center Feb 26-28, 2021 as usual. I will let you know if that changes.

Thanks again for all that you do for our Association. Take care.

Glenn



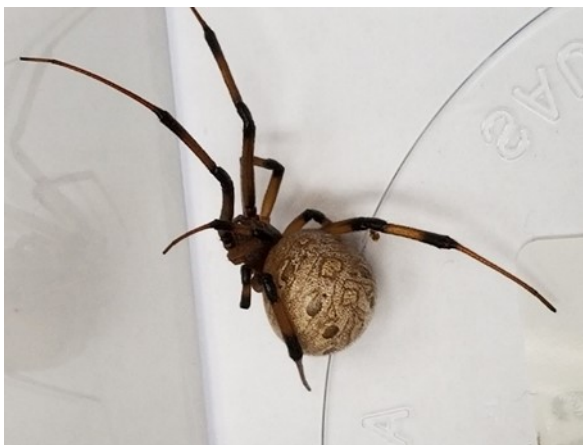
Widow Spiders

by Wizzie Brown

Widow spiders are in the genus *Latrodectus*, meaning “biting in secret”. Four species of widow spiders can be found in various parts of Texas. To properly identify three of them to species, one would need to dissect the spider and look at the genitalia. We can somewhat narrow down what type of widow spider based upon location and shape of markings on the spider.

Southern widows- *Latrodectus mactans*, western widows- *Latrodectus hesperus*, and northern widows- *Latrodectus variolus*- look remarkably similar to each other while the brown widow- *Latrodectus geometricus*- is easy to discern from the other widows in the state. Brown widow spiders are not native to Texas and originate in Africa. They have naturalized and can be found in various parts of the state.

Female brown widows can vary in color from light brown to gray with a reddish-orange hourglass on the underside of the abdomen. Lighter colored females may also have white markings on the upper side of the abdomen. Legs are alternating bands of black/ dark brown and light brown.



Southern widows, western widows, and northern widows tend to be dark grey to black in color. Northern widows may completely lack an hourglass or may have two red lines in place of an hourglass. Southern and western widows have an hourglass or two triangles on the underside of the abdomen. Western widows may have the back triangle somewhat larger than the front. All three of these widows may have a reddish-orange spot on top of the abdomen just above the spinnerets. Nevertheless, widow spider coloration can vary wildly.

Southern widows tend to be the most found widow spider in most parts of Texas. Western widows displace them in the western part of Texas and down into the Valley. Northern widows tend to reside in the eastern parts of Texas while brown widows are variable and we are still tracking where they are found. You can report sightings of brown widow spiders here:

<https://cistr.ucr.edu/texas-brown-widow-study>



Juvenile widow spiders have a gray to black abdomen with white stripes and yellow and orange spots. Adult males may be completely black or have coloration similar to juveniles. They do not have an hourglass marking like the adult females, but often have markings on the upper side of the abdomen.

Widow Spiders

by Wizzie Brown



Females lay eggs in a round or teardrop shaped sac which can hold around 200-400 eggs. A single female can lay between 4-9 egg sacs in a year. Depending on temperature and time of year, eggs usually hatch after about 20 days. Spiderlings stay near the egg sac for several days where they consume their brothers and sisters. Survivors throw a thread of silk to the wind and are carried off in a process called "ballooning". They eventually locate a sheltered spot where they build a loosely woven web and remain for the rest of their lives. As time progresses, widows build larger webs to capture larger prey. Males eventually leave their webs to find females for mating. In a natural setting, most females do not eat males after mating.

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

The bite of a black widow sometimes is not noticed, but when it is, it often feels like a pin prick. The bite location will have two red marks surrounded by redness and swelling. The bite reaction is systemic and intense pain usually occurs within 1-3 hours and continues for around 24 hours. Other symptoms include tremors, nausea, vomiting, leg cramps, abdominal pain, profuse perspiration and rise in blood pressure. It is also possible for breathing difficulties and unconsciousness to occur. If bitten by a black widow, immediately seek medical attention.

When working around the house or in the yard, it is best to wear leather gloves to avoid being bitten by venomous arthropods. The easiest way to remove widow spiders is with a vacuum. Make sure to shake out shoes, clothing and linens that have been in storage.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas 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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Wayne's Page



Affect of Humidity

As we move into cooler weather, this article seems particularly appropriate with respect to the affect of humidity on indoor plants. Shared from gardenmyths.com.

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/increasing-humidity-indoor-plants/#more-6643>

Identifying Iris Types

My wife has reminded me that it is about time to divide our large iris plant. That sent me looking for information, and I found this link about identifying iris types. I thought it was worth sharing.

https://www.gardenfundamentals.com/iris-identification-type/?fbclid=IwAR2OCxY6rU4LnPQU2m_naF_LZ6-cY3fRtWkaMUyKOWR_zQ79eCDSjb8rZWk

Wayne





1605 N. Main, Room 102
Belton, Texas 76513
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254-933-5312 (fax)

November 9, 2020

Bell County Master Gardeners,

On behalf of the Bell County 4-H Youth Development Program, we sincerely thank you for your generous donation of the use of your building for our Bell County 4-H Food Show & Food Challenge Contest.

The contest was a success! The Bell County 4-H Food Show/Food Contest allows members to demonstrate their culinary and food safety skills to be presented to judges. Your support gives youth across Bell County an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills and to unlock and discover their potential. Teams that placed will advance to the District level.

All of this would not have been possible without the use your building to host our contest. Special thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Colwick for helping us prep the building.

We sincerely appreciate all your help in preparing and planning for the event.

Thank you for supporting Bell County 4-H and our commitment to developing leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Bell County 4-H Youth Development Program

Bell County Extension Staff:
Jackie McLaughlin, FCH
Sheryl Long, 4-H
Tonya Elliott, 4-H Program Assistant
Lyle Zoeller, AG
Whitney Grantham, NR

BCMG MEMBERSHIP FEE DUE

Dear BCMG Members:

I don't know about you, but I am totally enjoying this cooler fall weather! I could enjoy this type of weather all year round, but alas, colder weather will come before we know it.

And with the cooler weather, comes the time to renew our BCMG membership. For our \$25 membership fee, we are blessed with seminars, scientific educational webinars, getting our hands dirty, friendship and lots and lots of fun.

Because of Covid-19, we are asking you to mail your membership fee to the office. We will be holding your check until after January 1st to coincide with the 2021 budget. We hope that you understand, and will bear with us in this regard.

We absolutely need these checks in our office no later than December 31st.

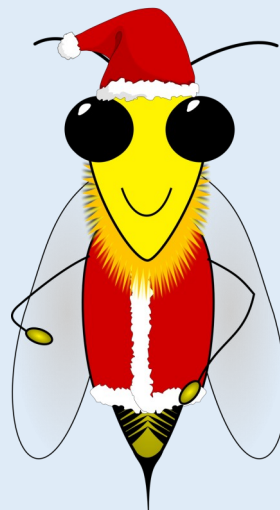
Along with your check, Terri Marceau our Communications Director, has asked that you please send your birthdate so birthday cards can be sent! Just include the month and the day. NO BIRTH YEAR!

Please make your check out to **BCMG** , include your birthday month and day, and send it to:
BCMG
1605 N. Main Street, #102
Belton, Texas 76513-1966

I will be sending receipts via mail to your home address on a weekly basis. That should allay any concerns on whether we received your check or not.

If you have a question, please feel free to call/ text me: 254-760-0317, or email me at:
sherry@oermannfamilyfarm.com

In the meantime, enjoy your gardening!
Sherry Oermann
BCMG Membership Committee



Texas Master Gardener Assoc.

TMGA Search For Excellence

Kathy Love

The Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA) presented its 2019 Search for Excellence Awards during a virtual meeting August 20, 2020. For the third time in four years the Bell County Master Gardener Association (BCMGA) was recognized as the Outstanding Association in the Large County category (membership between 100-199). The Association received this recognition from out-of-state AgriLife Extension judges for the horticultural education offered through its many projects, programs and outreach efforts. Judges also approved of the many occasions where the organization offers its members opportunities to socialize and enjoy sharing gardening knowledge and facts.

BCMGA also received first place recognition for a formal published report prepared at the request of the grounds staff of the Olin E. Teague Veterans' Administration Medical Center Grounds. The report was designed to offer horticultural best practices for improvements and maintenance of the hospital grounds. It also made cost saving suggestions. One judge offered the report the following compliment: "This is exactly what we hope to accomplish in our extension mission."

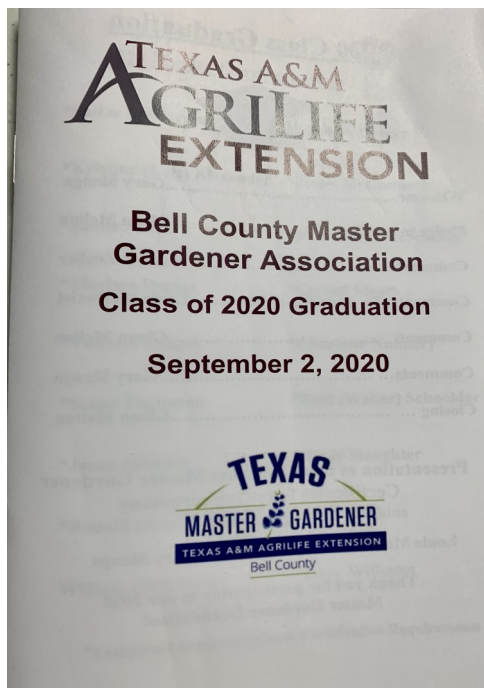
Marjorie Gillmeister, a certified Master Gardener since 2016, received a second place award in the category of Outstanding Individual Master Gardener. Marjorie is a leader in all things youth involved with BCMGA. In 2018-2019 Marjorie served as the Association's Youth Director on its Board of Directors. She led many new youth projects including youth horticultural development from our youngest citizens up to our college students. To mention just a couple of her efforts, she brought programs such as the gardening classes at Meredith Dunbar Early Learning Academy in 2017 and continuing. During 2019 she partnered with students at Temple College Phi Beta Kappa sorority to start food producing gardens on the grounds of the college. Throughout 2020 she has worked with other Master Gardeners and students teaching how to grow, harvest and prepare fresh produce from the garden. All produce grown at the garden is harvested, cleaned, packaged and donated to the college food pantry to help food insecure students with nutritious food.

BCMGA is grateful to it's parent Association, TMGA, for the recognition of it's efforts on behalf of the citizens of Bell County and the State of Texas.



MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



TMGA state president, Louie McDaniel, helped preside over the 2020 New Class graduation, marking the first time a state president (other than a BCMGA member who was a state president) has attended our new class graduation.

The new MGs were asked for a few words to describe completing the program during the pandemic, what was the most challenging, and what they enjoyed most about the experience. Their comments, if any, accompany their photos.



Sal Alcasey

Kris Alexander: "I enjoyed meeting and getting to know the Master Gardener's, Instructors, and classmates. I have made some good friends whom I'm very thankful for and look forward to working along side many levels of Gardeners and learning from them. The members and instructors are a very kind and caring people who want to share what they know with others, which makes the process of learning a joy. The most challenging part of the class was completing the Computer Modules in line, but am thankful again for the help of another team member helping me through that process. I enjoy working with the members and will continue in my learning with their knowledge sharing and kindness."

MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



Jamie Allen

Victoria Ezagui "I missed being physically in class, we were starting to bond as a class. I was disappointed at not having in-class instruction especially the propagating sessions. But even though things didn't go as expected I felt I accomplished something, and I'm proud of what I achieved."



Marissa Decker "The most challenging part of the class was having to work through the class virtually, not because the content was too difficult but because it's so much more fun to discuss the content with other gardeners. I most enjoyed meeting other gardeners and learning from everyone's experience. It's a special thing to be in a group with other people who love nature, plants, and growing as much as I do."



MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



Susan Fogelman "I am very thankful that our class started before the pandemic so that we were able to meet many of the Master Gardeners in person and also the other class members. Having to switch from "live" classes to online classes was challenging as it was a totally different experience but of course totally necessary under the circumstances. My favorite part of the class was the propagation class. I look forward to learning more and becoming more involved with BCMG's and getting to know the members better."

Ron Jones "I want to thank the New Class Committee & the Board for finding a way for our class to complete the training course. I know it was a lot of hard work that these people did to facilitate our training in spite of unusual circumstances.

I appreciate my Mentor, Gail Christian, for her encouragement and help with the program.

The classes we were able to actually attend were very enjoyable and we were just beginning to get to know each other. Finishing up with the on-line course work was ok, but I prefer actual "hands on" training. I hope to have the opportunity to monitor some classes later and learn some more. I missed going on the Field Trips and being able to attend the State Conference in Waco and our plant sale."



Jason Johnson "What I found interesting is just how much the people are connected to the plants. When we could no longer meet together, it wasn't the same learning the material. The human element had been lost and that took away a lot of the joy that I had found in gardening. Ultimately, all gardens are meant to be shared and enjoyed by people so I'm looking forward to sharing with others again soon."



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MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



Rebekah Lackey "I have gardened all of my life and, thought that I knew some of what I was doing - ha! The BCMG program is amazing, I have learned so much and, realize that I have much more to learn. While we were in a "live" class, the programs were all so informative. I hope that the future classes will be able to experience this. Working along side other MG has also been such a positive experience. I truly like and respect all of my fellow gardeners and look forward to working along side all of you in the future."



Penny McCormack

"I enjoyed meeting so many Master Gardeners who were so knowledgeable about gardening, plants, soils, etc, and the special activities like the events at the Expo, and being able to work at the Children's hospital. The hardest thing for me was studying the massive amount of information for the finals we had to take online. To have it taught in person with references and examples was far more productive for me. Overall, it was a great experience and I'm glad I participated. Thanks for everything!"



Jack McSpedon "Regarding what I found most challenging, I missed being in the classroom with live instructors and I was really looking forward to the propagation classes. Completing my volunteer hours was the most enjoyable aspect of the pandemic. I enjoyed working with Paul Carter on various projects, Edie Campbell at the Killeen garden, and Marjorie Gillmeister at Temple College."



Crystal Mears "The thing I enjoyed most about the 2020 Bell County Master Gardener class was the weekly face-to-face meetings. The Temple College No-Dig garden project site visit was very informative. I especially liked the first hands-on propagation class in March. I plan to volunteer to help the 2021 class so I can 'sit-in' on some of the propagation sessions I missed in 2020. After the shelter in place rules were implemented, the most challenging part was having to complete the weekly sessions on-line and taking the chapter 'tests'."

MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



Charlotte Nunnery "I thank Gary, Glenn, staff and volunteers for making our graduation a success, it's a wonderful feeling to have this behind us!!!! I'm happy to be a member of this wonderful organization and the fine folks that make it the great organization it is.

2020 has been interesting year thus far with the challenges and life adjustments we all have had to deal with and none of our lives are normal yet but I pray they will be soon.

I truly felt for myself a huge disconnect from the BCMG 2020 intern class due to COVID restrictions, although we were receiving emails from Gary and Glenn keeping us up to date with the latest information. I know we missed some hands on training and hopefully we will have the opportunity to catch those classes someday soon. I was glad I had a demo bed to work and volunteered at the Extension Office grounds when I could. I love the opportunities of volunteering in our community and will continue to be active. I am thankful for the knowledge I have gained and will continue to strive to broaden my knowledge as time goes on.

I had a great mentor and she was always there for me to answer any question I had and provide support along the way.

While getting my volunteer hours in I really enjoyed working the Youth Fair, that was the most enjoyable and rewarding time for me."😊



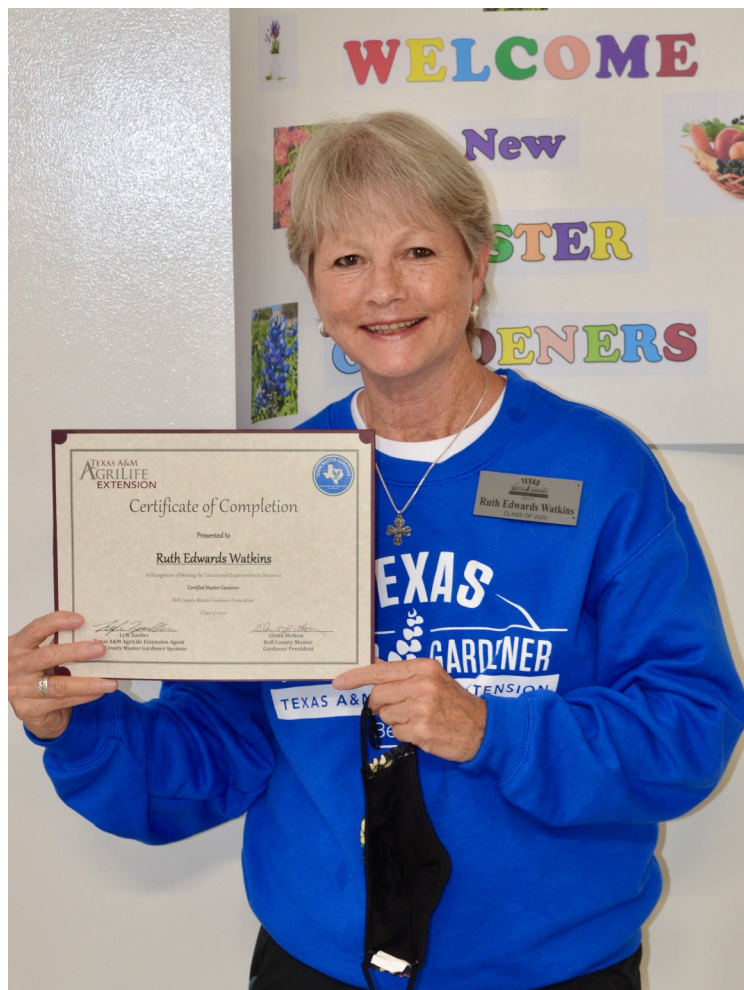
Walt Schneider "I missed the in person class sessions, the fellowship, field trips, community service and of course, the snacks. Staying home and doing virtual classes was not as much fun as in person and put a damper on things. On line sessions and especially the Garden 101 were intense and took a lot of time. I'm looking forward to meeting again at the learning center, working on the grounds and seeing everyone."



Dave Slaughter "I didn't experience any challenges completing the MG course during the pandemic. The training on the AgriLife website was a good alternative. Chapters 1-8 of gardening 101 were very informative, as were the plant diagnostics and plant pathology courses. Most importantly, working with experienced MG's like Bob, Larry, Jerry, David, Edie, Paul, and Randy at the Killeen Gardens, truly help fill any void."

MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



Gary Williams

Ruth Watkins "Completing the Master Gardener's class online was informative, but it lacked the fun and excitement of being with new friends in class and learning "in person" from our mentors and the leaders/teachers in the Bell County group. Being at home gave me time to work outside more than usual, and time to work at the demo beds, but I missed having the opportunity to learn more about the individuals in our Bell County family.

Hopefully, we will all be back together soon!"



What's Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden November 21, 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



1 of 3

What's Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden November 21, 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



2 of 3

What's Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden November 21, 2020

Photos by Randy Brown



What's Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden

December 5, 2020

Photos and reporting by Randy Brown

Task for today was to pull expended tomato/pepper plants; till and add mulch where necessary to prepare for spring plantings. Garden has now produced over 5700 lbs this season. Beets and cabbage were harvested.



Tiller Crew



Beet Harvest
Winner



End of Day

What's Coming Up!

Educational Videos

[New YouTube shorts](#) is the link to the Master Gardener YouTube channel.

This channel is connected to the BCMGA gmail account and will include short videos as well as some longer educational videos which are being worked on.

These are considered educational videos and can be used towards your education hours. If you have any questions about how to log these hours to VMS, please contact Teri Marceau at terimmarceau@gmail.com.



Photo by Juan Anaya

Announcement...



**TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION**

 **Conference Location**
Waco Convention Center
100 Washington Ave.
Waco, TX 76701

 **Date and Time**
Tuesday
January 5, 2021
8:50am - 4:00pm

 **Who Attends**
Health Professionals,
Registered Dietitians,
Registered Nurses,
Educators, Students

Connecting Agriculture & Health -From the Ground Up

Agriculture - Science - Health

Register Online! <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/groundup>

☐ \$50 register by December 29, 2020
\$25 enrolled full-time student
Fee includes lunch with Blackland Income Growth Conference

Application for CHES (entry level) continuing education contact hours (CECH) has been made to the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC).

Application for the approval of 5.0 Clinical Professional Education Activity has been submitted to the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).

Teachers will be provided 5 hours of CPE credit.
All other professionals will be provided a certificate for 5 clock hours of education.

Conference Speakers:

☐ What is A2 Milk and Why Do We Care?
Barbara Jones, PhD., PAS
Tarleton State University

☐ Urban/Suburban Fertilizer Use and Non-Point Source Pollution
Jake Mowrer, PhD.
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

☐ Challenges in the Food Supply Chain
Tracy Tomascik
Texas Farm Bureau

☐ Commercial Vegetable and Strawberry Production in Texas
Russell Wallace, PhD.
Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Service

☐ How Farmers and Ranchers are Responding to Trending Consumer Preferences
Jason Johnson, PhD.
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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proper COVID-19 protocols will be followed which include, social distancing, room seating occupancy at 50%, face masks will be encouraged or required based on local guidelines at the time of the conference, and no on-site registration will be conducted”.

Announcements...

No December General Membership Business Meeting

When: See you in January 2021!

Where: **Via Online Meeting**

Time: 10:00 AM

No December General Membership Educational Session

When: See you in January 2021!

Where: **Via Online Meeting**

Time: 10:00 AM

Topic:



Grounds Work Days

Karen Colwick and Paul Carter

We are all advised to make any day a work day. Karen has posted a list of "to dos" on the Annex gate. Please check the list before "digging in".



In the event of rain, there will be no work day.

Communications

While restrictions are in place, please send photos of your garden with a note about your photos to TeriMMarceau@gmail.com or to bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu and Teri will post them on Facebook.

If you know of someone in our organization who is ill, scheduled to have surgery, or has lost a loved one (including fur babies) please email Teri Marceau at bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu, or our correspondence secretary, Debbi Harris, at dcharris99@yahoo.com.

An appropriate card will be sent.

~~Refreshment Committee General Membership Meeting~~

~~A minimum of 7 volunteers are needed for meeting. Future meetings hold until further notice.~~



Upcoming Events

No Upcoming Advanced Training

Online Courses

Ongoing	Earth-Kind® On-Line Master Gardener Training modules	https://aggie - Horticul- ture.tamu.edu/ earthkind/ training/
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Extension Events



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



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

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Wizzie Brown
Wayne Schirner
Randy Brown
Juan Anaya
Crystal Fisher
Kathy Love

Jackie McLaughlin

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.
I will send them back to you!***

BCMGA Webmaster: Rachel Glass - glass.rachel@gmail.com

Please send your updates for the BCMG website to Rachel.

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

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

Texas Master Gardener website

<https://txmg.org>

Bell County Master Gardener website

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

Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management System

[https://texas.volunteersystem.org/
UniversalLogin.cfm?logout=1](https://texas.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm?logout=1)



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