

The Blooming Bell

March 2021



"Climbing Pinkie Rose has bloomed quite a bit this year. Without being fed; she just had banana peels. That might be helping her more than I realized."

Crystal Fisher

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Photos submitted by Crystal Fisher

March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
National Celery Month	1	2 Texas Independence Day	3 Workday	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 General Membership Business Meeting 10 AM Workday	11	12 Plant a Flower Day 	13 New Moon
14 Daylight Saving Time Starts	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day Educational Session 10 AM Workday	18	19	20 SPRING!! 
21	22	23	24 BCMGA Board Meeting 9-11AM Workday	25 Pecan Day	26 National Spinach Day	27
28 Weed Appreciation Day?	29	30	31 Workday			

"If you've never experienced the joy of accomplishing more than you can imagine, plant a Garden."

--Robert Brault

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

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.

President's Corner

Glenn Melton



Now that the last (hopefully) winter storm is over maybe we can all get back to our normal schedules of gardening and other maintenance chores around the house. We certainly do not want to go through that weather again. We have all probably lost some vegetables that we planted early, and I am sure those of us growing plants for the Plant Sale suffered some setbacks. I lost quite a few myself. The Spring Plant Sale is still a "go" and the Plant Sale Committee will be meeting to finalize details such as the date and various plants and vegetables available for sale.

We still need volunteers to work at the Extension Grounds to kill weeds, prune shrubs, clean up beds, and do general clean up chores prior to the Plant Sale as well as preparing for the upcoming Garage Sale scheduled for April. Please take this opportunity to earn service hours and help us spruce up the place before these particularly important events. I was recently asked whether we could start Burger Wednesday back up again and combine it with a workday however, Lyle's guidance at this time is to wait for an update from AgriLife and County Officials. The challenge with Burger Wednesday of course is the process of preparing and consuming food in the Learning Center. I will continue to communicate with Lyle and notify everyone when we can reinstitute this monthly event. And the same goes for our monthly Board of Directors meetings. Hopefully, we will soon enjoy a relaxation of restrictions and guidelines that will enable us to meet in person and resume some level of normalcy.

Recently, just before the monthly General Membership Meeting and again last week, I was asked for the link to attend these meetings. As a reminder, please go to VMS and search the Events Calendar for the dates of these meetings. When you click on the desired event you will be provided the link to attend via "GotoMeeting". Just click on the link or call the number provided to participate. Contact me if you have any difficulty logging in or finding the link.

And now a bit of good news: The State Conference this year will be held virtually on May 18 & 19, with a Leadership session held on May 17th. Details are sketchy at this time so please stand by for further information.

One last thing. Please take the time to enter all your service and educational hours in VMS before the end of each month. As you all know, Lyle has to report these hours to AgriLife and Bell County as part of his reporting requirements. And I encourage everyone to work diligently to earn the required hours now so as not to find yourself short at the end of the year. Attendance numbers at the General Membership, Board of Directors, and Educational Meetings continue to climb and I thank you all for your participation. Take care.

Glenn

DEEP FREEZE VS RAINWATER BARREL

By Teri Marceau



February kicked off with mild temperatures, with unseasonably warm temps on the thermostat. But winter was *not* over by a long shot.

The second week of February the meteorologists warned us that temperatures were forecasted to dip into single digits by Valentines Day. Having lived all over the US I tend to watch the weather forecast closely, but I must admit, I don't trust it as much as I could.

As you all know we got hammered with an Arctic Event for the ages. According to an article from www.weather.gov the last time all of Texas saw an event such as this was in February 1899. Central Texas saw another polar invasion of single digits again in the winter of 1949 and 1950 but those events didn't reach the gulf coast like the one of 1899 and now 2021.

Many of us, myself included, simply didn't think the deep freeze would last as long as it did. For many it was 10-11 days of extremely hard times. Yet, many others were preparing to avoid damage to their homes, gardens, and their rainwater barrels.

One of our faithful Facebook followers, Mars Everette, was one who was preparing for the worst scenario and asked us, "Should I drain my water barrels now to avoid damage?" I searched our northern state extension offices for answers. They suggested for their long winters to completely disassemble the barrel and store it in a garage or shed. But there was zero information for our area on what to do in the event of single digit temperatures. What I did was ask other master gardeners about their practices.

Those that I inquired with all agreed to let at least 1/3 of the water out, (if possible, capture it in smaller buckets for later use), and remove the lid. Some suggested to wrap the spicket especially if it is plastic. The water will expand upward rather than outward. This is what I suggested to Mars. Above is a photo of the barrel Mars received at our last workshop. You can see the frozen water overflowing the top and a little bulging of the sides. Thankfully, Mars did not lose either of his rainwater harvesting barrels during the Northern winter invasion.

I also checked with Glenn Melton on the status of his rainwater barrels. He had released 1/3 of the water, removed the lid and reported zero damage to his barrel. I chose to experiment with my 5-gallon rainwater buckets. I emptied some water out of 3 buckets and left 2 full. The 2 buckets that were full of water split but the 3 that were 2/3 full of water did not crack.

If we ever have another polar event like this in our lifetime, I will definitely suggest emptying at least 1/3 water from the barrel and remove the lid. If the lid is not removable, I would drain the barrel completely.



General Membership Meeting Highlights

February 10, 2021



FINANCIAL REPORT

Jan 1 Balance	\$31,316	Received: Dues & Donations
Jan 31 Balance	\$31,585	Spent: Utilities, State Sales
Received	\$1,972	Tax, New Class Soil Tests
Spent	\$1,703	Other News: PayPal

Plant Sale: Kathy Love & Barbara Ishikawa

Why have a plant sale? The plant sale(s) that we hold every year provide the funds to support the majority of our community outreach activities. In the past, we have raised from \$7,000 to \$9,200 from each sale

The plant sale also provides us an opportunity to educate the public on plants and planting techniques specific to Bell County and surrounding areas.

Can we have a plant sale and follow existing COVID guidelines? Yes. We plan to implement social distancing and sanitation guidelines during planning, set-up, sale and clean up activities.

There will also be plant sale volunteer activities if you prefer to work away from others.

General Membership Meeting Highlights

Plant Sale Q & A

- When is the plant sale?
 - Saturday, March 20. Gate will be opened at 8am
- Where will the plant sale be held?
 - The plant sale will be held at the Ag Extension center, in the fenced area around the Education Building. Inside use of the Education Building will be evaluated during the coming weeks and determined closer to the sale date
- Why did we change the location from Yeti Polk Park?
 - By limiting the sale to the fenced area around the Education Building we can manage the number of volunteers and visitors at the sale at any one time
 - Since the sale area is fenced, we can also spend more time getting set up before the sale
 - We can use what we've learned in the past to manage this year's sale

Plant Sale Q & A

- What plants will be sold at the plant sale?
 - We plan to focus our sale on annuals, perennials, vegetables, herbs and succulents
- How many plants will be sold at the plant sale?
 - In prior years at the Extension site, we've sold as many as 4000 plants
 - We are planning for fewer pots this year since attendance is uncertain and given the limitation on shoppers at any one time

General Membership Meeting Highlights

Plant Sale Q & A

- Where are we getting plants for the sale?
 - Members have been growing a variety of plants from seed, cuttings and transplants
 - We are partnering with Holland ISD to provide tomato and pepper plants as well as others TBD
 - Once we finalize the list of member-grown and donated plants, we will order additional plants to fill out our inventory
 - Succulents will be purchased from Eldred's Foundation Nursery

Plant Sale Q & A

- I want to grow plants for sale... is there still time?
 - There are 5 weeks until the plant sale, here are some ideas for what you can still do:
 - Start easy-to-root plants like mint or
 - Dig up and pot volunteers from your yard
 - Beware of the coming freeze
 - Consider buying & donating flat of plants for sale
 - Learn more about propagating & consider starting plants for our next sale
 - Contact Kathy Love for details, soil or pots

General Membership Meeting Highlights

Plant Sale Q & A

- Will there be other vendors selling at the plant sale?
 - No. In the past we've had merchandise and snacks for sale at the plant sale, but in order to minimize contacts this year, we will not be inviting vendors to share our space.
- Why aren't we holding a "virtual"/on-line plant sale?
 - Some other organizations have held on-line plant sales during the last year, however, we value the time we're able to spend discussing plants and gardening with our customers at the sale.
 - We will evaluate attendance, sales volume and public feedback and consider sale alternatives as needed

Plant Sale Q & A

- What can I do to help with the plant sale?
 - Grow or buy plants for sale
 - Work on the Extension grounds
 - Save boxes & bags for shoppers
 - Donate purchased or recycled containers for succulent arrangements
 - Join a planning / pre-sale team
 - Join a day-of-the-sale team
 - 'Share' our social media posts and news items

General Membership Meeting Highlights

Plant Sale Q & A

- Planning / Pre-sale teams
 - Plant sale grounds (inside the fence)
 - Plant related research and signage
 - Write a brief plant / grower article to be shared on social media
 - Transportation (getting member plants to grounds)
 - Pre-sale plant care (caring for plants prior to sale)
 - Set-up activities

Plant Sale Q & A

- Day-of-Sale teams – we plan to work in shifts
 - Front gate greeters
 - Plant area specialists
 - Ask a Master Gardener table
 - Talliers
 - Cashiers
 - Exit gate / Loading zone
 - Safety / Sanitation
 - Clean-up crew

General Membership Meeting Highlights

Plant Sale Q & A

- Volunteer through VMS "Spring/Fall Plant sales"
 - Put in notes area of interest
- How can I find out more?
 - Barbara Ishikawa
 - Kathy Love
 - Watch our website and Facebook page

Communications Update



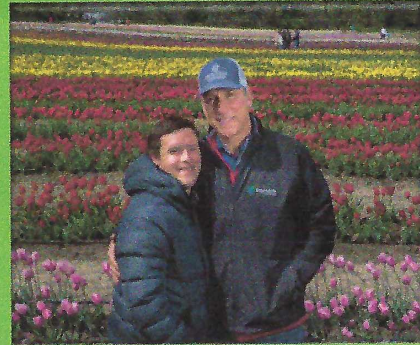
- Looking for Tech Savvy folks to help with filming (nothing too difficult). We would like to start show casing ALL of our projects.
- We opened our PayPal account and there will be button on the Website soon.

General Membership Meeting Highlights

Poston Tulip Gardens

"When John Poston planted a million tulips on a plot of land in Waxahachie, easily viewable by the steady stream of traffic on Interstate 35 near Dallas, he had a single mission in mind: making life better for his son and other adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities....

...the gardens raised awareness and provided vital jobs and scholarship money to the residents at the adjacent Daymark Living, a housing complex and community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities that Poston opened in February 2019 after struggling to find an adequate residence for his son, Michael, who has Down syndrome."



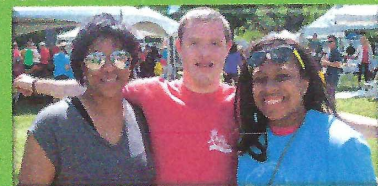
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Upcoming Events

Tulipalooza at Poston Garden March 25 (8am)

If you wish to make the tour:

- Meet at Extension Office at 8am
- Travel via personal vehicle
- *COVID-19 guidelines must be followed at all times.*



Admission: \$5.00 (seniors)
Tulips: \$3.00 per bulb picked



For More information contact Jan George
Web site: <https://postongardens.com>

Tour will be available for education credit
Via Facebook Live

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Bell County Youth Fair

February 8-11
Family & Consumer Science Division

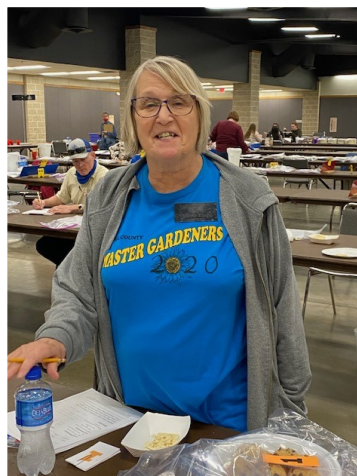


Photo courtesy of Christy Reese

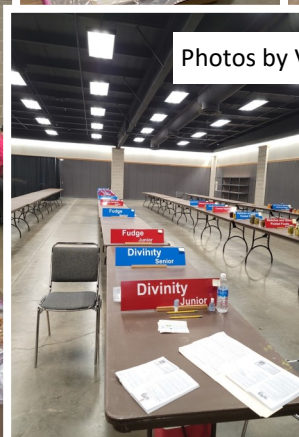
The Pandemic presented some challenges, but did not stop Assistant General Superintendent Christy Reese, Jackie McLaughlin, Bell County Family and Community Health Agent, and Betty Nejtek, General Superintendent, (all pictured left) from successfully overseeing the many volunteers as they completed their duties in the Family & Consumer Science Division at the BCYF.

The Classes included in this Division are Food Preservation, Foods, Yeast Bread, Quick Bread, Cookies, Candy, Cake, Pie, Country Store, Clothing, Textile Crafts, Fashion Revue, Creative Arts, Art, Photography, and Woodworking, Leather & Other Crafts.

Pictured are volunteers judging baked goods. SOMEBODY had to do it!



Brownies!

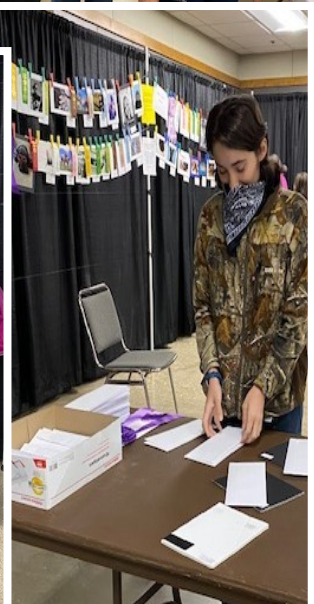
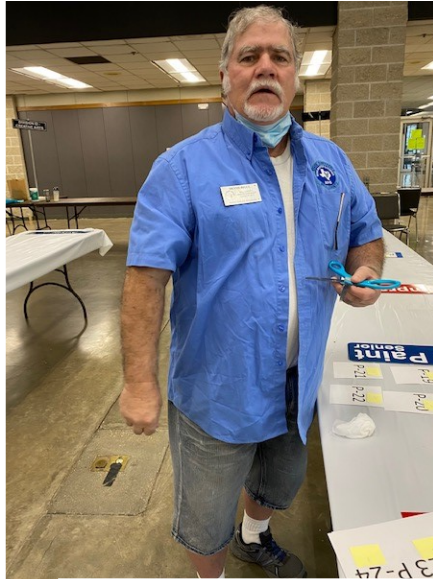
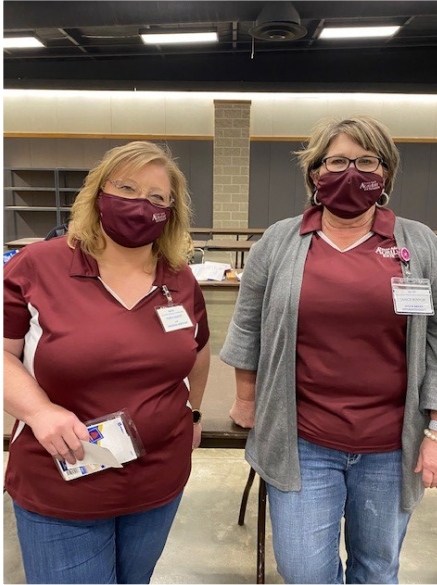


Photos by Victoria Ezagui



Bell County Youth Fair

February 8-11
Family & Consumer Science Division



In The Garden....

Photos and text submitted by Juan Anaya



"The American robin and house finch recover from injuries after the storm. Preferred food was apple chunks. Both survived and now can be seen on the hood of your car."
"



"The caracara feeds on robins that perished during the snow storm."

In The Garden....

Phi Theta Kappa Temple College Garden

Photos and text by Marjorie Gillmeister

Frozen flowers and the garden view as the frost begins.



In The Garden....

Phi Theta Kappa Temple College Garden

Photos and text by Marjorie Gillmeister

The garden after the snow and ice melted deep into the soil.

Our next maintenance and garden prep day will be Friday, March 12th at 9:00am. Details will be posted on VMS.



Wildflower seeded bed looks beautiful even after the frost. Many seedlings are still green as we wait to see what will recover



California poppies unharmed by the frost



Salad burnet and oregano still growing green



Green globe artichokes froze but we are hopeful that new growth will appear in the spring.



A row of chandler strawberries planted in October are thriving. Peas were planted next to the strawberries to fix nitrogen into the soil and succumbed to the frost.



Winter savory and lemon thyme survived

March Education Presentation

by Jan Upchurch



From Teri Marceau, Certified Master Gardener:

"I attended the Farm and Field 2019. Dr. Haney's talk and demonstration on cover crop and the effects on crop production and soil health. It was my favorite presentation because while Dr. Haney is a scientist, he spoke clearly and on the lay person's level. I learned so much from Dr. Haney and look forward to his class this month."

On March 17, 2021, Rick Haney, PhD, Research Soil Scientist at the Grassland, Soil and Water Research Laboratory, will speak at the Bell County Master Gardener Association monthly educational session. Dr. Haney leads research to develop state-of-the-art methodologies and improved understanding of the interactions between soil fertility, biological quality, and chemistry, all within the context of land use sustainability and soil health.

Dr. Haney develops integrative soil testing methodologies and instrumentation that incorporate chemical and biological processes. Specifically, he develops novel methods to assess soil microbial activity and its effect on nutrient cycling, characterizes the role of soil organic carbon (C), nitrogen (N), and phosphorus (P) fractions in nutrient cycling, and incorporates these processes into soil health assessment tools that assist producers in implementing improved agricultural and conservation practices.

These tests are changing soil testing related to nutrient cycling and sustainable production. He has personally developed new concepts, modified existing theory, and arranged concepts systematically to develop the soil health nutrient tool (Haney test) which include: 1) microbial respiration and activity (1-day CO₂) method; 2) refinement of soil microbial biomass methodology; 3) standardized protocols for soil drying and rewetting; 4) CO₂-C respiration system for microbial activity and N and P mineralization; 5) a novel soil extractant (H3A) for multi-nutrient analyses; and 6) the design and production of two infrared gas analysis (IRGA) CO₂-C analysis systems designed for commercial soil testing labs.

Dr. Haney's research is transforming laboratory soil-test procedures and modifying existing scientific theory related to nutrient cycling and soil health. Resulting management practices will increase efficiency and profitability of agricultural production, while decreasing nutrient loadings to vital watersheds throughout the country. The incumbent's soil health research will also contribute to the global transformation of systems to regenerative agriculture to provide continued production growth, while conserving and enhancing natural resources.

Dr. Haney is a recognized global authority on soil microbial activity, nutrient cycling, soil health, and soil analysis innovation. His education, research, and on-farm experience have earned the respect of the U.S. and international scientific community, along with great respect from farmers and ranchers. His stature and research impact evidenced by 106 national and international speaking invitations and requests to participate in advisory activities on several boards. Dr. Haney's innovative methods are relied upon worldwide for state-of-the-art analyses.

What's Happening...

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.

These educational videos 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.

Bell County Master Gardener Merchandise with the New Logo Taking Orders Now

Must have minimum of 25 orders for any type of merchandise.
All orders must be prepaid.

Orders of 25 will be grouped as:

- A) *Caps and visors*
- B) *T-shirts (soft tee crew neck/soft tee V-neck/cotton tee crew neck with a pocket)*
- C) *Sweatshirts*
- D) *Denim shirts (men's and women's combined and either long sleeve or short sleeve)*

If you have any questions, contact Sylvia Maedgen

By email: txbikerchic7@gmail.com
Or by phone: (254) 624-6171



SAVE THE DATE!
April 10, 2021
BCMGA Garage Sale
PLUS Plant Sale #2!



**Perennials, Annuals, Succulents, House Plants,
and Vegetables and Herbs remaining from March 20 Plant Sale**

Announcements...

March General Membership Business Meeting

When: March 10, 2021

Where: **Via GoToMeeting**

Time: 10:00 AM

March General Membership Educational Session

When: March 17, 2021

Where: **Via GoToMeeting**

Time: 10:00 AM

Speaker: Rick Haney, PhD

Topic: Soil Testing for Soil Health

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 24, at 9 a.m. via GoToMeeting**.

Members are welcome to join the call.

Please submit your agenda items to Sylvia Maedgen, Recording Secretary, by **Wednesday, March 17.**

Grounds Work Days

Karen Colwick and Paul Carter

List of individual tasks are posted on the gate each week. Gate code is 2019 and extra tools may be found on back of the wood shed.



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. meetings hold until~~



~~each Future are on further notice.~~

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Advanced Training

Virtual Training

3/16-
5/6/2021

Entomology

FULL

Ongoing

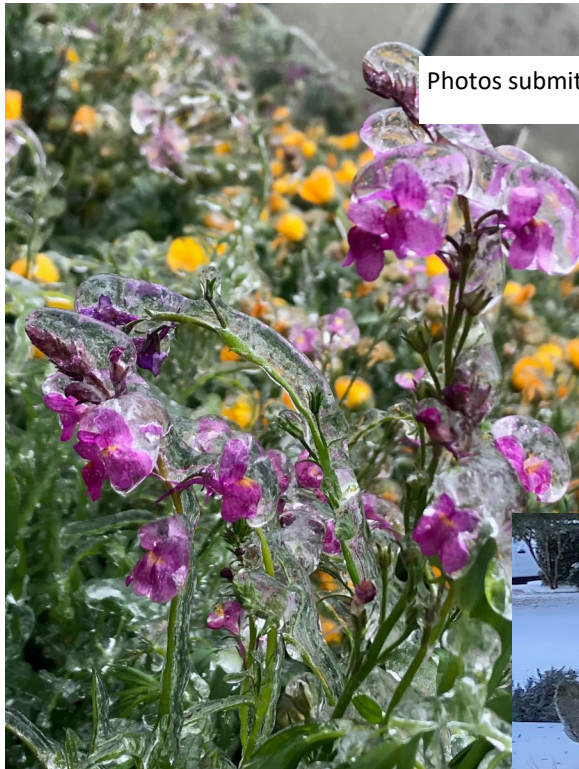
Earth-Kind®
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Training modules

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training/](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/)

Extension Events



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



Photos submitted by Marjorie Gillmeister



In my front yard on 2/15/21.... Virginia Bargas

Directors

Communications	Teri Marceau	2020-2022
Facilities	Paul Carter & Karen Colwick	2019-2022
Membership	Sherry Oermann	2020-2022
KMCCG	Larry Moehnke	2021-2021
Outreach	Crystal Mears & Rebekah Lackey	2021-2022
New Class	Gary Slanga / Gail Koontz	2019-2022
Projects	Wayne Schirner & Stacye Parry	2020-2022
Youth	Janice Smith	2020-2022

Executive Board

President	Glenn Melton	2019-2022
1 st Vice President	Jan Upchurch	2020-2022
2 nd Vice President	Bill Walker	2019-2022
Recording Secretary	Sylvia Maedgen	2020-2022
Treasurer	Barbara Ishikawa	2020-2022

AgriLife Agent Lyle Zoeller

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Teri Marceau
Jan Upchurch
Christy Reese
Victoria Ezagui
Marjorie Gillmeister
Crystal Fisher

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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