

# The Blooming Bell

..... December 2021 .....

A Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
to all our members!

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# November 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Christmas Party Dinner @ 6pm	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

"My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece."  
**Claude Monet**

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 and wear a mask where appropriate.

## **President's Corner**

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**Glenn Melton**



President's Corner: December 2021

Please join me in congratulating all the new officers recently voted in by our membership. The new leadership assumes duties after the holidays so make sure you welcome them and offer any help they may need to get off to a good start. We still need someone to fill the Facilities vacancy so if you are interested in this position, please make your intentions known as soon as possible.

Work is progressing well on the new office space, and we have moved all furniture and supplies from the old office area. We have purchased new equipment and furnishings, and the Help Desk will be fully functional soon. We expect the Help Desk will be open at least four days a week, so if you would like to work a particular shift, contact Kathy Love, Teri Marceau, or me for more information.

Now that the danger of COVID infection is on the decline, members are able to enjoy the holidays with family and friends as in the past. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I ask you to just be aware of precautions if you still feel uncomfortable celebrating the holidays with a large group of people.

It has been an honor serving as your President these past three years and I look forward to working with you in the coming year as we continue our mission of supporting the citizens of Bell County, AgriLife, and the BCMGA. Thank you.

Glenn

# Welcome Newly Elected Board Members!

President — Kathy Love

- 2nd Vice President — Louann Hight
- Recording Secretary — Gail Koontz
- Director of New Class — Pat Johnson
- Director of Projects — Wayne Schirner
- Director Killeen Municipal Court Garden — Dave Slaughter

# Educational Article by Wayne Schirner

## Mow your leaves!

It's that time of year again when the leaves are falling. Allowing whole leaves to remain on the lawn can result in damage to your lawn, especially when they get wet and mat together. Many homeowners blow or rake their leaves into piles then bag them and put them at the curb for trash pickup. Organic material that goes into a landfill decomposes anaerobically. This results in the release of methane gas, which is at least 10 times more harmful to the environment than the carbon dioxide that is released by aerobic decomposition. Clearly putting fallen leaves into the landfill is not a good option. Fortunately, there are several acceptable options. We know that mulching grass clippings when mowing allows the return of nutrients to the soil, reducing the need for supplemental fertilization. The same benefit can be achieved by mowing your leaves. A mulching mower is best, but a regular lawn mower will also work by cutting the leaves into smaller pieces.

This allows the microbes in the soil to decompose the leaves more easily, releasing all the nutrients contained in the leaves. In addition to N, P, and K, the leaves contain other trace minerals that are helpful in maintaining a healthy lawn. Many of the required elements will be available for growth of turfgrasses when they come out of dormancy next spring. Since different trees release leaves at different times, it is probably best to plan on mowing several times. Dry leaves are mulched by a mower more easily than wet leaves, so don't wait too long to do this. Once the leaves get wet and mat down, the process is not as effective.

If you have too many leaves, mow those excess leaves with a bagger attachment. Those leaves can be piled in a part of your property where they can decompose slowly producing leaf mold, which can then be added to your garden or landscape. The microbes that are most active in a regular compost pile are mostly bacteria. In a pile of leaves, the primary microbes at work are fungal. Another alternative is to keep those bags of leaves on your property instead of putting them at the curb to go to the landfill. Water the leaves in a bag well and punch holes in the bag to allow air to get into the leaves. This allows aerobic decomposition to occur in the bags of leaves. A regular phillips screwdriver works great for punching holes in the bag without causing large tears in the bag. Decomposition of a pile or bags of leaves occurs more slowly than a regular compost pile, but it will still happen. Not only will you be getting a nutrient rich leaf mold, but you will also be helping the environment by keeping all those leaves out of the landfill.

Happy Gardening!

# In The News

## Texas A&M AgriLife's Stover testifies during congressional State of Nutrition in America 2021

By Kay Ledbetter

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

The U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics and Research held a hearing Nov. 2 to discuss the State of Nutrition in America. Among calls for the second White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger and Health — the last of which was held over 50 years ago — one voice highlighted the essential role of agriculture in any conversation about nutrition.

“We need to build upon the Borlaug legacy in a revolutionary new way: by expanding our mission from simply using food to eliminate hunger and undernutrition to using food to become healthier,” said Patrick J. Stover, Ph.D., vice chancellor of Texas A&M AgriLife, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research. “This can only be achieved by innovating throughout the entire food supply chain and by advancing rigorous science — not merely focusing on what some deem to be ‘healthy foods.’”

### The challenge of nutrition security

Stover's comments were made during his congressional testimony to the subcommittee, where he was among four other experts speaking about nutrition in America and the challenges facing the U.S. amid an epidemic of chronic diet-related disease that has been exacerbated by COVID-19.

Today, half of all American adults suffer from diabetes or pre-diabetes, and 122 million Americans have cardiovascular disease, which alone results in around 840,000 deaths each year. At the same time, food security is a major issue that has worsened as a result of the pandemic. Before the pandemic, one in eight Americans faced food insecurity; yet now, high rates of unemployment driven by the coronavirus are expected to leave another 18 million U.S. children food insecure. It is expected that at least 40% of all U.S. youth will soon be food insecure.

“Urbanization, gaps in knowledge, competing agendas and a deficit in public trust all contribute to the growing disconnect between people and the food they eat,” Stover said. “To put it bluntly, that disconnect threatens agriculture, the food supply and the health of our society. Fortunately, agriculture is uniquely positioned to be the solution. With current and emerging technologies, we can tailor agriculture and food systems to support any and all desired outcomes.”

### Texas leading by example with two new efforts toward solutions

There are solutions on the horizon, Stover said. And Texas A&M AgriLife is well-positioned to lead nationally in partnership with other land-grant universities and U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service, USDA-ARS, centers.

As the largest comprehensive agriculture program in the country, Texas A&M AgriLife is taking a connected systems approach — linking the “production” and “consumer” domains — by launching two innovative efforts to connect agriculture and health.

First, Texas A&M AgriLife's new Institute for Advancing Health Through Agriculture, IHA, is the world's first research institute to bring together precision nutrition and responsive agriculture research. The institute aims to link food production to human consumption as a way to improve public health and lower health care costs.

continued next page...

# In The News

The IHA will also advance research to help agricultural producers harness big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning to produce food that improves public health. A recent example is a previously inedible cotton byproduct that can now be a highly nutritious food source worldwide.

Second, the new Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Scientific Evidence Center at Texas A&M AgriLife will be a global resource for policy makers in providing non-biased, scientific evidence reviews about environmental, economic and human health outcomes related to agricultural and food policy.

“I am grateful for the investments from the state of Texas and USDA-ARS that have enabled Texas A&M AgriLife to launch these two long-term innovative efforts,” Stover added.

## Agriculture must be at the table

Stover implored the committee to ensure, as discussions on this important topic continue, that agriculture must be part of the dialogue.

“The costs of the current situation cannot be overstated. Diet-related chronic diseases place a huge financial burden on individuals, the health care system and the American economy — and are crippling quality of life for most Americans,” he said. “While historic efforts to eliminate hunger and food insecurity were important and well-intentioned, hunger cannot be considered in the absence of agriculture and health.”



Patrick J. Stover, Ph.D., vice chancellor of Texas A&M AgriLife, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, testifies during the Nov. 2 State of Nutrition in America congressional hearing.



# Projects in the community

## Killeen Municipal Court Community Gardens

On the 8th of November Killeen Rotary Club donated cabbage plants and four peach trees to the KMCCG.

Judge (Ret) Barbra Weaver, founder of KMCCG, and Rex Weaver, members of the Killeen Rotary Club, helped with the planting.





# Bell County Water Symposium

The Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District (CUWCD) holds an annual Water Symposium to share water related issues with the residents and government officials of Bell County. Topics usually include changes in climate predictions, an overview of groundwater management in the state, water supply and demand trends, and an update on various studies underway by CUWCD as well as other pertinent issues. This year's presentations were held at the Bell County Expo Center on Nov 17<sup>th</sup> and included, among other topics:

Current status of water in Texas

Growth and development of Bell County

State of Groundwater in Bell County

Several BCMGA members attended the symposium and earned more than 6 educational hours. A booth was also available and we provided information about our Association, our mission, and how our organization supports the citizens of Bell County.





# Herb Study Group

Here is our tour of the Walker Honey Farm in Rogers that the Herb Study Group attended on Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>. The tour was 2 ½ hours long. It was very interesting. The owner Clint Walker gave us the tour of the retail store, vineyard, and the building where they extract the honey, package the bottles, make the honey butter, and their wine. Some of the members had some wine samples and several members enjoyed lunch on their patio area. Clint talked about the types of plants they have on their property, pollinators, and other types of honey that they get from other parts of Texas.

Sylvia Maedgen



# ***Help Needed / Announcements***

COVID19 restrictions have been lifted and most projects are gearing up for 2022 and could use your help. You can find a complete list of projects in VMS; there you can email the project manager for volunteer opportunities. For help with finding an active project to volunteer in you can contact Stacey Parry at [stacye1120@gmail.com](mailto:stacye1120@gmail.com).

HELP DESK: Beginning in 2022 the HELP DESK will be open 5 days a week. We are looking to fill 3 hour shifts with 2 people per shift. There is a morning shift, 9:00 am to noon and an afternoon shift, 1:00-3:00 pm. We are already starting to take volunteers. Working in the new Education Center is a great way to learn. getting your continuing education hours and to fill you service hours.

NEW OFFICE NAME & HOURS: Beginning January 2022, the MG office will be called The Education Center. We will have displays for the public both from MGs and from the Master Naturalists, along with our education materials being displayed and available for the public. The Education Center will be open Monday through Friday (closed on Holidays) 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (closed for lunch noon-1:00 pm). The Education Center is located in the first office on the left as you enter the Extension Building. Stop by and see us. We are currently working on the display plans while we are working at our new help desk.

## **ADVANCED TRAINED MEMBERS MEMO FROM TERI MARCEAU**

I am compiling a list of MGs who have gone through any advanced training to keep handy at the Help Desk so we can start to share the wealth of inquiries we receive. Just in May with all the rain we received over 80 calls/emails. It would be very helpful to be able to spread the work load out as the summer approaches, so will the calls/emails increase. Just send me a quick email with your name, preferred phone number, email and what your advanced training is in. Thanks so much. Teri Marceau



# ***Help Needed / Announcements***

## **Communications**

Please send photos of your garden with a note about your photos to [TeriMMarceau@gmail.com](mailto:TeriMMarceau@gmail.com) or to [Bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu) and Teri will post them on Facebook.

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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](mailto:bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu), or our correspondence secretary, Debbi Harris, at [dcharris99@yahoo.com](mailto:dcharris99@yahoo.com).

An appropriate card will be sent.

BIRTHDAYS: The communication committee is looking for your birthday (month and day) so we can celebrate with you. Please send the date to Teri Marceau at [ter-immarceau@gmail.com](mailto:ter-immarceau@gmail.com). We LOVE to celebrate our

## **Board of Directors Meeting**

### **To Be Decided**

## **Grounds Workdays**

**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.



## **Refreshment Committee General Membership Meeting**

A minimum of 7 volunteers are needed for each meeting.



#### Directors

Communications	Teri Marceau	2020-2022
Facilities	Paul Carter, Dave Slaughter & Karen Colwick	2019-2022
Membership	Sherry Oermann	2020-2022
KMCCG	Dave Slaughter	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	2019-2021
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Jan Upchurch	2020-2022
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Bill Walker	2019-2021
Recording Secretary	Sylvia Maedgen	2020-2021
Treasurer	Barbara Ishikawa	2020-2022

**AgriLife Agent Lyle Zoeller**

#### **Texas Master Gardener website**

<https://txmg.org>

#### **Bell County Master Gardener website**

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

#### **Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management System**

<https://vms.texasmg.org/>

**BCMGA Webmaster:** Rachel Glass - [glass.rachel@gmail.com](mailto:glass.rachel@gmail.com)

Please send your updates for the BCMG website to Rachel.

#### **Editor: Julian Hancock**

Please submit articles with photos not to exceed 300 words and without photos not to exceed 500 words as Word documents. Photos should be sent separately in a folder through a link using OneDrive, Dropbox, or Google Photos. **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 Julian at [julianhancock61@gmail.com](mailto:julianhancock61@gmail.com).

***Please do not send PDF documents.  
I will send them back to you!***

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