

The Blooming Bell

..... January 2022

Happy New Year!

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January 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31					1
2	3	4	5 Work Day Burger Wednesday	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Work Day General Membership mtg 10:00am	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Work Day	20 Outreach Seminar 6:30pm Learning Ctr.	21	22
23	24	25	26 Work Day Board Mtg.	27	28	29

“Gardeners, I think, dream bigger dreams than emperors.” – **Mary Cantwell**

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

Kathy Love

Here's hoping everyone had a wonderful Christmas season and a Happy New Year celebration.

But the fun is not over, it is just beginning for our Bell County Master Gardener Association. First up will be the start of the 2022 New Class which will be meeting in person this year. Orientation will be January 3rd starting out in our new office space in the Extension Building. New class directors Pat Johnson and Betty Nejtek along with their had working committee members are getting everything ready so the class can start off with a bang! As you meet them, please extend a warm welcome to our future Certified Master Gardeners!

Then at our January General Membership Meeting, which will also be in person at the Harris Center, our program will be on the Help Desk which we hope to grow exponentially in 2022 given the move from our "closet" into our spacious new accommodations. Teri Marceau and I will present and explain how the help desk process works, e.g., how we serve our citizens with horticultural education via telephone, email, walk-ins, and home/site visits. We still don't have two additional desk top computers, but they are in the works and when we get them, we want to get many more of you involved with this great learning experience.

In the new office space, which we have dubbed our "Education Center", we have and will have demonstrations set up for square foot gardening, rainwater harvesting, no-till gardening, composting, seasonal weeds, soil types and insects. We are already collecting and preserving insects which citizens bring in to identify, something we have been asked us to do by our agent Lyle Zoeller. Lyle has stressed that the new space needs to be a true educational tool for Bell County citizens. Everyone is invited to come by when you are in the Extension building and check out the new space.

We are still in need of a director or directors for our grounds and landscape to take over from Karen Colwick and Paul Carter who have done an incredible job for the past 3 years. I also want to thank other members who are going off the Board in 2022, Gary Slanga-new class director, Bill Walker-2nd Vice President, Sylvia Maedgen-Recording Secretary, Stacye Parry-Projects, Larry Moehnke-Killeen Municipal Garden, and of course, Glenn Melton-President for 3 tough years. I hope I can be as successful as Glenn in my 2 years in this office.

Kathy

Educational Article by Anne Wagner

Citrus growing in Bell County Texas probably does not cross your mind in fall or winter.

As a Bell County Master Gardener, I have successfully kept alive and grown a two-year tangerine that I selected from a nursery to a fully fruited tree with ten oranges. The tree was about 2 feet tall and the trunk size about pencil width when it was bought during summer 2020. Kathy Love purchased the tree for me as a housewarming gift. I selected this one because it looked like the healthiest one at the nursery. Fast forwarding to November 2021, the tree had 9 big green tangerines on it. This tree is only 2 years old and still has a thin trunk and is about 3 feet tall now. It has only been repotted once from the original pot. I removed 4 of the fruits so the tree would not break and could put all its energy into filling out the remaining fruit. As you can see in the photos, the fruit are nice size for a small tree. Many of these mandarin variety citrus sold today are on "Flying dragon" rootstock because of its ability to keep a tree small but produce fruit within two years of purchase. You can see the fully developed fruit segments in a thin rind. The tangerine exhibits all the qualities of a mandarin variety. The fruit is very easy to peel, seedless, and sweet. I was surprised it was juicy as well. Next time I will leave the fruit on the tree a little longer, as it would further develop its sugar content.

According to Texas A&M Aggie horticulture website, most people lose their potted citrus within the first two years of purchasing because they are not aware that most citrus will freeze at temperatures below 28° Fahrenheit and keeping the tree watered during the hot Texas summers is crucial to its survival. Citrus must have at least 8 hours of full sun daily to thrive. Despite the challenges, if your tree does suffer minor freeze damage such as leaf defoliation and some bark splitting, it can be nursed back to health within a year. Therefore, it is recommended to keep citrus in a pot in central Texas because you can control the soil moisture and temperature much better than planting it in the ground. I brought my citrus trees in pots into the house during the 2021 deep freeze and kept them near a window until March. The only other challenges that I have had growing my tangerine were keeping the mealy bugs and leaf miners in check during summer. I used neem oil spray in evening once every 10 days per directions until the infestation was under control. I never sprayed them while the sun was out in hot temperatures to avoid leaf burn.

I hope this article motivates more people to grow citrus in pots because it really is fun especially when you start getting fruit on your trees. Central Texas has a long enough growing season to do so. I also wanted to share some photos of the thornless lime tree that I purchased at HEB in Belton last year that is fruiting heavily in a pot on my south facing patio. Both of these trees are self-pollinating making it much easier to get fruit.

Annual Awards 2021



Distinguished Service: Larry Moehnke and
Joan Bumgarner



25 Year Pin: Bob Gordon and Charles Newsom



20 Year Pin: Mary Lou Edmonson



15 Year Pin: Louann Higt, Bernie Hurta, Gary Slanga, Don
Wyatt

Annual Awards 2021



10 Year Pin: Randy Brown, Jan George, Pat Johnson, Stacye Parry, Elane Passman, Gail Pierce, Janet Stein, Susan Terry



Green Thumb Award: Charlotte Nunnery, Teri Marceau, Paul Carter, Rebecca Caldwell



Golden Shovel Award:
Dave Slaughter



Golden Trowel Award: Dave Slaughter



New Master Gardener
Of The Year:
Amy Castro, Anne
Beauchamp



5 Year Pin: Sandra Blankenship, Lorraine Brown, Mike Butts, Breanna Care-Howeth, Linda Farmer, Barbara Ishikawa, Emily Kuczek, Glenn Melton, Christy Reese, Janice Smith, Bill Walker

Christmas Party



Auction items on display



Auction items going under the hammer

Projects in the community

Thomas Arnold Elementary School

The Thomas Arnold Elementary school fall garden is coming along. We had the students out to check the progress of the seeds they planted and to taste a few leaves. After winter break we plan to harvest enough to make dishes that the students will sample. We have broccoli, celery, beans, carrots, peas, spinach, and lettuce. Plus mint, oregano, thyme, rosemary, and parsley.



Projects in the community

KMCCG

Big crew of gardeners on the final workday of 2021. Six rows of yellow, red and white onions planted (a big thankyou to Bill Walker for providing all the onion slips); 100lbs of tomato's harvested, expended tomato and pepper plants cleared, and the entire garden watered. A great conclusion to KMCCG 2021.



Dave Slaughter and Ed Eayala planting onions .



Rebecca Caldwell and Sandra Blankenship removing expended tomato plants.



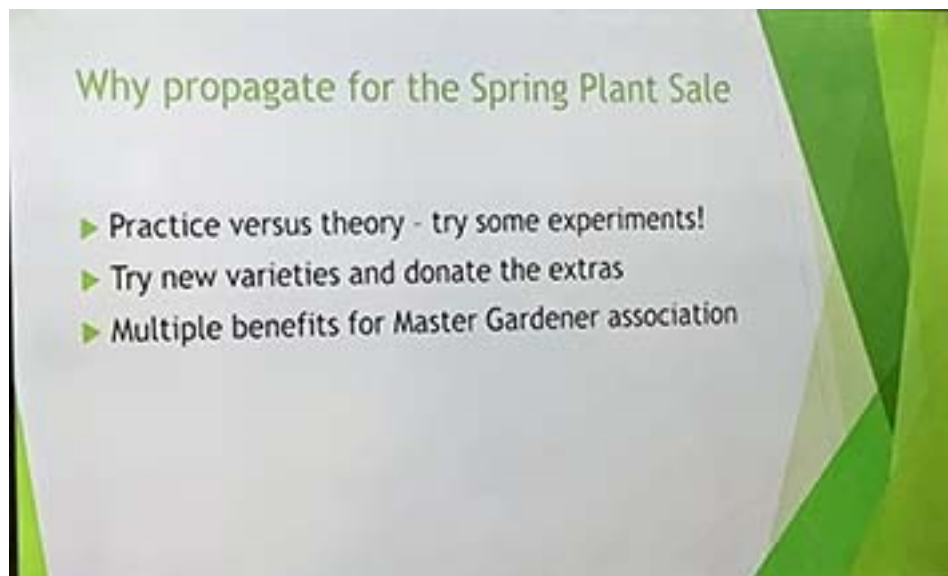
New sign installed at the garden entrance.



Paul Carter with tomato harvest.

Plant Propagation For Plant Sales

Barbara Ishikawa and Wayne Schirner presented a well attended and informative class on December 8th 2021 in the BCMGA Learning Center.



Educational Article By Wayne Schirner

Seed starting resources

Here are some links and info that I shared in the presentation on seed starting, plus some other resources on soil blocking. I verified that the links provided all worked, but let me know if you have problems on your device.

Vegetable seed germination based on soil temperatures:

<https://sacmg.ucanr.edu/files/164220.pdf>

Seed longevity chart:

This chart is from joegardener.com by Joe Lamp'I. There are several other charts and episodes on starting seeds indoors from him. Go to his site and search on "starting seeds indoors," and then browse his site.

<https://joegardener.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Seed-Longevity-Chart.pdf>

Vegetable planting guide for central TX:

This planting guide is for Austin. Even though Austin is also in zone 8b like Bell county, our first and last average frost dates are about a week later in the spring and a week earlier in the fall.

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/VegPlantingGuideJan2015.pdf>

YouTube videos:

There are many YouTube videos on seed starting. The ones that I like best are from the Gardener Scott channel. He is a Master Gardener, and you can claim education hours by watching his videos. I've given the time for each video after the titles.

How to get started growing seeds indoors, 16:13

How to start seeds indoors, 22:51

When to start seeds indoors, 17:58

How to grow seedlings, part 1, 16:29

How to grow seedlings, part 2, 22:00

10 big seed starting mistakes, 17:20

Understanding soil blocks – method, recipes, & benefits, 25:07

There are also lots of resources for soil blocking at <https://thegardenersworkshop.com>. On the site, look under "learning center" and then check out the videos and the link specific to soil blocking.

A great resource for indoor seed starting is published by Botanical Interests and is available for downloading for free. Here's a link to it: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.botanicalinterests.com/downloads/Botanical%20Interests%20How%20to%20Start%20Seeds.pdf>

Let me know if you have questions and I will try to answer them.

Wayne

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.

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 or to [Bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto: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.

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. We LOVE to celebrate our Master Gardeners.

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	2021-2022
Outreach	Crystal Mears & Rebekah Lackey	2021-2022
New Class	Pat Johnson	2019-2022
Projects	Wayne Schirner	2020-2022
Youth	Janice Smith	2020-2022

Executive Board

President	Kathy Love	2022-2024
1 st Vice President	Jan Upchurch	2020-2022
2 nd Vice President	Louann Hight	2022-2024
Recording Secretary	Sylvia Maedgen	2020-2022
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

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.

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

CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK PAGE! GO TO

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



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