



NEWS . EVENTS . GARDENING TIPS. EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES



## Cut Flower Gardening

*By Misti Daniel*

Cut flower gardening in central Texas is a fun and rewarding hobby. Whether you are an experienced gardener or a beginner, cut flower gardening is a terrific way to connect with nature and enjoy the beauty of your surroundings. By choosing the right plants, providing proper care, and using creative design ideas, you can create a beautiful and thriving cut flower garden that will provide you with fresh blooms all season long.

Central Texas is a region that experiences hot and dry summers, making it important to choose plants that thrive in these conditions. When it comes to cut flower gardening, there are many beautiful and resilient plants to choose from. Here are a few of the best plants to grow in a cut flower garden in central Texas:

1. Zinnias – Zinnias are a wonderful choice for cut flower gardening because they can tolerate the hot Texas summer, they come in a variety of colors, and they will last in a cut arrangement up to two weeks. Look for the “cut and come again” variety as this mixture will continue to produce flowers all the way to the first frost.
2. Sunflowers – Sunflowers are a classic addition to any cut flower garden. For mess-free arrangements, choose a pollen-less variety, such as ProCut or Buttercream. Plant sunflower seeds every 2-3 weeks to ensure continued harvests into fall.
3. Cosmos – Cosmos are another wonderful choice for cut flower gardening in central Texas. They can thrive in hot and dry conditions and produce large, showy flowers in shades of pink, white, and purple.
4. Black-eyed Susan – These sunny yellow flowers are easy to grow in central Texas and add a nice pop of color to an arrangement. They are drought tolerant and thrive in full sun but can handle part shade.

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Have Gardening Questions? Submit your questions and photos at: [bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu)

# THE BLOOMING BELL MAY 2023

## UPCOMING EVENTS MAY 2023

### Speakers Bureau & Monthly Outreach Seminar

All Classes start at 6:00 PM.

Thursday **May 18th**

Tuesday, **May 23rd** Harker Heights Activity Center - Texas Superstar Perennials

For more information please email: [BCMGA Speakers@gmail.com](mailto:BCMGA Speakers@gmail.com).

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**WEDNESDAY WORKDAYS: First & Third Wednesdays, 8:00 to 11:00 am**, are Master Gardener workdays at the Extension Office. We have demonstration beds all around the facility. Bring a friend who may be interested in becoming a MG or just a friend of the BCMGS. Come for an hour or two or four.

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**Board of Directors Meeting:** Meets on **May 24th**, at 10:00 a.m., in the Education Center (which is in the AgriLife Building).

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**May 10th** General Membership Meeting will be our **Spring Fling** at the Immanuel Lutheran Church at 2109 W. Avenue H, Temple. More information to follow. Our 2023 Interns will be graduating at our get together.

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**Burger Wednesday:** Burger Wednesday is currently suspended pending an individual or group to volunteer to coordinate the meal. Contact April Marek for details at [april3481@gmail.com](mailto:april3481@gmail.com).

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**Herb Study Group:** Meets on the **3rd** Wednesday of the month, **10:00-11:30 AM**. See the Calendar of Events for location as it may fluctuate between the learning center and the extension classroom. Please contact Tracy Brown for further information: [bcmgtabrown@gmail.com](mailto:bcmgtabrown@gmail.com).

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**Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden:** Meets every Saturday, time varies according to the season. Please contact Dave Slaughter [slaughtd915@gmail.com](mailto:slaughtd915@gmail.com). See VMS for additional Harvest Days to earn extra service hours.

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**HELP DESK:** Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to Noon & 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

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**Blooming Bell Newsletter:** You can find the newsletter on the Home Page of our Website at [txmg.org/bell](http://txmg.org/bell).



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Horticulture Program in Bell County

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### Executive Board

President	Kathy Love
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Anna Sartin
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Louann Hight
Recording Secretary	Misti Daniel
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Membership	Sherry Oermann
KMCCG	Dave Slaughter
New Class	Pat Johnson
Projects	Wayne Schirner
Youth	Susan Fogleman & Joyce Lauer
Outreach/Speakers Bureau	Debra Thompson

# THE BLOOMING BELL MAY 2023

## Monthly Seminars for Central Texas Gardeners

Presented by Bell County Certified Master Gardeners or Guest Speakers

Date	Topic
May 18	Landscaping with Native Plants
June 15	Soil Health
July 20	Hummingbirds and Pollinators
August 17	Blackberries
September 21	Migrating Monarchs
October 19	Onions and Garlic
November 16	Planting Trees

**Location:** Bell County Texas Agrilife Extension Office, BCMGA Learning Center, 1605 N. Main St. Belton, TX

**Time:** 6:00 – 7:30 P.M.

**Class Size:** Seminars are limited to 50 participants. Register at [bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com](mailto:bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com)

**Cost:** Our seminars are free but the BCMGA will accept donations up to \$5

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## Special Event Presentations and Workshops for Central Texas Gardeners

Presented by Bell County Certified Master Gardeners or Guest Speakers

Date	Topic
May 23	Harker Heights Activities Center "Texas Superstar Perennials"
June 17	Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden "Open House"
July 19	Harker Heights Activities Center "Texas Superstar Per-Annuals, Woody Shrubs, Specialty Plants and Trees"
August 31	Harker Heights Activities Center "Drip Irrigation" Part 1 of Water Conservation Series
September 28	Harker Heights Activities Center "Drought Tolerant Native Plants" Part 2 of Water Conservation Series
October 24	Harker Heights Activities Center "Rainwater Harvesting" Part 3 of Water Conservation Series

All events will be announced on FACEBOOK, Local Newspapers, Select Radio, and TV Stations and the BCMGA Home Page [txmg.org/bell/](http://txmg.org/bell/) Please email [bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com](mailto:bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com) for more information.

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

# THE BLOOMING BELL MAY 2023

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Kathy Love*

April was an erratic month for weather, bouncing back and forth from chilly to warm and occasionally downright hot! A sure sign you are living in Texas!!!

BCMGA received recognition as the 2022 Volunteer of the Year from the City of Harker Heights. The plaque in recognition of this honor was presented by Harker Heights Director of Parks and Recreation, Jeff Achee. Debbie and Randy Thompson, Sylvia Maedgen and Teri Marceau accepted the plaque on our behalf. This was in recognition of the numerous programs presented at the Activity Center by our members. We thank all of you for making this honor possible.

We will be graduating 16 members of our Spring 2023 class on May 10<sup>th</sup> ahead of our Spring Fling. Please keep in mind that the graduation will take place at our May general membership meeting which will be held at Emmanuel Lutheran Church located at 2109 W Avenue H, Temple, TX 76504 due to the unavailability of the Harris Center in May. Please join us from 9:30-10 a.m. for socializing, then there will be a short business meeting followed by the graduation. After graduation we will enjoy fun and games arranged by 1<sup>st</sup> VP Anna Sartain and her committee.

During the April Board of Directors meeting the Policy and Planning Committee presented a draft of our BCMGA by-laws for Board consideration and discussion. Following the discussion, the Board approved the current draft of the By Laws with only minor changes, and they will be posted in our members only section of the website by the May general membership meeting for everyone to review. Fairly extensive changes have been made, mainly to bring our by-laws more into line with the State by-laws. The draft will be discussed with the general membership during our June meeting to allow modifications/changes etc. Thereafter, any changes made will be incorporated and the general membership will vote on the new by-laws at our July meeting and if approved, they will become effective immediately.

Barbara Ishikawa presented the following from the Plant Sale Committee. The net income from the sale was \$11,923, including the refunded \$200 deposit from the Bend of the River. Her post sale survey most requested improvements were more plants, better process/layout, staffing level for tally and check out ques, better parking signage and staffing. Barbara's committee presented 3 location options for the spring 2024 Plant Sale, Bend of the River, the Killeen Event Center, and the Bell County Expo Center. After discussion of the pros and cons of each location, including the associated expenses, the Board voted in favor of holding the event at the Bell County Expo Center Assembly Hall. The target dates for the spring sale are March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. This information will be presented in more detail at an upcoming General Membership meeting.

Discussion was held on holding a fall bulb sale in lieu of a Fall Plant Sale, featuring a limited, region appropriate selection of bulbs. The details of this possible change will be discussed with the general membership soon.

Our outreach and youth programs remain extremely active. Outreach Director Debbie Thompson reports we made a total of 38 individual presentations in April, and she is currently getting the May calendar going as well. She is working on a series of programs on water conservation for the months of August/September/October for the Harker Heights Activity Center. If you are interested in getting involved in this series or any other outreach project, please contact Debbie or the help desk.

Youth director Susan Fogleman and associate director Joyce Lauer have youth projects going all over the county including such activities as Earth Day at Fort Hood, Cedar Valley Elementary school presentation to kindergarten classes, Academy Middle School Science Fair, Salado 4H presentation, Salado Museum Music Festival, Kindergarten Day at KMCCG and Nolan Creek School STEAMFEST. Ongoing LGEG programs include Hector Garcia Elementary School, St. Mary's and Hay Branch Elementary, Brookhaven School, and Ft. Hood 4H at Montague. Again, please contact Susan or Joyce if you want to get involved with our youth programs.

Finally, the State Awards program was presented Tuesday evening May 2<sup>nd</sup> and BCMGA received First place in the Youth JMG category for the LGEG program and third place for Outstanding Individual - Barbara Ishikawa.

Happy gardening all!



## Bell County Master Gardener Class Field Trip 2023

### True Harvest Farms Tour by Lindell Small

**WOW!** What a wonderful learning experience the April 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 Master Gardener class field trip provided. The trip included a tour of the True Harvest Farm in Belton as well as a tour of both Joan Stanley's and Mary Lew Quesinberry's gardens.

The first stop on our trip was the True Harvest Farms located at 111 True Harvest Way in Belton. True Harvest Farms is a hydroponic farm growing lettuce and leafy greens for sell to schools, grocery stores and restaurants in Texas. Hydroponic farming is modeled after the farming methods used in the Netherlands where land is at a premium and Hydroponic gardening provides an efficient means of providing high yield produce. The class was provided with a thorough tour of the facilities and given an extensive opportunity to discuss operations of the farms with one of the managing members, Jason Maks, and the tour guides Anna and Sarah.

Of particular interest to the class was the time we were able to visit with the person responsible for the growth of the produce from seeds through harvesting. The tour provided a prime example of what we had learned in our gardening class related to the propagation of the plants from seed through plant maturation. We observed firsthand how the exact control of the key elements in growing plants (growing media, light, water, temperature, nutrients, pest management) yields consistent and excellent results.

First step in the process is the seeding station where the plugs for the seeds are prepared by providing a slurry of peat moss (imported from eastern Europe) and injected into a machine that forms the plugs and places them in trays for the seeding machine. The trays are fed into the seeding machine where they are placed in the plugs and covered with more peat moss for the germination process. At this stage beneficial bugs are also added to manage the harmful pests. The "good bugs" that kill the "bad bugs"



Figure 1 Seeding Plugs



Figure 2 Covering Seeds



Figure 3 Adding Beneficial Bugs

At this point the planted trays are ready to enter the germination chamber to allow the seeds to actually germinate and start plant growth.

Once germination is started and the plan emerges, the plugs are placed into the growing trays where they are cultivated to maturity and ready to harvest. This can take from approximately 35 to 60 days depending on the season.



Fig 4 Romaine Growing



Fig. 5 Harvest Ready Baby Butter



Fig. 6 Lettuce Ready to Ship

When the plant is ready to be harvested, it is harvested and packed for shipment to grocery stores, restaurants, and Texas school districts.

True Harvest Farms currently have approximately an acre of green house space under cultivation. However, they are expanding their facilities to have approximately 5 acres under cultivation in the near future.

Any one interested in a virtual tour similar to what we experienced in person and go to YouTube and search on True Harvest Farms to view.

### **Joan Stanley and Mary Lew Quesinberry Gardens**

After the True Harvest Farm tour, we were treated to the beautiful and diverse family gardens of the Stanleys and Quesinberrys. Both Gardens are excellent reflections of plants and trees that are native to or adapted to the environment of central Texas. Both gardens are diverse in plant variety and visual perspective. They ranged from the elegant stately beauty of various varieties of bearded Iris plants to the delicate beauty of the Rose Campion to the breathtaking beauty and fragrance of the Anacacho Orchid tree and all things in between including a profusion of Texas Bluebonnets. Of particular note is that both gardeners use minimal water while maintaining excellent plant health. The following figures show just a few of the beautiful flowers seen in our tour of the gardens.

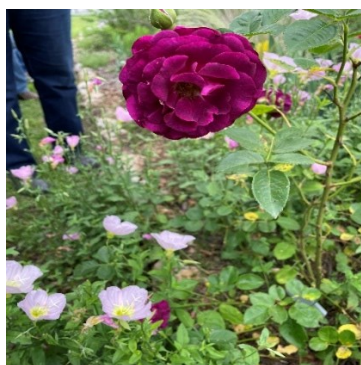


Fig. 7 Rose Campion

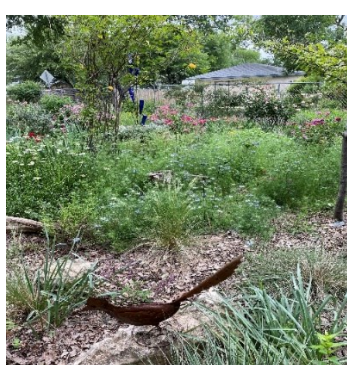


Fig. 8 Road Runner Statuary

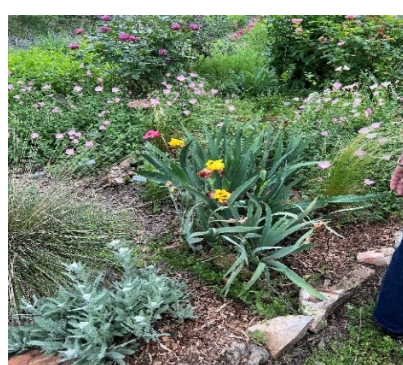


Fig. 9 Bearded Iris

Our heartfelt thanks to True Harvest Farms, Joan Stanley, and Mary Lew Quesinberry for hosting our tour.



## **Saving Water on a Rainy Day**

*By Randy Thompson*

On April 22, Certified Master Gardener Teri Marceau conducted a rain barrel workshop for the public at the BCMGA Learning Center. Seventeen builders along with their guests attended the informative class and learned about the importance and benefits of harvesting rainwater. Two 4H2o Youth Ambassadors also gave a presentation at the event. Much was learned about the different methods of saving and harvesting water as well as how to construct the barrels.

After the presentation, a tour was given of the grounds to show how the association's rain barrels were set up, as well as different guttering and catch systems. Once the tour was completed, it was time for the rain barrels to be built. All accessories, as well as the barrels, were donated by Clearwater UWCD. Certified Master Gardeners and Interns were standing by and ready to help the public with construction. After the holes were drilled and the faucets were installed, seventeen proud builders went home with their new rain barrels just in time for the heavy rains that came shortly thereafter. The BCMGA looks forward to holding another Rain Barrel Workshop in the fall.



## Cut Flower Gardening

*Continued from page 1*

Picking the right spot in your yard for your cut flower garden is very important because most cut flowers require at least six hours of direct sunlight per day. Prepare your bed by removing weeds and mixing in compost to the top six inches of the soil. Many cut flowers, such as zinnias and sunflowers, prefer direct sowing over transplanting. Direct sow cut flower seeds once all dangers of frost have passed and thin seedlings once they are 2-3 inches tall. Water frequently and deeply, even after the seedlings become established, to keep the plants healthy during the hot Texas heat. Adding a layer of mulch around your plants can also help retain moisture and keep the soil cool.

Once your flower garden is producing beautiful blooms and you are ready to bring a fresh flower arrangement into your home, it is important to take the proper steps to preserve your flowers to extend their life and enjoy their beauty for several days or even weeks!

First, cut at the right time. It's best to cut flowers in the early morning or the late evening when the temperatures are cooler. Choose flowers that are just beginning to bloom to increase the life of your arrangement. Once you have cut your flowers, remove any foliage that will fall below the water line and remember to change the water every two to three days to help prevent bacteria growth. When changing the water, trim the ends of the stems at an angle to help them to absorb water easily. Store your arrangement in a cool area of your home, away from direct sunlight. By following these tips, you can greatly increase the time that your arrangement will stay fresh.

Arranging your cut flowers is the fun part of cut flower gardening. Use complimentary colors such as pink and green or yellow and purple. Use taller flowers in the center of your arrangement and shorter ones around the edges. Be careful not to overcrowd your arrangement, give each flower enough space to be seen. Experiment with assorted colors, shapes, and sizes and don't be afraid to try new things!

Cut flower gardening in central Texas can be a relaxing and rewarding hobby. Be sure to pick the right plants for your area, plant in a warm, sunny spot, use proper care when cutting and preserving your blooms and get creative when making your arrangements. Most of all, have fun!





## Horticultural myths

*By Wayne Schirner*

THERE CAN BE  
**NO LIFE WITHOUT SOIL**  
AND **NO SOIL WITHOUT LIFE**



The soil is **ALIVE!**  
But conventional pesticides, herbicides,  
fungicides and fertilizer **KILL IT!**

This meme appeared on our Facebook page when it was shared from another Master Gardener Association's page. This illustrates why we shouldn't just accept everything we read, even if it is from a supposedly reliable source, such as another MG Association. This month's post on horticultural myths will address the last two sentences, which have no research based evidence supporting the claim. I fully support gardeners making an individual choice about how they will garden, but I don't support making claims that aren't true. The training we all received as interns included the information that refutes those two sentences.

The first clue when evaluating something like this is the meme doesn't define "conventional." What do they mean? It is left up to the reader to decide for themselves what is meant by conventional. I suspect they are talking about organic versus non-organic, but that is just my suspicion. Looking further at the meme, a pest in the garden is anything that adversely affects plant growth. The three most common pests we deal with are insects, diseases (fungal, bacterial, and viral) and weeds. A pesticide is a substance that controls insects (insecticide), fungus (fungicide), bacteria (bactericide), and weeds (herbicide). There are no pesticides against viral diseases. The TMG Management Guide statement on the use of pesticides requires that if we give specific recommendations on a product, all approved products must be mentioned. My interpretation of this is that if I am giving a recommendation on a treatment for a specific pest, I must address the organic and non-organic controls that have been proven to be effective when used according to the label.

Finally, addressing fertilizers, a plant can only use nutrients once they have been broken down into their individual ions. A plant can't tell if the nitrogen being taken up by the root started out in an organic fertilizer or a non-organic fertilizer. The nutrients in an organic fertilizer cannot be used by a plant until the microbes in the soil have broken down the more complex compounds into the individual ions. That takes time, which is why organic fertilizers are commonly called "slow-release" fertilizers. Non-organic fertilizers are frequently water soluble so the ions are available immediately, which is why they are commonly called quick-release fertilizers. The microbes that break down organic fertilizers live in the soil and require water, air, and nitrogen to eat. Whether you follow an organic or non-organic method of gardening, the standard recommendation is that soils should have around 5% organic matter. Probably the most common source of organic material in our gardens is compost. This is independent of the choice of fertilizer.

Before accepting the information in the meme and then just sharing it, do your own research. Here are some resources to get you started.

<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/403/2015/03/organic-superiority.pdf>

<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/403/2015/03/organic-pesticides.pdf>

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/does-fertilizer-kill-soil-bacteria/>

There may be valid reasons for deciding to follow organic or non organic gardening methods, but the impact on soil life isn't part of that decision.

# THE BLOOMING BELL      MAY 2023

## KILLEEN MUNICIPAL COURT COMMUNITY GARDEN REPORT

*By Randy Brown*



### 4-1-2023

Perfect day in the garden! Harvested radishes, carrots, turnips/greens. Three interns joined us, Holly, Cynthia, and Nikkis. Had a great crew of Master Gardeners. Completed tomato and pepper plantings. Garden now has all rows under cultivation. After the radish harvest, work preparing that raised bed for the Three Sisters Demonstration garden was accomplished. Corn will be the first item planted. Several potato rows were mounded, weeded, and great maintenance performed on front entry beds.

### 4-8-2023

Cloudy, misty, cool day; perfect for Master Gardeners. It was a student holiday. Great crew of Master Gardeners and interns; Monique, Cynthia and Dawn joined in the fun. Lots of weeding maintenance. Found cabbage worms and aphids after 3/4" rainfall and treatment applied. Had a very good harvest of 75.6 lbs of cabbage, carrots, turnips and greens.

### 4-29-2023

Was a breezy, clear day. 159.7 lbs of squash, carrots, turnips, beets, cabbages and onions. 469.9 of produce for the month and 532.5 lbs 2023 to date.



## TEXAS SUPERSTAR OF THE MONTH



### "Bluebonnet" By Debbie Thompson



The "Bluebonnet", the State Flower of Texas, is the most recognized flower across Texas. It grows March through May and is the most photographed flower due to its scenic beauty. Did you know that there are currently three bluebonnets that have been given the title of "Texas Superstar" to include: the Texas Bluebonnet, Texas Maroon Bluebonnet, and the Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue Bluebonnet. All three varieties are a hardy winter annual native to Texas. The flowers are densely arranged on a spike with a characteristic ice white terminal tip. The Texas Bluebonnet is the most common species that is found on roadsides and pastures throughout Texas.

The Texas Maroon Bluebonnet and the Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue Bluebonnet trace their ancestry to the Texas Bluebonnet. They are both considered the State Flower of Texas due to a law that was passed in 1971 that states "if any new species are discovered they will also assume the mantle of the state flower of Texas." There are also two other bluebonnets that are recognized as the State Flower of Texas, not including the "Texas Superstar", that brings it to a total of five bluebonnets as the state flower.

All three varieties grow best in full sun and can grow from 12-14 inches high. This annual can be planted in the fall in well-drained soil. The seeds require scarification but can be chemically scarified to allow germination to occur within 10 days making them a great option for your spring landscape. The Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue Bluebonnet can produce as much as 40 percent more seeds than the traditional bluebonnets, making it very easy to propagate.

All varieties of the "Bluebonnet" are deer resistant, are welcomed by pollinators, and they rarely suffer from insect or disease problems. Adding a well-balanced fertilizer in the fall will help with spring flower production.

The Texas Bluebonnet grows well in flower beds, meadows, and hillsides. The Texas Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue Bluebonnet also does well in meadows and hillsides, as well as accent beds and containers. The Texas Maroon Bluebonnet does best in bedding, window boxes, patio containers, and hanging baskets. It was once graced, by an assumed Aggie, in the flower beds of the University of Texas campus and stuck out amongst all the UT orange.

Any of the varieties of Bluebonnets are an excellent choice for your landscape. Plan now by buying seeds for the fall that can be purchased at nurseries, on-line, and in local retail stores.

Source: **Texas Superstar Handbook Color Brochure:** [https://issuu.com/gotexan/docs/txagri-trade-32456-01\\_texas\\_superstar\\_booklets\\_f\\_w](https://issuu.com/gotexan/docs/txagri-trade-32456-01_texas_superstar_booklets_f_w)



Texas Bluebonnet



Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue Bluebonnet



Texas Maroon Bluebonnet



# THE BLOOMING BELL MAY 2023

## Texas Superstar Annuals Seminar

*by Nellie Pennington, Intern, 2023*

Have you ever wondered why some yards have such pretty color and greenery throughout the year in their flowerbeds and in their landscaping? As a plant lover, I often get attracted to plants at nurseries for their beautiful flowers and foliage. I know I'm not alone as we had an excited crowd, waiting to hear all about high points from Debra Thompson, Certified Master Gardener and speaker at our March seminar on Texas Superstars Annuals.

Debra Thompson began by providing our class, a little history in considered growing these superstars. Did you know in 1989 the Texas superstar annuals were noted to be state wide to be recognized. She also included where to begin, starting with researching your soil environment where you want to plant. She stressed the importance of getting a soil test and provided information where you could pick up your soil envelopes at the extension office and the instructions on how to do so. Debra Thompson, explain the importance of making sure you have good drainage, not planting on a uneven surface, weed free without too many rocks, and providing the right amount of sunlight provided for most of these annuals.

To be selected as a Texas Superstar Annual, they need to have the following qualities. The selection includes, they will be beautiful, unique characteristics, they must perform well, deer resistant, pest resistant, easily propagated, and last, but not least affordable.

The Texas Superstars are made up of the following plants, Annuals, Perennials, Woody shrubs, and specialty plants.

The crowd was also given important information on results of your soil sample how to check the pH and explained about the watering process and how you can even do a percolation test in your yard. She had a Three-way moisture, meter, that checks, pH, water, moisture, and sunlight. She taught the class about Hydro zoning, the importance of grouping plants that like similar water needs together. You wouldn't want to put a plant that needs a small amount of water with plants that need medium to heavier watering together. Too much water is not good for all plants either. So making smart planning decisions on laying out your plants will help you for a successful garden space. And always plan your landscaping or flowerbeds to know what their full potential of growth will be so that they're not overcrowded.

In addition, she provided growing calendars that suggest the best times to begin planting in your area as we discussed March 24 is our last frost date provided for our area. She explain to us the importance of reviewing your soil sample to research if your ground is more acidic or more alkaline in certain areas. Colorful slides that showed us the Texas super stars and their unique qualities, whether it be their flowers, foliage, or the way that they grow. Some of them are vining and creep low for ground cover, some stand up tall, some are very full and compact, while others are a thrill of the show. When planting in container pot the excitement to be made to be the envy of your street is plant with a filler, thriller, and spillers.

Some excellent examples of Texas Superstars are Mandevilla, Larkspur, Vinca Coral Series, Mari Mum, and Marigold chrysanthemum's, Sweet Alyssum, Pentas, Whopper Begonias, Texas, bluebonnets and Esperanza's.

Deborah Thompson shared many important links with our audience on how to make your own compost tea, a list of the Texas, Superstars Annual natives and descriptions of each growing pattern, moisture requirements, and of course their sun requirements. She also provided the information that many of our local nurseries even offer labels or tags to show that they are a Texas superstar variety plant.

A question and answer time was offered for our guest to ask questions. Many had very good questions and Debra provided answers to each and everyone. Our guest were very enthused and happy with the knowledge that they gained. At the end of the class door prizes we offered to our attendees. To included Texas Superstar, Whopper Begonias, Pentas, and seed packets of our Texas native bluebonnet seeds. The information was very valuable to myself as I feel I'm learning something every day. As a plant lover, I now realize I will not be throwing away money as I did before. Understanding my landscape, soil needs, sunlight required for these plants and the moisture levels was instrumental in helping me make decisions for a year-round garden. As she explained many of these superstars do not require as much water as some of your choices that you may have pick up before learning about the living requirements. Knowing the best plants for our area, you can't go wrong for your own successful landscaping.





## CHANGE; Cut Both Ways

### The Opportunity & Challenge of Change

By Teri Marceau

Do you see opportunities unfolding in change or only difficult challenges? Change has two sides with the same value much like a silver dollar coin. For one person change can be an obstacle and for another it can be an opportunity. One may find the challenge of change to provocative while another sees it as formidable. Life starts with a wide-eyed wonder and adventure, embracing change. However, as we mature, we may become immune to the excitement of these opportunities, even become opposed to them. If we look closely, we can see there is a pattern to life's regeneration.

In business there is a theory that productivity in a group consists of adoption patterns. I was given a 2019 article [The Value of Early Adopters](#) by Simon Johnston that sparked my curiosity and made me think how this relates to change within BCMGA.

In the article above there are five patterns relating to new products, but these can be applied to any group. Each one of us falls into one or some of these categories throughout our lifetime. Can you identify what pattern you fall into?



Germination

The first group is considered to be innovators. Germination marks those who

generate new ideas and are quick to show interest in them. They are excited by new ideas and are usually among the first to volunteer. They bring new projects to the table.



Budding

This group is said to be the most influential and get invested in new projects. Our leaders come from the budding or early adopters' group and have the biggest impact on the success of a project. This group will ask "what can I do to help?".



Flowering

The flowering group is known to be strongly interested but are leery of the risk

and want to be confident the project is worth their valuable time and energy. They are the majority who shows up early but doesn't commit. These people will say, "I may volunteer but not just yet".



Seeding

Seeding is known as the late majority. This group can be a bit skeptical of new projects and ideas. They sit back and wait for the project to prove its success. This group will volunteer only if the project is majority approved.

**CHANGE; Cut Both Ways*****Continued...***

Ripening

The name of this group suggests that they are the last to join the party. Unfortunately, this tends to be towards the end of a project when new ideas are starting to germinate. This group may say things like, “We have never done it that way or we always do it this way”.

As we continue to celebrate our association’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary I can’t help pondering on all the wonderful changes BCMGA has gone through and all who have laid the path we walk today. I look forward to the new innovative projects we come up with as move into the next 25 years. I challenge you to look positively on the opportunities and challenges that come with change.

*Resource: [The Value of Early Adopters](#) by Simon Johnston posted to [iconrelocation.com](#) 10/16/2019*

## Community Outreach Seminar

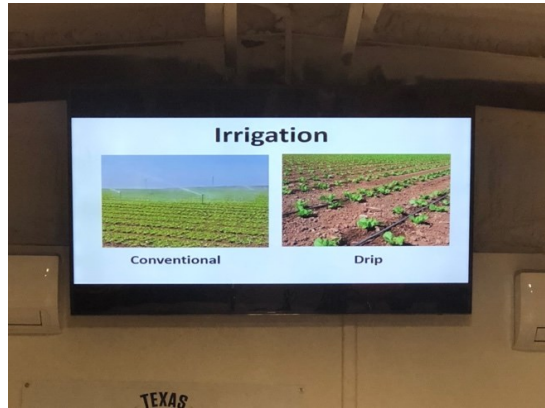
*By Jeanne Richard*

Charlotte Nunnery & Jeanne Richard hosted the first-ever “Herb compound butter & cream cheese spreads” hands-on workshop April 22, 2023 at the AgriLife Ext office from 10 to noon. Twenty participants were treated to tasty herb filled savory and sweet butters and cream cheese spreads, along with lavender lemonade and rosemary/lavender cookies. The herbs used were harvested from Charlotte & Jeanne’s own herb gardens, as well as from the MG demonstration garden (the herb spiral garden is thriving, so please help yourself!). Participants watched demonstrations, and then chose herbs to make their own blends. The room was filled with the fragrance of fresh herbs, as they chopped and mixed. Everyone went home w/drawstring bags to hold their culinary creations, and several received herb garden inspired door prizes. They also received recipe hand-outs, as well as a list of easily grown herbs for Central Texas. Many thanks to Debbie Thompson for her tireless help and organizational efforts. Jeanne and Charlotte are considering scheduling another class in the Fall, using a Thanksgiving & Christmas holiday themed workshop.



## Drip Irrigation Seminar

*By Monique Armas, BCMG Intern*



How fitting to attend a class about water on a rainy day. Despite the torrential rains and hail, we had close to 20 folks come out to learn from one of our greatest master gardeners, Dave Slaughter. Attendees were able to learn a slew of information on drip irrigation. He showed some historical timelines on water levels. He then went on to explain the worldwide drought we are experiencing and how being mindful of our water consumption has a beneficial impact on water levels. He presented some mathematical examples to demonstrate the correlation between usage and its impact. Attendees were able to learn the valuable purpose of using drip irrigation in contrast to conventional practices (e.g., sprinklers) to include viewing a cost analysis of using each. Drip irrigation was the clear winner of the comparisons proving to offer more benefits such as mighty savings on water bills. However, more savings can be reaped if drip irrigation is used in conjunction with harvesting rainwater. And what is a presentation without any hands-on learning? Well, Mr. Slaughter showed a variety of drip irrigation systems ranging from nylon rope, DIY olla, soaker hoses, watering stakes, water storing crystals, and a pump to help compensate for PSI levels. This seminar was a great precursor to the rain barrel workshop.





## WIT (Workforce Industry Training) Event at Academy Middle School

*by Jackie McLaughlin, Fall Class of 2022*

The Academy ISD Middle School Science Teacher requested a table of information for their WIT Science Day on Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 12pm. WIT, Workforce Industry Training, is the former STEM program. At the event, students demonstrated their science projects and explained the process to those attending.

Our Bell County Master Gardeners, Melenda Pomykal, Jo Carlson, Joan Bumgarner, Dalila Poyser (intern) and Jackie McLaughlin represented the Association at the event. Our table consisted of a seed identification challenge and informational displays on how to read a seed packet. The seeds used for the challenge were: watermelon, squash, radish and cucumber. Information on square foot gardening was provided along with a planning calendar. Each student that participated in the seed challenge was given a small packet of okra seeds. To reinforce the use of a seed planning calendar, the student was asked to find okra in the list, then cross reference the months to plant okra. And as each of you know, this is the perfect time to put okra in the soil for production.

Jackie purchased seeds from Belton Feed and Supply and they in turn provided some packets of squash and radish seeds that were left by customers.

We had about 35 students and some parents visit our table that morning. We had very interesting answers to the seed challenge from both students and parents! Our objective was to make an impact on those attending regarding seeds, plants and fruit and vegetable identification.

## Urban Riparian and Stream Restoration Program

*by Jackie McLaughlin*

Texas Water Resources Institute and Texas AgriLife Research Extension hosted an Urban Riparian and Stream Restoration Program in Bell County at the Seaton Star Hall on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Forty -two percent (42%) of the river and stream miles in the United States are reported to be in poor condition due to streamside disturbance and poor riparian vegetation cover (USEPA 2020). Increases in human population along with industrial, commercial, and residential development place heavy demands on stream corridors. Riparian and Stream degradation is a major threat to: water quality, in-stream habitat, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic species and overall stream health. Most streams and rivers in Texas have been adversely affected by past natural and human activities resulting in: increasingly damaging floods, lower base flows, high sediment loads, reduced reservoir storage capacity, invasion of exotic species, loss of natural riparian habitats and degraded water quality. With the increasing population in Texas and the increased loss of rural working lands, the concerns for the health of streams and rivers are imminent. The top three fastest growing counties are within our Central Texas area: Comal, Hays and Williamson Counties.

The program and workshop centered on identifying the threats to streams, rivers and reservoirs. Examples included improper mowing next to a stream or river, thus interfering with the riparian area; forced changes in stream and river meandering thus causing increased sediment in the stream and river created by bank erosion which will then affect the baseflow and the natural flood plain of a stream or river. Also, improper bridge building designs can affect the flow of the stream or river, thus increasing all of the issues listed above.

Since the current drought is on everyone's mind, the increased sediment in our reservoirs affects the capacity of that lake or reservoir, thus decreasing the available water resources.

There are methods for restoration. The goals of the restoration program are: to promote healthy watersheds, natural stream restoration and improve water quality through the delivery of Urban Riparian and Stream Restoration training programs in priority watersheds and an Advanced 3 -day Stream Restoration training. Also, Restoration Demonstration Sites are in process to show the benefits of riparian restoration on bank erosion and total suspended solids levels within the creek.

Attendees of the workshop went to Big Elm Creek (one of the concerned watersheds in Central Texas) and participated in assessing the health of the stream/creek which runs behind the Seaton Star Hall.

Healthy streams, rivers and reservoirs should be everyone's concern. Understanding the importance of natural stream and river flows by both urban and rural planners is vital to the maintenance and stabilization of our land.

Master Gardeners participating in the program that day were Charles and Gladys Newsom and Jackie McLaughlin.