

# The Blooming Bell

NEWS . EVENTS . GARDENING TIPS. EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES

## Hummingbirds & Orioles



**Photos**  
**By**  
**Juan**  
**Anaya**



Upcoming Events .....	2
President's Corner .....	3
General Meeting .....	4
Why Are Trees Beneficial?.....	5
Horticultural Myth.....	6
KMCCG Report.....	7/8

Texas Superstar Of The Month.9/10	
Starting Tomatoes For Fall.....	11
Blanco Field Trip.....	12



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

# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## UPCOMING EVENTS JULY 2023

### Speakers Bureau & Monthly Outreach Seminar

Here is a tentative schedule for upcoming seminars. Please note the bureau will be adding hands-on classes on Saturdays and working in classes on the West side of the county.

**July 12**, 1:00-2:00pm – Community Outreach Planning Committee meeting, in the Learning Center after the GM meeting.

**July 20** at 6:00pm - Hummingbirds and Pollinators (Learning Center)

**July 22** at 10:00am - Hypertufa Workshop (Learning Center) opens to Master Gardeners on July 9th.

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

**WEDNESDAY WORKDAYS: First & Third Wednesdays, 8:00–11:00** are Master Gardner 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.

**To Beat the Heat, you may want to come earlier.** Check with April for what needs to be done.

**General Membership Business Education Meeting:** Meets on **July 12<sup>th</sup>**, at 10:00 a.m.; Fellowship time at 9:30 a.m. **Wizzie Brown** will present on *Stinging Insects of Summer* during our education meeting.

Looking ahead to the **August 9<sup>th</sup>** General Membership Education Meeting, **Tim Hartman** will be discussing *Fruit Trees and the Current Research for Fruit Trees*.

We will meet at the Harris Community Center, 401 N. Alexander St., Belton.

**Board of Directors Meeting:** Meets on **July 26<sup>th</sup>**, at 10:00 a.m., in the Education Center (which is in the AgriLife Building).

**Communication Committee Meeting:** We will meet on **Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>**, at 1:00 p.m. in the Education Center.

**Burger Wednesday: Suspended until further notice. Looking for one or more volunteers to organize these events. But please join us for our workday and fun fellowship.**

**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).

**Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden:** Meets every Saturday at 8:30 am,

Please contact Dave Slaughter [slaughtd915@gmail.com](mailto:slaughtd915@gmail.com). See VMS for additional Harvest Days to earn extra service hours.

**HELP DESK:** Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to Noon & 1:00 to 4:00 pm. **Closed Tuesday July 4th!**

**Blooming Bell Newsletter:** You can find the newsletter on the Home Page of our Website at [txmg.org/bell](http://txmg.org/bell). The deadline for articles is the **1st** of each month. Publication will be on the **5th**.



Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Horticulture Program in Bell County

1605 N Main St Ste 102 Belton, TX 76513

Email: [bell-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:bell-tx@tamu.edu)

Phone: 254.933.5305

Fax: 254.933.5312



### 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
Treasurer	Jackie McLaughlin

### Directors

Communications	Teri Marceau
Facilities	April Marek
Membership	Sherry Oermann
KMCCG	Dave Slaughter
New Class	Pat Johnson
Projects	Wayne Schirner
Youth	Susan Fogleman & Joyce Lauer
Outreach/Speakers Bureau	Debra Thompson

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Kathy Love*

It looks like it's going to be a long hot summer, but of course this is Texas so what else can we expect!

June was still a pretty busy month for BCMGA. Volunteer service hours were 860, education hours accrued were 158. While our school projects for the Learn Grow Eat Go (LGE) programs came to a basic stop with school out, our non LGE youth programs remain active, particularly the "Play in the Dirt" Harker Heights Parks and Recreation program. Thanks to Chuck Lauer and Monique Armas for their work with this project along with Susan Fogleman and Teri Marceau for classes taught. If I overlooked any others who have dedicated time to this particular project, please make note it is because you failed to enter your hours in VMS, not because I overlooked you!

For those who may not have attended the June general membership meeting, we received our official plaques for our State Search for Excellence awards, 1<sup>st</sup> place Learn Grow Eat Go and 3<sup>rd</sup> place Individual Master Gardener Barbara Ishikawa. Thanks to the many members who brought us the LGE award as that program has really flourished throughout the county, from schools in every community. Keep up the good work! Of course what can we say about all of the contributions Barbara has made to both our association and the State other than fabulous!

As always, our top volunteer project continues to be the Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden (KMCCG) thanks to the leadership of Dave Slaughter and his team of gardeners. In the month of June, the garden provided 2755.5 pounds of vegetables for local shelters, consisting of various squash's, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, beans, corn, and cucumbers. This is a new one-month harvest record. The garden hosted an open hour on June 17<sup>th</sup> attended by 15 adults and one child. Not a bad attendance given temperatures were 97 degrees by noon!

The help desk is experiencing a typical summertime increase in contacts with well over 100 made during the month of June. Topics as always for summer remain primarily lawn and tree issues. Many of the lawn issues focus on folk's failure to aerate or dethatch their primarily St. Augustine lawns. Our trees continue to suffer branch die-back due to primarily excessive water sprouts development on trunks and branches after the hard freezes in 2021 and 2022. If you encounter either of these lawn or tree issues with your neighbors or other contacts, give us a call at the help desk as we have very good extension information on both problems you can share.

We still have plenty of opportunities to learn and earn volunteer hours at the help desk Monday through Thursday 9 a.m.-noon and 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Sign up to work at the desk in VMS. Just a couple of topics I learned about this past month were how herbicides can remain in animal manure compost and desert termites in pastures. Granted the desert termites in pastures should have been an Ag call for Floyd, but we had to help out while he and Whitney were in Ireland and Scotland with our county 4H livestock judging team participating in the 2023 Clonmel Show, Clonmel, Ireland and 2023 Royal Highland Show Edinburg Scotland! Congratulate our county 4H team when you see them!

In the meantime, stay cool and happy gardening!

---

### **OOPS! From the Editors**

In the featured article Soil by Teri Marceau. She mixed up her East and West. To clarify, the soil East of I-35 is Blackland Prairie (she said "The western part of Bell County, Falls and Milam soil is the coveted Blackland Prairie."). We apologize for any confusion or misunderstanding.



# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## June General Meeting



The monthly meeting began with social time and a lot of wonderful goodies. At 9:30 AM the Second Vice President began a review of the membership recommended changes to the by-laws; discussions concluded with an approval vote by the membership. Board positions and their duties to be voted on in the Fall, were presented by the current Officers and Directors. After a short break the Business Meeting was conducted. Meeting adjourned at 11:55. AM.



TMGA First Place in JMG Youth Education.



Barbara Ishikawa TMGA third place for Individual Master Gardener of Year.



KMCCG Director Dave Slaughter explains his duties to the association.

## Trees – Why are they beneficial?

*By Sylvia Maedgen*



Summer is here and so is the heat. If you are spending more time indoors and thinking about cooler weather in the fall, you may want to think about what trees to plant in the fall. Here are some good reasons to plant trees.

**Trees fight climate change** – through photosynthesis, trees absorb harmful carbon dioxide, removing and storing the carbon and releasing oxygen back into the air.

**Trees clean the air and help you breathe** – they absorb odors and pollutants like nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulfur dioxide and ozone. Estimates state that one tree can absorb nearly 10 pounds of polluted air each year and release 260 pounds of oxygen.

**Trees prevent soil erosion and rainwater runoff** – heavy rains produce water run off finding its way to streams, lakes, and wetlands, creating the potential for floods. The tree leaf canopies help buffer the rain and their roots hold the soil in place, encouraging the water to seep into the ground rather than run off.

**Trees increase your home's value** – having trees in your yard can increase your home's value by 15 percent in addition to making it more beautiful. They can also help absorb loud noises.

**You'll save money** – trees conserve energy in summer and winter, giving you shade from the hot summer sun and shelter from cold winter winds. You'll spend less on your energy bill to heat and cool your home.

**You'll attract birds and wildlife** – they provide nesting sites, food and shelter for your bird friends, animals and other creatures. Place feeders in your trees and the birds will sing year-round. Also, squirrels can provide great entertainment during the day.

**Trees are good for your mental and physical health** – views of trees have been proven to reduce stress, anxiety and even the crime rate. Hospital grounds with tree-filled gardens speed healing for patients. And don't you remember climbing trees as a kid?

**Trees can feed you** – you can plant fruit and nut trees in your yard and produce an abundance of food for you, your family and friends. You can eat the produce fresh, or can them or freeze them for future consumption.

Also consider this, trees can live hundreds of years, so consider this a gift to your children and grandchildren especially if you are planning to pass on your property to your loved ones. It's a symbol of your commitment to the environment and the beauty of the world around you that will live on beyond your own lifetime.

Now you just need to decide what type of tree(s) you want to plant. Do you want a small, medium or tall size tree? Ornamental, conifer, or shade tree? Green or colorful foliage? Flowers, fruit, berries, nuts, fruitless? Evergreen or deciduous? Needle or leaf type? Type of leaves – simple, lobed or compound? Whatever you decide, keep in mind what trees grow well in our area. Consider planting native plants and Texas Superstars as they are more resistant to drought, insects, and disease.

### Resources

<https://arbordayblog.org>

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

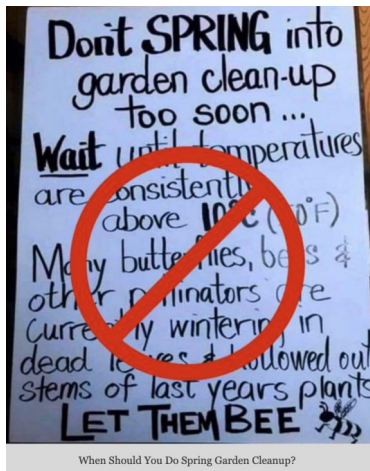
## Horticultural myth(s) of the month

**Wayne A Schirner**

In keeping with the theme for July, I searched for myths related to pollinators and found a few. One is based on the claim that because cedar repels insects, you shouldn't use cedar mulch in the garden because it can repel or kill pollinators, including bees. Here's a link on the science behind that claim:

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/cedar-mulch-repel-insects/#more-9759>

Then there is the claim that spring garden cleanup shouldn't be done before the temperature is "consistently above 50F." Have you seen this meme before?



What does the science say about this claim? Here's a link to help you evaluate the evidence:

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/spring-garden-cleanup/#more-8982>

I then turned my search to any myths related specifically to bees, and found several interesting posts:

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/honey-bees-native-bees/#more-4130>

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/honey-bees-dying/#more-4131>

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/native-bees-dying/#more-4134>

It is apparent that many myths start because people fail to correctly identify what they are talking about, and then what might be correct information about one thing gets erroneously attributed to something similar but different. All the links shared in this article have other imbedded links that you can use to learn more about these topics.

That's it for this month. Happy Gardening.

# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## KILLEEN MUNICIPAL COURT COMMUNITY GARDEN REPORT

*By April Marek and Randy Brown*



June was a hot and humid yet productive month at the Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden (KMCCG). A new one-month harvest record of 2,755.5 pounds of produce was harvested on four regular Saturday work days plus six additional harvest days, thanks to the master gardeners who volunteered to harvest during the week. The crops included onions, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, corn, cucumbers, and beans, as well as zucchini, yellow, and tatume squash. Okra has been planted and will be the dominant crop this summer.

The demonstration beds are worth a visit if you are in the area. The perennials and annuals continue to flourish, providing nectar for the pollinators and enjoyment for the folks visiting the gardens.

KMCCG hosted its inaugural open house on June 17. At least 16 visitors came to tour the garden and ask questions. Several master gardeners walked the visitors around the garden and shared the history, current progress, and purpose of the project.

### **6-7-2023**

Beautiful sunrise over The Farm at 6:20 AM. Seven intrepid Master Gardeners harvested 328.6 lbs of onions, zucchini, yellow and tatume squash, green peppers and tomatoes. Paul Carter delivered produce to shelters.

### **6-10-2023**

Warm, beautiful day in the garden. Twelve Master Gardeners harvested 329 lbs of potatoes, onions, tomatoes, peppers, squash, and zucchini for the shelters. To date in June, 1186 lbs of produce have been harvested ; a strong start to the month. Watering and weeding maintenance were accomplished. Flowering plants continue to provide a great show.

### **6-17-2023**

A typical Texas Summer day; hot and humid. Nineteen Master Gardeners harvested 273 lbs of peppers, tomatoes, onions, potatoes, yellow squash, tatume squash, zucchini, corn, and beans. Fifteen adults and one child visited as part of the Community Open House. Maintenance activities included watering, weeding, deadheading flowers, and trimming trees.

### **6-24-2023**

Was a windy, warm, yet beautiful workday. Thirteen Master Gardeners, one Friend of Master Gardeners, and several students harvested 316 lbs of peppers, corn, squash, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers and the final day of harvest in 2023 of potatoes and onions. June total production to date is 2592 lbs. Some okra was transplanted to give optimal plant spacing. Much watering, weeding, flower deadheading, and pruning maintenance was completed.



# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## KILLEEN MUNICIPAL COURT COMMUNITY GARDEN REPORT

*By April Marek and Randy Brown*



Andi and Santi weighing today's bounty.



Flowers still look great.



Most colorful harvest in a while of potatoes, onions, tomatoes, peppers, squash, zucchini.



Ann, Holly, Monique, Paul, Jean and Stacy.



Okra transplanting crew for better plant spacing.



## TEXAS SUPERSTAR OF THE MONTH



By Melissa Johnson

### *Turk's Cap*

*Malvaviscus arboreus Var. drummondii*

Malvaceae (Mallow Family)

This wonderful plant that is native to Texas and got its name from a man named Thomas Drummond. He was a Scottish born naturalist who in 1830 made trip to America to collect specimens from western and southern United States.

Turk's Cap is a member of the cotton, hibiscus, mallows, okra and the rose of Sharon family but this one is unique because that its flowers never totally open, they have a rolled look to them and look something like a turban, giving them the name Turk's Cap.

These bloom continuously from spring to frost, it is a great pollinator even with their petals rolled up, the flowers manage to attract hummingbirds and butterflies all season long, and in 2011 the Texas A&M Superstar committee selected Turk's Cap to become a Texas superstar and

#### Plant Characteristics

- Grows to 4 to 6 ft. tall and 3 to 4 ft. wide.
  - Completely winter-hardy in all of Texas.
  - Best in morning sun and afternoon shade.
  - Drought-tolerant
  - Flowers spring until frost.
- 
- Blooms are most commonly bright red, although pink and white are available
  - Plants die back with the first hard freeze, Trim all stems back to the ground, and the new shoots will emerge in the spring.

It is moderately deer resistant and attracts birds, butterflies and hummingbirds.

#### Growing Conditions

**Water Use:** Medium

**Light Requirement:** Part Shade - Shade

**Soil Moisture:** Dry - Moist

**Cold Tolerant:** yes

**Soil Description:** Sandy, loamy, clay, and limestone soils. Moist, well-drained soils.

**Conditions:** Drought tolerant. Prefers partially shady sites. Under cultivation, Turk's Cap will adapt to and thrive in many different conditions including full sun and heavy soil.

# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## TEXAS SUPERSTAR OF THE MONTH



### Propagation

**Propagation:** by Root Division, Seeds, and Softwood Cuttings

**Description:** plant seeds outside after danger of frost is past. Germination of Turk's Cap is inhibited by cold temperatures. Cover the seeds no deeper than 1/4 – 1/2 inches. You can propagate Turk's Cap easily from softwood cuttings. These cuttings should be 4 to 6 inches long with leaves from the bottom halves removed and treated with rooting hormone. Large clumps of Turk's Cap may easily be separated in early spring and transplanted to a new site. Be sure to water well.

**Maintenance:** cut it back to 5 inches after the last frost.



# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## Tomatoes and Peppers for a Fall Garden, Part 2

By Wayne Schirner

Last month, I wrote about starting seeds for tomatoes and peppers to be ready to transplant the later half of July for a fall crop. I started my seeds on June 5<sup>th</sup>, using 6-packs filled with a seed starting mix made from 4 parts peat moss and 1-part medium grade vermiculite. I used two 6-packs for tomatoes and two 6-packs for peppers. The tomatoes were three dwarf varieties packed for 2021. The peppers were golden bell, jalapeño, and ancho varieties also from the 2021 season. In each cell I tried to place two seeds, but I got three seedlings in some of the cells. The tomato 6-packs were placed on a heat mat set at 80F. The pepper 6-packs were placed on a heat mat set at 85F. The tomato seedlings were up in 5 days and the pepper seedlings were up in 8 days. At that point, they needed light. Since not everyone has grow-lights, I wanted to compare growing the seedlings outdoors under natural sunlight to indoors under grow-lights. My indoor grow-light setup is in my garage and the temperature never rose above 83F. The outdoor temperatures have been hotter than normal this June, reaching temperatures above 100F daily for the past two weeks. The tomato and pepper seedlings grown indoors only needed to be watered once or twice a week while the seedlings grown outdoors needed to be watered at least once a day. I have included photos to show the results as of 6/28/23.

The tomato seedlings have their second set of true leaves and I plan to up-pot them into 3.5" pots as soon as the 3<sup>rd</sup> set of true leaves have appeared, which will probably be in the next week. The peppers aren't nearly as far along, and I'm not sure if the seedlings being grown outdoors will even make it. If I had done this comparison in a typical June when outdoor temperatures aren't usually so high, the peppers might have done better. The seedlings being grown indoors will still need to be hardened off before they are ready to transplant into the garden. I have convinced myself that seedlings can be grown outdoors under natural light, but indoors under grow-lights has worked better for me this year. I suspect the temperature differences are a major concern, but that might not be an issue every year. If you don't have grow-lights, this is certainly an option.

When I up-pot, the seedlings in each cell will be separated and planted individually into 3.5" pots so they can continue growing until it is time to transplant into the garden. I will use the same growing mix in the larger pots that I use in my garden. I'll see if I have enough to write about for a Part 3 next month. Happy Gardening.



Seed starting setup for Tomatoes (T) on the left and Peppers (P) on the right 6/6/23



Comparison of tomato seedlings grown indoors (T-I) to seedlings grown outdoors (T-O) 6/28/23



Comparison of pepper seedlings grown indoors (P-I) to seedlings grown outdoors (P-O) 6/28/23



# THE BLOOMING BELL JULY 2023

## Blanco Field Trip

*by Dawn Woodcock*

Enjoyable. Informative. Wonderful. These are a few descriptions heard about the Bell County Master Gardeners field trip in June to Blanco. A big thanks to Jan George who organized the trip! The highlight of the trip was a tour of the Arnosky Family Farms in Blanco. The Arnoskys grow and sell cut flowers and flowering plants on 88 acres in Blanco. Not only do they sell flowers at their onsite Blue Barn Market and local markets, but they furnish all of the “Texas Specialty Cut Flowers” brand at all HEB stores. Owner Pamela Arnosky gave an engaging talk about their cut flower operation as she quickly assembled many beautiful arrangements. We were all in our happy place surrounded by an overwhelming array of flowers.

After we purchased our fill of flowers, we wandered across the street to Hill Country Lavender Farm where they sold a wide variety of products made with lavender. We were too late in the season to cut our own lavender flowers, but now we have a good reason to come back for another trip next spring. You can’t go all the way to Blanco and not dine at the Redbud Café. The weekend happened to be Blanco’s Lavender Festival, so it was packed, but well worth the wait. Besides awesome food, the lavender lemonades and famous Lavender-Ritas really hit the spot on the hot day.

From there the carpools split up, some going to Backbone Valley Nursery in Marble Falls, some went to see a rainwater catchment system in action (arranged by our own Linda Mills), and other spots of interest. You will hear more about the rainwater catchment in a future newsletter. You can also look forward to more exciting field trips in the future.

