

The Blooming Bell

NEWS . EVENTS . GARDENING TIPS. EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES

There has been a lot going on at the extension office grounds! If you have not been to the grounds in a while, you should consider a visit. The next few Master Gardener workdays are November 2, November 16, and December 7, from 8:00 am – 11:00 am.



Misti Daniel has been busy learning the irrigation system and working to get it repaired and fully functional around the entire grounds. Some of you have had conversations with Misti about changes to the irrigation set-up in your areas, and we appreciate all of the input and suggestions for improvements to make your work easier.

The front landscape bed is coming back to life with the cooler temperatures and recent rains. We are putting in a Monarch Butterfly Waystation (<https://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations>) in the front landscape bed, next to Main Street. Dave Slaughter has already planted eight zizotes milkweed plants, and workday volunteers are gradually adding more nectar and host plants for the pollinators.



Melissa Johnson helped oversee the planning and installation of a stone walkway near the wooden tool shed. This walkway replaced the terraced steps that were becoming a trip hazard.

Upcoming projects include the installation of additional shaded areas, a fan over the stone table, and a clean-up day for the inside of the learning center.



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Have Gardening Questions? Submit your questions and photos at: bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu

THE BLOOMING BELL NOVEMBER 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS November 2022

Christmas Party & Award Ceremony: This year's Christmas Party will be on **November 29th**, at the Harris Community Center (401 N. Alexander St., Belton). The party begins at 6:00PM with a TX/Mex Feliz Navidad themed dinner at 6:30PM.

There will be a silent auction. If you have items to donate, please bring them to the GM meeting on Nov. 9th or drop them off at the Help Desk Mon-Thurs.

OFFICER NOMINATIONS: The Nominating Committee is still looking **First Vice President** nominations to be voted on in November. Please email Glenn Melton at gmelton1@hotmail.com

Speakers Bureau

Coming Soon: Sylvia Maedgen will be speaking on Texas Super Star Plants in near future after she finishes up her advanced training. Keep tuned in here for date, time, and place in Harker Heights.

Speakers Bureau email: bellspeakers76513@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY WORKDAYS: First & Third Wednesdays, 9:00 am to Noon, is a Master Gardener work day 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.

Monthly Outreach Seminar 6:30-8:00PM, in the Learning Center:

November 17th: Attracting Wild Birds & Feeding them in the winter with Mary Ann Everett and Juan Anaya.

No Seminar in December

Board of Directors Meeting: Meets on **November 16th**, at 10:00 a.m., in the Education Center (which is in the AgriLife Building).

General Membership Business & Education Meeting: Meets on **November 9th** at 9:30 a.m.; Fellowship time at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will begin with the educational portion of our meeting.

This month we will hear from Barbara Ishikawa on how the demographics in Bell County and beyond effect BCMGA. You won't want to miss out on this.

We will meet at the Harris Community Center, 401 N. Alexander St., Belton, TX 76513

Burger Wednesday: We are back to our socializing with our Burger Wednesdays. They are on the **1st Wednesday of the month**. Bring a dish to share and small donations accepted. Our new organizers and cooks are Don Wyatt, Ray Machovsky & Art Carr for more information contact Don Wyatt, dwyatt2005@sbcglobal.net, 254-314-6758.

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.

Killeen Municipal Court Garden: Meets every Saturday, time varies according to the season. It is harvest season as well and fall garden preparation time, see Calendar of Events

Please contact Dave Slaughter slaughtd915@gmail.com. See VMS for additional Harvest Days to earn extra service hours.



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| Executive Board | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| President | Kathy Love |
| 1 st Vice President | Jan Upchurch |
| 2 nd Vice President | Louann Hight |
| Recording Secretary | Misti Daniel |
| Treasurer | Barbara Ishikawa |

| Directors | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Communications | Teri Marceau |
| Facilities | TBD |
| Membership | Sherry Oermann |
| KMCCG | Dave Slaughter |
| Outreach | Crystal Mears & Rebekah Lackey |
| New Class | Pat Johnson |
| Projects | Wayne Schirner |
| Youth | Janice Smith |

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Kathy Love

The kickoff for our BCMGA 25th anniversary on October 12th was a great event and we certainly thank our members who spoke about our organization's origins, Ilene Miller, Charles Newsom and Bob Gordon. If Charles said it once he said it twice, in the beginning there was no money in the coffers, and everything was done through donations and gifts! We have come quite a way from those days for sure as we once again held a successful Fall Plant Sale.

Speaking of the Plant Sale, our volunteer service hours were up 743 compared to August, with the Plant Sale accounting for 725 of those increased hours. Contacts recorded for the sale were 460 total and 65 members recorded plant sale volunteer hours from June 1st through September 30th. Total sales were \$15,408, total expenses (mostly wholesale plant purchases) were \$12,202 resulting in total income of \$3,206. Of the plants left over from the sale a total of 645 assorted plants were donated to local charities and school gardens and others were sold to the Eldred Nursery Foundation and members at cost. Thanks to all who participated in this major project and special thanks to Barbara Ishikawa, Wayne Schirner and Teri Marceau for heading everything up and getting us a new sale location, the Bend of the River Ranch.

Dave Slaughter brought nominations for Lifetime Service to the Board of Directors on October 26th and persons receiving this recognition were voted on and will be awarded at the annual Christmas Party on November 29th.

If you have not yet signed up for the Christmas Party, please get your \$20 per person reservation in to either Jan George or Joan Bumgarner by November 9th. This year's theme is Feliz Navidad, and our meal will be catered Mexican food. We have adopted two service projects, Food for Families out of Bartlett and Families in Crisis, Killeen & Temple. Please continue reading this newsletter for more information on donations needed by these groups, and for guidelines on silent auction items.

Our new Extension Agent Floyd Ingram will take over on November 1st and I have invited him to our November general membership meeting and our Christmas Party so we can all start getting to know him. Please be sure and welcome him when you get a chance.

We still have need for a 1st Vice President to handle programs and socials so if you are interested in this position, please contact Glenn Melton at gmelton1@hotmail.com. We have had an interested member contact us for the position, but it remains open at this point.

Our fall 2022 New Class is almost complete with graduation scheduled for Thursday, November 17th at 10 a.m. If you are available, please come and welcome our newest members!

In the meantime, happy gardening!!!!

THE BLOOMING BELL NOVEMBER 2022

October 12th kicked off our celebration of BCMGA's 25th anniversary!



We met at the Harris Community Center for monthly general membership meeting. We heard from founding members about our meager beginnings. Ilene Miller spoke to us via video. She talked of first days as assistants to the county AG agent. The had no computers, phones, or office as we do today, yet the community rallied and attended our Master Gardener training classes. One year there were 40 plus students, but many fell away and they decided to have smaller classes, a practice we follow today. One of our oldest projects is the Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden

Charles Newsom and Bob Gordon spoke on the work to build our grounds as you see them today. I think one of the things that stood out to me was when Charles said the board would throw money onto the table at their monthly meetings and that is all they had to do a project. At one meeting he remembered gathering about \$1200. Bob Gordon talked about breaking the grounds at the KMCCG, which remains one of our most active projects.

Another project that remains one of our successfully active, is the youth projects such Learn Eat Grow Go. If you haven't joined a project to serve in please consider what you can contribute to our neighbors in Bell County.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!





Gossamer Winged Butterflies

Gossamer winged butterflies, family Lycaenidae, are the second largest family of butterflies after Nymphalidae. There are over 6,000 species in the world with over 100 species in North America.

Adults are small, usually under 5 cm, brightly colored, and often metallic. Many species will have tails on the hindwing. Larvae are flattened and slug-like and have a gland that releases a sugary substance similar to honeydew that is used to “bribe” ants for protection. Lycaenidae is split into 7 subfamilies, 3 of which are not found within the U.S.- Aphnaeinae, Portiinae, and Curetinae.

Family Lycaeinae, the coppers, are found in northern and western U.S., are small in size with a brilliant coppery orange on the upper surface of their wings. These butterflies aren’t seen too much within the state, but can be found in more northern regions.

The hairstreaks, family Theclinae, are common throughout the state. They get their name from the “hairlike” lines crossing on under surface of the wings. Most hairstreaks have slender tails on their hindwings. The tails on the hindwing are paired with eyespots to make it look like a false head which can allow the butterfly to evade predators. Tropical species tend to be brightly colored while ours tend to be mostly gray or brown. The patterns of lines and spots on the underside of the wings are used for identification. Hairstreaks are fast flying and tend to dart around erratically. Males will defend territory around their perch areas.

Family Miletinae, the harvesters, has one species, *Feniseca tarquinius*, found in North America and Texas. The butterfly is orange with brownish-black borders and spots on the upperside of the wings. The underside of the wings are pale orangish-brown with dark brown spots with whitish rings. This butterfly’s caterpillar is carnivorous, feeding on wooly aphids. Adults eat honeydew from aphids as well as fluids from tree sap, carrion, and dung.

The blues, family Polyommatainae, get their name from the blue upperwings of many of the males. Females are more brownish with wide, dark borders and blue towards the body. Species identification is confirmed by the pattern of spots on the underwings. Blues flight is more fluttery, but they are able to dart away when needed. Males often gather at mud puddles and wet sand to get moisture, salts, and amino acids.



For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

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Keep Gatesville Beautiful

Keep Gatesville Beautiful became an affiliate of Keep Texas Beautiful in July of 2017. The mission of Keep Gatesville Beautiful is to educate and engage our citizens to take responsibility for a cleaner, more beautiful community. Bell County Master Gardeners who live in Gatesville have participated with the organization since it began. We have had community wide clean-ups, volunteered at household hazardous waste collection days, and provided education with a class for the community on Bokashi Tea and composting and a hands-on learning experience with vermiculture for the Boys and Girls Club. In 2021 Gatesville placed first in the Governor's Achievement Award for cities with a population between 15,001 to 25,000. This award recognizes communities for outstanding efforts to keep their community beautiful. This award provides funds for a landscaping project along a TXDOT right-of-way and we anticipate a start on this project in March of 2023.

This past summer a Beautification Committee was formed to focus specifically on some of the public areas to clean up and improve with plants. We tackled the Native Plant Garden located in Freedom Park next to the Civic Center, a small garden area in Raby Park, and a large open space on Main Street. We recently added some grasses and plants donated by the BCMGA following our fall plant sale to the Native Plant Garden area and Raby Park.



Keep Salado Beautiful

The Keep Salado Beautiful Demonstration gardens, one located at the Salado Museum, feature native and adaptive plants. Central Texas Master Naturalists and Bell County Master Gardeners planned and planted the gardens. The primary gardens are maintained by the KSB First Monday Gardeners. Plant markers identify plants and native plant books are available at the Salado Library. The Salado Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center is located at the Museum.

The Salado Museum and College Park was established to preserve and promote the pioneer history of Salado and the diverse nationalities that settled this area. The Museum houses a collection of artifacts, books and papers that document the settlement and heritage of this area in a beautiful 100-year-old stone building across from the historic Stagecoach Inn in downtown Salado. College Park, just south of the museum, is the location of the ruins and grounds of historic Salado College.

The Dodd's Creek Bridge, also known as the Green Bridge is another KSB Garden. A favorite photo spot along the Main Street walking trail, this garden also has plant markers to provide information about native plants. Pick up a KSB brochure at the Museum and find all fourteen Pocket Gardens in Salado while you enjoy a beautiful Fall Day.



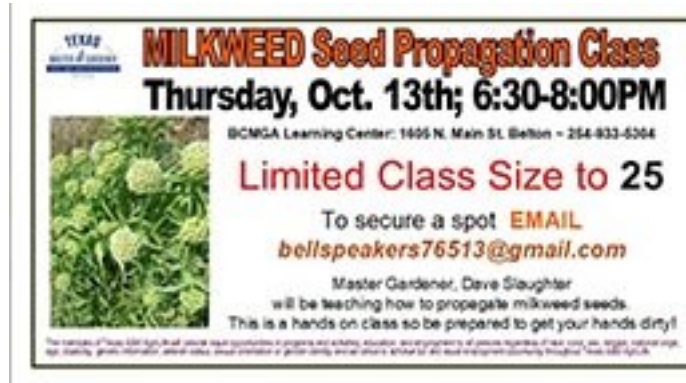
Museum Garden



Bridge Garden

Milkweed Seed Propagation Class

On October the 13th Dave Slaughter conducted a Milkweed propagation class at the learning center. There was a full capacity attendance and attendees learnt techniques through hands-on experience.



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KILLEEN MUNICIPAL COURT COMMUNITY GARDEN REPORT



So far for the month of October, we have harvested 439 pounds of vegetables, bringing our yearly total to 4597.60 pounds. During the month of October, we planted turnips, kohlrabi, green and red cabbage, carrots, radishes, and brussel sprouts. We have mentored 21 youth during the month and 58 master gardeners and interns have worked at the gardens. During our monthly planning meeting, Santi Duncan provided excellent training on the origins, planting, and care of desert roses.



Herb Study Group

Flavored Extracts
By Debbie Thompson

On October 19th, I gave a presentation on flavored extracts to the herb study group. I discussed the history and how to make pure vanilla and flavored extracts.

Vanilla is made up of three species: Planifolia, Pompona and Tahitenis. Of those species, there are five different types of vanilla beans. They are the Madagascar or Bourbon vanilla, Tahitian, Tonga, Indian and Mexican. The most popular vanilla bean is the Madagascar which is considered the extract bean.



Vanilla beans are composed of two grades- A and B. Grade A is the gourmet bean used by chefs and bakers while Grade B is used for making extracts since they are more concentrated.

The flavorings used to make extracts include nuts, coffee beans, cocoa beans, fruit berries, fruit zest/peel, herbs, maple, cinnamon, star anise and vanilla. They can be made with alcohol or glycerine.

Shelf life for vanilla extract made with alcohol is indefinite or until evaporated, while other flavored extracts are 4-6 years. For those extracts made with glycerine, the shelf life is 18-24 months. Butter extract requires refrigeration and is good for two weeks.

The top 10 extracts include almond, butter, coconut, lemon, maple, orange, peppermint, rum and vanilla. Imitation vanilla extract is the most used extract in the United States. This is due to the high cost of pure vanilla.

There are numerous flavored extract recipes available. I encourage you to make your own homemade extracts for both your personal use or as gifts.

If you would like more information on making extracts, do not hesitate to contact me.

ASK A GARDENER!

October was a busy month at the help desk. We received questions from trees to insects. While we are continually looking for additional help desk staff we have had a few new volunteers. As you know we are still experiencing a drought even with the several inches of rain we recently had. Which has brought quiet a few questions about trees with limbs that are dying. MaryAnn Everett went on a site visit and identified one particular problem was due to compacted roots from the sidewalk and driveway blocking the necessary air and water get to the tree. It is very difficult to make a solid hypothesis from dead leaves no matter what our limitations maybe we always recommend citizens to send a sample to the disease diagnostics lab at TX A&M.

Another fun question we receive regularly is “can you identify this bug?”.

One such inquiry was for what we identified as Asian Beetle with its larvae. I can honestly say that I had never seen anything like it. They will devour aphids much like the American ladybug.

One of the coolest pieces of equipment that we purchased for the new and improved Help desk was a microscope that is connected to the desk top.

We can look at close up of aphids, mites, and other microscopic pests and capture it in a photo. If you haven’t experienced the magnitude of our little microscope you should stop by and check it out.

