

The Blooming Bell



NEWS . EVENTS . GARDENING TIPS. EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES



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

THE BLOOMING BELL JANUARY 2023

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2023

STARTING 2023 WITH A BANG!

Speakers Bureau & Monthly Outreach Seminar

Here is a tentative schedule for 2023. Please note the bureau will be adding hands-on classes on Saturdays and working on classes on the West side of the county.

January 19 - Spring Gardening Starts Now with Wayne Schirner

January 24 - Harker Heights - Wayne Schirner on Spring Gardening Starts Now

February 16 - Honeybees, Native Bees & Gardening

February 25-26 - Home & Garden Show (topics and schedule to be determined)

March 16 - Peaches & Plums

April 20 - Drip Irrigation

May 18 - Landscaping with Native Plants

June 15 - Soil Health

July 20 - Hummingbirds & Pollinators

August 17 - Blackberries

September 21 - Migrating Monarchs

October - Onions & Garlic

November 16 - Planting Trees

Stay tuned for a new Speakers Bureau email address coming soon, **BCMGA~~Speakers~~@gmail.com**. If you are interested in teaching a class please contact Debra Thompson at the above email address or text her at (210)441-0237.

WEDNESDAY WORKDAYS: The **First & Third** Wednesdays, **8:00 am to 11:00 am**, are Master Gardener workdays at the Extension Office. We have demonstration beds all around the facility and new projects every month.

Board of Directors Meeting: Meets on **January 25th**, at 10:00 a.m.

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

Burger Wednesday: Occurs the **1st Wednesday of every month at 11:00**. Bring a dish to share and donations are accepted.

For more information, please contact Melissa Johnson at (484)767-1730 or shinyone1966@gmail.com.



Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Horticulture Program in Bell County

1605 N Main St Ste 102 Belton, TX 76513

Email: bell-tx@tamu.edu

Phone: 254.933.5305

Fax: 254.933.5312



Executive Board

President	Kathy Love
1 st Vice President	Candidate TBA
2 nd Vice President	Louann Hight
Recording Secretary	Misti Daniel
Treasurer	Velvet McKague

Directors

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

THE BLOOMING BELL JANUARY 2023

UPCOMING EVENTS January 2023

General Membership Business & Education Meeting: Meets on **January 11th**, 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 Camille Wiseman on Native Grasses. Invite a friend! You won't want to miss out on this.

We will meet at the **Special Events Center at the Bell County Expo Center.**

For more information, please contact Melissa Johnson at (484)767-1730 or shinyone1966@gmail.com.

Herb Study Interest 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 Community Garden: Meets every Saturday, **9:00AM**

Please contact Dave Slaughter slaughtd915@gmail.com.

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



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Master Gardener Program Coordinator:
Lyle Zoeller



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Kathy Love

Here's hoping everyone and your plants made it safely through the hard freeze last week with little or no damage to life, homes, etc. I was able to get most of my remaining plants into my heated greenhouse and though we did lose power when the storm came in Thursday evening, our whole house generator kicked in and ran everything without a hitch! I left a few plants in an old washtub that I thought were cold hardy, but this freeze was just too much for them, especially with that brutal wind chill! Burrrrr!!!

As I recently sent out in a broadcast email, our January 11th, 2023 general membership meeting location has been moved from the Harris Center to the Special Events Center at the Bell County Expo. The Harris Center advised us in December that the building is undergoing renovations in January and will not be available to us for our regularly scheduled meeting. At the last Board of Directors meeting in November the Board decided to move the meeting to our Learning Center on the Extension grounds due to cost concerns, but Sheryl Long in the office who took over management of the Extension grounds from Lyle, nixed that idea due to parking issues. We regularly have 60+ attendees at our meetings, even as high as 80, which could mean 60 or more cars needing parking. Sheryl thinks the Extension parking lot holds around 40 cars and of course the meeting is on a weekday so BSW's lot will not be available. Some members mentioned seeing if we could use the gated/gravel lot at the back of the property but that is the Sheriff Department's impound lot and is not available.

Everyone should have received the broadcast message from Teri Marceau and Barbara Ishikawa regarding upcoming background checks, but I am going to repeat that message below:

"The state Master Gardener program has changed the vendor responsible for conducting volunteer background checks. As part of that change, we've decided to have all Bell County Master Gardeners go through the background check process at this time. Doing so will ensure our records are complete and in sync with the extension office.

The new background check vendor is Sterling Volunteers. The process will now be entirely on-line.

*You will be receiving an email from Sterling Volunteers (TheAdvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com) within the next 2 weeks inviting you to log-in to their system and provide information that will allow them to complete a background check. **This email may go into your SPAM folder, be sure to check there.***

Please log-in and provide the information requested within 3 days of receiving the invitation. The log-in portal has more information about Sterling Volunteers and their security controls.

You will receive a second email with confirmation of the background check in progress; you should be able to check the progress of your background check via the Sterling Volunteers portal. A final email will also be sent once the background check is complete

Results of the background check will be shared only with you and our county extension agent.

If you have questions about this process, please contact either Sherry Oermann (sherry@oermannfamilyfarm.com) or Barbara Ishikawa (barbaraishikawa@gmail.com)

If you received an email from our Membership Director Sherry Oermann with an attached Volunteer Agreement, it means you are due for your every 3-year renewal agreement, so please complete the form and turn it into the Help Desk Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. – noon or 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.—or the Extension office staff if the help desk is not available. This form, along with your \$25 annual dues were both due on or before December 31st, but if you needed this reminder to get it done, please go ahead and turn them both in ASAP.

The Thursday evening class schedule is complete and posted on our website so check that out for some wonderful classes for 2023 that can of course be used for Education Hours.

Let's all hope the worst of the cold is over and the sun will be shining and that the rain falls regularly to keep out gardens healthy and growing!

Upcoming Community Outreach and Special Events presentations scheduled for January

Please plan to join us for the BCMGA community outreach presentation “Gardening Myths”. The presentation is scheduled for Thursday, January 19th beginning at 6:30 pm in the Learning Center.

Wayne Schirner will be refuting many of the common garden myths in circulation today. He will provide resources to allow others to easily do their own research on claims commonly found in gardening groups and on the internet. This presentation directly supports the part of the BCMGA Mission statement to “provide research based horticultural information to the citizens of Bell County and the State of Texas.”

We also have a special event scheduled for Tuesday, January 24th at 6:00 pm at the Harker Heights Activities Center, 400 Indian Trail, Harker Heights. Wayne Schirner will be presenting on “Spring Gardening Starts Now”. Class is limited to 30 people, so keep watching for announcements to register.

In this presentation, Wayne will discuss the common vegetable crops grown during the spring gardening season in Bell County. He will include information on when to start plants from seeds and when to transplant or direct sow. Included in this presentation will be basic gardening information for those who are beginners to vegetable gardening. Wayne will also provide information on the Square Foot Gardening Method.

We encourage you to attend the events to help you get started on your spring garden using research based horticultural information.



Wayne Schirner was a family physician in the United States Army for 35 years. After Wayne retired in September 2014, he signed up to take the 2015 Master Gardener course with the Bell County Master Gardener Association. After becoming a certified Texas Master Gardener, Wayne obtained Advanced Training in vegetable gardening, composting, and irrigation efficiency. Wayne served the BCMGA as President during 2017 and 2018. He has served as a director representing the BCMGA to the Texas Master Gardener Association since 2019 and he was recently elected to serve as the 2nd Vice President of the TMGA. Wayne follows the Square Foot Gardening Method and is a certified instructor and advisor for the Square Foot Gardening Foundation. Wayne is passionate about disputing common gardening myths. He also enjoys giving presentations on vegetable gardening and composting.

Congratulations Class of Fall 2022!



THE BLOOMING BELL JANUARY 2023

KILLEEN MUNICIPAL COURT COMMUNITY GARDEN REPORT



Update by Dave Slaughter

During the month of December, we harvested a total of 317.7 pounds, bringing the yearly total to 5225.95 pounds. The harvest consisted primarily of Swiss chard, radishes, carrots, and cabbage. During December, thirteen young adults worked on their community service hours: consisting of four young ladies and nine young men. Also, during the month of November forty-one Master Gardeners participated during Saturday workdays, as well as five friends of the master gardeners.

During 2022, 527 master gardeners participated on Saturday workdays, 220 youth completed their community service hours, and twenty-one friends of the master gardeners supported our Association.

Saturday workdays resume January 7. We will resume construction of our herb bed, plant onions, and prepare the garden for additional cold weather-crops, later in the month.

Our next monthly KMCCG planning meeting and training session is scheduled for February 7, beginning at 9:00 AM.

Misti Daniel is scheduled to provide training on planting flowers for cutting.



THE BLOOMING BELL JANUARY 2023

Article by Melissa Johnson



This is the beginning of a wonderful new 12-month long series spotlighting some of our great Texas superstars. Each month we will highlight one of the Texas superstars from our great list and provide you with details about the plant.



To be selected as a Texas Superstar, a plant must be beautiful and perform well for customers throughout the state, must be easy to propagate, widely available, and

reasonably priced.

So, for January's Texas Superstar selection, the "Henry Duelberg".

let's look at

Salvia Farinacea "Henry Duelberg"



This wonderful plant was discovered by Texas Horticulturist Greg Grant in a rural Central Texas cemetery during a hot, dry Texas summer on the grave of Henry Duelberg. The grave had an interesting salvia that didn't look like the native populations. Greg took home some cuttings and after field trials and tests it was dubbed the name "Henry Duelberg" and became a superstar.

This is a variety of the Mealy cup or blue sage and is a native perennial of South and Central Texas. It is a hardy plant good thru zone 7. Prefers well drained soil, drought tolerant, maintain 2 inches of mulch and cut to ground after first frost mulch over winter. It is a Superstar known for its low maintenance, heat, drought, humidity tolerance. and is a beautiful Perennial that works well in our area and is deer resistant and virtually disease and pest free.

Characteristics:

common names:	Duelberg Sage, Mealy Sage
Requirements	Full sun
Plant Habit:	Lamiaceae (mint family)
Water:	low
Growth:	3ft wide by 3 ft tall in maturity
Bloom time:	spring through fall
Flowers:	showy medium dark blue spike flowers on tall stems
Leaves:	segregated medium sized leaves
Wildlife attractant:	bees, butterflies and hummingbirds enjoy it

Source. <https://www.wildflower.org> Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

In The Community

Learn, Go, Eat and Grow (LGEG)

An article by Janice Smith

This fall 20 students at Hay-Branch Elementary School in Killeen, and another 20 students at Hector- Garcia in Temple participated in the LGEG after-school program. LGEG is a 10-week curriculum developed for grades 3-5. It is taught in weekly 1-hour sessions, and combines elements of nutrition, garden science, physical activity, food prep and fresh vegetable tastings to improve the health and wellness of children, families and the school community. It is based on best practices identified through 5 years of research on the Junior Master Gardener program. This program is offered through the Agri-Life Office Better Living for Texas program and the Bell County Master Gardeners Association.

In addition to fun classroom activities, the students planted a vegetable garden at each school, tended the garden each week, and enjoyed tasting the fruit of their labor on harvest day. Their excitement was palpable and infectious, as they watched their garden grow and were able to sample fresh produce, some for the first time in their lives.

Beverly Hodges, AgriLife Extension County Agent and Tonya Elliott, AgriLife Extension Program Assistant provided materials and nutrition education for the classes. Master Gardeners Sylvia Maedgen, Susan Fogelman, Jackie McLaughlin and Debbie Thompson led the classes at Hector-Garcia and Janice Smith and Ann Munroe were at Hay-Branch. Special sessions on vermiculture were provided by Teri Marceaux and Rebecca Caldwell at the respective campuses.



THE BLOOMING BELL JANUARY 2023

Master Gardeners and Eldred's Nursery Foundation

By Susan Fogleman

Right down the street from the Extension Office, behind Taco Town and next to Bourlands, is a wonderful nursery called Eldred's Nursery Foundation. This nonprofit nursery offers a wide variety of native plants as well as many other shrubs, trees, annuals, perennials, groundcovers, herbs, vegetables, and houseplants. In addition to selling plants, Eldred's uniquely serves the community as a location for adults with learning disabilities and cognitive delays to be trained for transition into the workforce. After realizing the need for this type of training, nursery owners Margaret and Rob Chadwick started Eldred's Nursery Foundation in 2017. When the Foundation began, it initially consisted of the current greenhouse building with 6 domes behind and a tree area. Now it has expanded to include a cottage for dayhab as well as a beautifully renovated house for additional training activities. When visiting the nursery, you will see trainees diligently watering, trimming, and weeding plants as well as completing many other nursery tasks. Volunteers work alongside the trainees offering encouragement, assistance and guidance as needed.

Eldred's Nursery Foundation is one of BCMGA's projects. Many different Master Gardeners have assisted with a variety of projects at the Nursery including composting, making rain barrels, making succulent soil to sell, planting succulents, and spreading mulch. Another area of focus is with several methods of propagation including eggshell planting, propagating African Violets, and self-watering propagators. Eldred's Nursery Foundation is a great place for Master Gardeners to volunteer, whether they are just getting started or have years of experience. Volunteers have the option to work on a specific project or volunteer on a regular basis assisting with ongoing nursery activities. I have been a volunteer for several years and find it to be very rewarding. I don't always know exactly what I'll be doing when I get there, but I look forward to my Thursday mornings at the nursery because I know I'll be spending time with the trainees and the plants.



Plant Of The Month

By William Walker

In the more mature forest growth of our farm, we often come across displays of native Holly in all their winter glory. The attached pictures were snapped this weekend 12/11/22 on a walk through our mature woods area. This is the Possumhaw Holly (*Ilex decidua*). This is a deciduous Holly. As you can see it has just about dropped it's leaves.

With cold winter weather and threat of freezing rain or snow, birds will quickly find this a source of energy ahead of the pending winter weather.

