

~ Bluebonnet Master Gardeners ~

The Blooming News

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Letter from the President

Yikes! Can you believe that Thanksgiving is here and Christmas is just around the corner? The year has gone absolutely too fast! We have had a great year with an awesome board and a superb membership of gardeners. Remember our goals? 1. Encourage membership project participation; 2. Improve demonstration garden; 3. Submit project for awards; 4. Standardize By Laws/Policies and Procedures; 5. Monthly newsletter; 6. Public relations person. Well, we've done pretty well. We have a public relations person-Kathy Girginti has been posting our public notices, the Bylaws and P&P were overhauled, I'm doing the newsletter (and waiting for someone to take it over). We submitted a project for an award (although we didn't win anything, they came pretty close), we're looking into using the Boy Scout camp for demonstration gardens and perhaps using their building, and we have more people participating in projects,

although we could use more. We'll keep working on that one.

We've also added 2 more projects to our list of things you can do to earn volunteer hours. There is an approved docent program for the Quilt Museum in La Grange. This programs has Master Gardeners working as docents in their Grandmother's Flower Garden adjacent to the museum when there are large groups of people who visit the museum. This qualifies as an educational program and is within our guidelines for programs.

We have also approved a new program which is a citizen scientist program out of Colorado called CoCoRaHS. That stands for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. It is non-profit community based network of volunteers working together to measure and map precipitation. Measurements are taken at your house every day and entered into a database on the computer. Data is displayed and organized for end users to analyze and apply to daily situations such as severe storm warnings and resource analysis. We will learn more about it when a representative from the organization comes to talk at one of our early meetings next year. It will be interesting to see a graph or other data from our area of rain. We don't have to worry too much about snow or hail, thank goodness. This is also education and helps to determine plant types based on rainfall amounts for planting in our area. It is also a good opportunity to participate in research to

In every gardener there is a child who believes in the Seed Fairy...Robert Brault

*Letter from the
President, continued*

Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry
Christmas!

Faye Beery



*There can be no other occupation
like gardening in which, if you
were to creep up behind someone
at their work, you would find
them smiling. ~Mirabel*



Winter chores

Well, what is an avid gardener to do during those winter months when the flowers give way to seed heads and dry stems and the weather is too harsh for most plantings? Well, there are those cleanup chores that can get the beds ready for the spring season. There are always tree leaves unless you have all evergreens. You can mulch them up with a mulching mower so that they will add nutrients to the grass and the flower beds. If they aren't big heavy leaves, just leave them in place to provide those nutrients. Ornamental beds can be cleaned or left in place, annuals can be removed and added to the compost pile provided they are disease free. Perennials can be cut back after a hard frost or left standing for wildlife or for seed collection. Prune shrubs in winter dormancy or after blooming or, depending on the shrub, just leave them to do their thing.

Remove pots or decorative ornaments that may be damaged by a freeze. Clay pots, especially, will swell and freeze and can crack if left in freezing rain. Gather up stakes, tomato cages, and put them safely away so that you won't



lose them or run over them with a mower or tractor or tiller during spring tilling. Now is a good time to clean, dry and sharpen tools to be ready for spring or more use in the winter. Drain hoses before a freeze and put them away if you aren't going to use them in winter gardening. They may crack during a freeze also.

Since we live in a generally mild winter climate and our normal last freeze is sometime in February, there isn't much time to do winter chores and take care of holiday chores before it will be time to begin planting seeds for spring gardens. Usually as soon as Christmas is over, I start getting catalogs from various seed companies and garden suppliers. Now is a good time to look those over and think about what you might want to plant or if you want to try something new. I usually start my tomato seeds in January so that they are ready to plant in the ground by March. Last year had some cold weather in March, but usually spring has arrived by then. If you are using seeds that take 90 days to harvest, they need to be planted early. Be sure to read the packet for instructions. If you have saved seeds from last season, it's a good idea to plant them to make sure they are viable seeds and plants.

Don't work too hard!

Faye Beery

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*Don't wear perfume in the garden unless you
want to be pollinated by bees...Anne Raver*

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