



WHAT'S GROWIN' ON

The BCMGA Newsletter



September 2002

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Meeting Items of Interest:

We had no speaker this month because Paula continued the Planning Meeting after the general meeting. You'll want to come for the October 8 meeting, though. The speaker will be Kyle Kolenovsky who will show us how to make rocks. He has been written up in the Lazy Gardener, has appeared on Channel 8 and comes very highly recommended.

The fall Master Gardener training began on September 10. There are 17 people signed up for the class, several of whom came to the meeting. If you are able to host one of the classes, please contact Pat Gerard.

Glenn Comiskey told the group he had been working at the Community Garden in Angleton. He said there are several garden plots that are overgrown with weeds. Anyone who wants to can plant the plots, take whatever they want from what they grow, and the rest would be given away to the food bank or other similar organizations. If you are interested in working there, please give Glenn a call.

Mark Snyder revised our volunteer time sheets with the categories that are used the most. Mark said that if you have a stockpile of the old ones to just use them. Also, if you spend less than 15 minutes on something, please don't put it down.

If you are interested in serving as an officer or committee chairperson, please let the Nominating Committee know. This year's Nominating Committee is made up of Barbara Burkhart, Barbara Ray and one other person not yet designated. You can fill out the forms provided at the meeting or use the one distributed in the last newsletter and bring them to the October meeting or you can contact Barbara Burkhart or Barbara Ray.

At the November 12 meeting we will have elections, a plant swap and a potluck dinner. You'll need to bring some plants along with side dishes and desserts to go with the gumbo that Tommie Holt is bringing as the main dish.

Carol Farmer provided a new calling list/roster. Please review it to make sure your information is correct. Contact Carol with any changes.

Fall Plant Sale:

The fall Plant Sale is scheduled for Saturday, September 21, at 8:30 a.m. Help is needed beginning at 7:00 a.m. How can you help with the Plant Sale?

- ✿ Take a walk through your yard for plants you can pot and sell at the plant sale. They can be taken to the greenhouse at any time. Please email or call Cindy Erndt with your plant information as soon as you can, so the brochure can be prepared.
- ✿ On Friday, September 20, you can help with the plants that will be delivered to the Extension office from Treesearch. Help is needed with unloading, labeling and reloading. Delivery time is not yet known. If you can help, contact Cindy Erndt, so she can keep you posted as to the time.
- ✿ At the meeting, Cindy had signup sheets for the following jobs, so we would have a better idea of what we are supposed to do at the Plant Sale. Contact Cindy to sign up for something to do:
 - customer service
 - sales ticket writers
 - Master Gardener plant assistants
 - cash boxes
 - security
 - Treesearch plant assistants
- ✿ If you have a wagon, please put your name on it and bring it to the Plant Sale, so we can help our customers carry plants to their cars. Also feel free to bring any extra plant trays and grocery bags.

Brazoria County Fair:

The County Fair is October 5 and runs through October 13. Please bring a potted plant to the horticulture booth on October 3, even if you are not planning to enter anything, so it will look like the Master Gardeners do actually grow things!

On Thursday, October 3, beginning at 2:00 p.m. volunteers are needed to set up and decorate the booth. Contact Donie Stowers or Carol Farmer if you need more information.

Beginning October 5, volunteers are needed to work at the booth in two-hour shifts. If you volunteer to work at the booth, tickets to the Fair will be provided to you. Contact Carol Farmer to sign up. The booth times are as follows:

Saturday (10-5) Sunday (10-6)	1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Monday (10-7)	5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Tuesday (10-8), Senior's Day	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday (10-9) Thursday (10-10) Friday (10-11)	5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday (10-12)	11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

If you are planning to enter a plant or plants, entries will be accepted on Thursday, October 3, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Entry fees are \$1.00 for youths (18 and under) and seniors (60 and over) and \$5.00 for adults. Contact Carol or Donie for information on general requirements, rules and categories.

2003 Planning Meeting (cont.):

Garden Tours and Plant Swaps - The following people have graciously offered up their yards and gardens for Master Gardener invasions in 2003. If you would like to do the same, please contact Paula:

Gil Livanec - April
Barbara Burkhardt - May
Pat & Don Gerard - early June
Barbara Ross - October

Seminars - The winners of the public seminars which also provide us with recertification opportunities are:

Rose Varieties for Brazoria County
Growing and Using Herbs
Fruit Trees
All About Plumerias
Wildflowers
Easy-to-Build Garden Accessories

Spring Plant and Seed Swap - Plans are in the works for a spring plant and seed swap which will include not only the Master Gardeners but local garden clubs and other garden related organizations. Pat Cayer and Ron King volunteered to help coordinate.

Field Trips - Tommie Holt and Kirby Rapstein volunteered to organize at least two field trips for us in 2003.

A Country Christmas - Donie Stowers and Carol Farmer volunteered to do a presentation at this event (see "Mark Your Calendar" for more details).

Vegetable Show - We will hopefully bring back the Vegetable Show and combine it with the Farmers Market that will be held every weekend in June.

Demonstration Gardens - Paula informed us that the Interagency Agreement is not going to be signed at this time and that the current relationship we have with the research station will continue. The agreement would have been between the research station, Brazoria County, BCMGA and TCE. It would have spelled out the responsibilities and liabilities of the organizations involved and boundaries for use of the land.

A brainstorming meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 27, 9:00 a.m., at the Greenhouse, to discuss the future direction the Master Gardeners will be taking with regard to the Demonstration Gardens. If at all possible, please come and join in on the discussion. We are looking for opinions, alternatives and ideas.

Master Gardener Business:

Website - The newsletter is now on the Brazoria County TCE website. If you have internet access, please check it out at <http://brazoria-co.tamu.edu>. ***If you are able and willing to get future newsletters off the web rather than in the mail, please email me. This would help us save postage and paper.***

Master Gardener Hotline - Mondays and Wednesdays are hotline days. Please call Sandra to sign up to answer calls.

Extension Office Flowerbeds - When you went into the Extension office for the September meeting, you may have noticed a new flowerbed around the big sign out by the street. When I was at the office last month to send out the last newsletter I saw Pat Gerard and Ted Cooper out there shoveling soil. Well, actually, Ted was shoveling, and Pat was complaining that he was hogging the shovel. They put in some flowers which look like they survived the flood. The plan is to pull up the shrubs and install new beds. As always, if you are interested in helping out, any assistance would be appreciated. The next round of work is scheduled for some time after the ground dries up.

Demonstration Gardens:

mark your calendars for these	October 1	October 4	October 8	October 29
October work days:	October 11	October 15	October 18	
	October 19	October 22	October 25	

Work Days - Tuesdays, Fridays, and 3rd Saturday.

<u>Mark Your Calendar:</u>	
<i>*see below for details</i>	
2002 Dates:	
September 23-25:	Landscape Design Study Course
September 26:	Pesticide Applicator Series: Plant Disease ID and Management*
September 27:	Greenhouse meeting-9:00 a.m.
October 5-12:	Brazoria County Fair
October 8:	October meeting
October 10:	Pesticide Applicator Series: Weed ID and Management*
October 15:	Pesticide Applicator Series: Insect ID and Management*
October 17:	Pesticide Applicator Series: Pesticide Use and Safety*
November 12:	November meeting - elections, plant swap and potluck
November 14:	A Country Christmas*
November 19:	Brazoria County Pecan Show
December 10:	December meeting
2003 Dates:	
January 14:	January Meeting - awards and recognitions
January 28:	Little League Turf and Pesticide Training, Alvin Community College
February 11:	Spring Master Gardener Classes begin
April 5:	Pecan Grafting Field Day at Varner Hogg
April 19:	Spring Plant Sale
June 7:	Farmers Market
June 14:	Farmers Market
June 21:	Farmers Market
June 28:	Farmers Market
September 9:	Fall Master Gardener Classes begin
September 20:	Fall Plant Sale
October 4-11	Brazoria County Fair
November 18:	Brazoria County Pecan Show

Pesticide Applicator Series - Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Location: Extension office. Fee: \$15. Each seminar is limited to 20 registrants and seats must be reserved no later than one week prior to the class. For further information contact the Extension Horticulture Department (979-864-1558 X112; 979-388-1558 X112; 281-756-1558 X112).

A Country Christmas - Thursday, November 14, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Location: Extension office. Fee: \$3.00 per person. Pre-registration deadline: November 8. Featuring: Make and Take Project; Holiday Foods; Holiday Food Safety; and Holiday Decorating.

In The Garden:

Seed Catalogs: The cold weather will be coming soon (it could happen) - and there's nothing better to do in the winter than to plan those spring gardens. I would like to put a list of favorite seed catalogs in an upcoming newsletter. If you have a seed catalog that you think the rest of us would enjoy, let me know about it. I would like to know the catalog name, contact information (phone no./address) and if the company specializes in certain types of seeds/plants (if it isn't obvious). You can call me, email me, mail to me, or bring it to the October meeting.

Horticulture Places to Visit: Sherry Summers shared with me a list of horticulture sites to visit and I thought I'd highlight one each month. Some are semi-local and some are out of town. Keep them in mind if you are traveling. If you have any suggestions of good places to visit, let me know! Here's this month's feature:

Our Family's Herbs & Such - 702 Llano, Pasadena, TX 77504, 713-943-1937. Bulk herbs, essential oils, books about growing and using herbs, gift shop, display gardens and nursery, tours, and classes in cultivating, growing and cooking with herbs as well as herb crafts. Visit their website at www.herbsandgardens.com.futuresite.register.com/ to check out their online catalog. I found this on their website and thought it was kind of fun:

IN THE LANGUAGE OF HERBS AND FLOWERS:

- ☛ Basil symbolizes love and good wishes;
- ☛ Chamomile symbolizes humility;
- ☛ Lamb's ear symbolizes surprise;
- ☛ Lavender means devotion;
- ☛ Lemon balm means sympathy;
- ☛ Marjoram brings happiness and joy;
- ☛ Mint symbolizes virtue and brings wisdom;
- ☛ Parsley means festivity;
- ☛ Rose symbolizes love; and
- ☛ ROSEMARY IS FOR REMEMBRANCE.

Five Steps to Speedier Compost

submitted by Donie Stowers

source: (07/01/02) Gardener's Supply - www.gardeners.com

The great thing about composting is that you can throw a bunch of leaf clippings, food scraps, and dried leaves into a pile and they will decompose into crumbly, nutrient-rich compost for your garden. Depending on the size of your compost pile, what you put in it, and how you tend to it, this process can take 3 months to 2 years.

If you want to get compost in a hurry, there are few things you can do to speed the process along.

1. Size it right

Compost piles that are about 1 cubic yard (3 ft square by 3 ft high) get hotter quicker. (Up to 140 degrees F!) Heat is a by-product of rapid microbial action and a sure sign that the microbes are working at top speed to break down the materials. Smaller piles and larger piles don't heat up as quickly.

2. Turn it over

Microbes need oxygen to do their work. Turning the materials in your pile once a week will add the needed air. If you can't--or don't want to--turn the pile, try aerating it by poking around it the pile with a pitchfork.

3. **Keep the combo right**

For rapid decomposition, your compost pile should have a carbon to nitrogen ratio of about 20:1. Carbon-rich materials include corn stalks, straw, dry leaves, sawdust, and shredded paper. Nitrogen-rich materials include kitchen scraps, fresh prunings from your garden, alfalfa hay, grass clippings, and seaweed.

4. **Keep it moist**

Water is another key component in making compost, but you don't need too much. Your compost pile should be moist like a damp sponge, not soggy or waterlogged.

5. **Shred it**

It's no surprise that smaller materials break down faster. You can help your compost along by shredding fallen leaves with your lawnmower or chopping up your kitchen scraps. Some avid gardeners even recommend putting kitchen scraps through the blender, which gives you the added benefit of moisture when adding the scraps to your compost pile.

Note: In years past, many experts have recommended adding manure—which is nitrogen-rich—to your compost bin to speed up the microbial activity. New strains of bacteria have caused concerns, however, and some people are backing away from that suggestion. Alfalfa meal and soybean meal are high-nitrogen alternatives and are available at many feed stores.

Note from the Editor:

Here's how to reach me for newsletter contributions. The deadline for contributions is the Friday after our monthly meeting.

Thanks - Anna Gawlik, Editor/Historian

Happy Gardening!!!

Paula Craig
CEA - Horticulture
Brazoria County