

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

July 2003

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At the Meeting:

Speaker - BCMG Marti Graves gave a presentation on hibiscus. My sources tell me that Marti's program was interesting and educational. You might even say outstanding. It kept the interest of all (no side conversations going on), and there were even a lot of questions from the audience. She had a lot of great pictures of various types of hibiscus and information on propagation, etc. Everyone learned a lot about hibiscus and enjoyed it.

Scholarship Committee - Sandra Taylor gave a report on the progress of the Scholarship Committee. They have reviewed the programs of other Texas county Master Gardener chapters and found Master Gardener scholarships are primarily used to send members to seminars or other advanced training or perhaps on books for Sprouts. The Committee is to prepare a "process" and submit it for approval.

Refreshments - Mary Lou Christie asked for volunteers to bring refreshments during the coming months.

Volunteer Hours - Mark Snyder has updated the volunteer hours list. Please turn in your hours.

Fall Plant Sale:

Needed: Raffle Donation Solicitor - Jeanette Shane needs some help getting donations from the Angleton/Lake Jackson area. She did a fantastic job for the spring sale with all items being donated, but she really could use the help of someone familiar with the south end of the county. If you are interested, please contact Jeanette.

Plant Sale Update - We have been planting seeds and transplanting plants at the greenhouse in preparation for our Fall Plant Sale. We will have fall vegetables, annuals, perennials and natives for the sale, including some of the day lillies from the demo garden out front. Remember to check your flower beds for excess plants that you can pot up for the sale. If they grow well for you, then they will grow well for your neighbors, too.

Plant Waterer Positions Open - We need volunteers to water the new seedlings. If you can water on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday or Sunday, contact Cindy Erndt.

At the Demonstration Gardens:

Third Friday - At the Demonstration Gardens every third Friday of the month we will cook some burgers or dogs or something appropriate for the weather. It will be a good time to swap plants, lies and gardening information. Things are really starting to shape up out at the gardens thanks to a lot of sweat by a lot of people. Come join us for the food and fun. The fun starts around 8:00 a.m. and food is cooked around 11:00 or 11:30, depending on the heat factor.

CEMAP Committee - We formed a CEMAP committee and established a budget so we could purchase dirt, mulch and other stuff for the new CEMAP bed(s) we are making at The Greenhouse.

Thanks - To Gwen Collins for taking down the hanging baskets, etc., at the greenhouse in the middle of Claudette. They could have done some real damage with all the glass.

And More Thanks - To Phillip Hollenshead for supplying the tractor/mower and cutting the grass at the Demonstration Gardens and also to Roy Compton and D.C. Grindle for their assistance.

Shoo Fly Shoo - White flies were found in the greenhouse so the plants were moved to the covered area across from the greenhouse. The greenhouse tables were bleached, and the plants were sprayed.

What's in the Horse Barn? - All of the gas powered equipment, that's what! The front corner room of the "horse barn" was cleaned out and all of the equipment now has a home.

Spreading the Dirt - The soil has been delivered for the CEMAP beds. We will be spreading it and then planting the CEMAP plants on the regular work days.

Speaking of Work Days - Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:30/8:00 a.m. until noon.

Mark your calendars for these

August work days:

August 1

August 12

August 22

August 5

August 15*

August 26

August 8

August 19

August 29

*Third Friday

Calendar of Events:

**see below for details*

new items in bold

2003 Dates:

August 2:	Gorgeous Gingers
August 3:	Butterflies and Hummers*
August 9:	Pond Tour*
August 12:	August Meeting
August 15:	Third Friday
August 17:	Hibiscus Show & Plant Sale*
August 23:	Tropical Workshop
August 30:	How to Know the Trees of Texas*
September 6:	Hooked on Tropicals*
September 9:	Fall Master Gardener Classes begin
September 9:	September Meeting
September 18:	Wildflowers*
September 19:	Third Friday
September 20:	Fall Plant Sale
Sept 29-Oct 1:	Advanced Hort Food Crops Symposium
October 4-11	Brazoria County Fair
October 14:	October Meeting
October 17:	Third Friday
October 31-	
November 2:	Fall Festival of Roses-Antique Rose Emporium
November 11:	November Meeting
November 18:	Brazoria County Pecan Show
November 21:	Third Friday
December 9:	December Meeting
December 19:	Third Friday

2004 Dates:

January 13:	January Meeting
January 16:	Third Friday
February 10:	February Meeting
February 20:	Third Friday
March 9:	March Meeting
March 19:	Third Friday
April 3:	Spring Plant Sale
April 13:	April Meeting
April 16:	Third Friday
May 6-8:	State MG Conference
May 11:	May Meeting
May 21:	Third Friday
June 8:	June Meeting
June 18:	Third Friday
July 13:	July Meeting
July 16:	Third Friday
August 10 :	August Meeting
August 20:	Third Friday
September 14:	September Meeting
September 17:	Third Friday
September 18:	Fall Plant Sale
October 12:	October Meeting
October 15:	Third Friday
November 9:	November Meeting
November 19:	Third Friday
December 14:	December Meeting
December 17:	Third Friday

Butterflies and Hummers - Date: August 3; Time: 2:00-4:00 p.m.; Location: Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway, Houston; Phone: 713-681-8433. Presentation by Jay Kolvenovsky. Free to public.

Pond Tour 2003 - Date: August 9; Time: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; This is the first pond tour of local water gardens and koi ponds. Discover the wonderful world of water gardening by visiting ten featured ponds. This is a great source of information and ideas for anyone wanting to get their "feet wet" and really don't know where to begin. Ponders are always willing to share both knowledge and plants with new comers to this hobby. Maps will be available at Brazos Landscaping Supply in Angleton and Janda's Garden Center and Wild Water Ponds in Clute.

Hibiscus Show & Plant Sale - Date: August 17; Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.; Location: City of Bellaire, Recreation Center, 5125 Laurel, Bellaire; Phone: 713-662-8280.

Permaculture: Gardening for a Sustainable Texas-An Introduction - Date: August 27; Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.; Location: Richmond/Kirby area; call Urban Harvest for location and to register; Phone: 713-880-5540. Free. Permaculture has made a big difference in the lives of many people who have studied it or received help from permaculturists. In this orientation, learn about four courses over the next year that will help you turn your yard or farm into a vibrant bird and butterfly filled space, resplendent with gourmet vegetables and fruits. Permacultural concepts help create sustainable environments in urban and rural settings. If, after this orientation, you enroll in one or more of the four courses (Land Design, Ecological Foundations, Sustainability Principles, Design Project Tutorial) over the next year, you'll learn how to renew rural Texas and how to produce a city with less concrete, with fewer dead trees and unproductive lawns, and without noisy leaf blowers.

Permaculture is being practiced all over the planet, and it is the most advanced design concept available for creating gardens, landscapes, and ecosystems. It also helps design sustainable buildings and societies that can prosper easily and efficiently for centuries while minimizing energy and materials use. Students who complete all four courses totaling 75 hours receive a Permaculture Designers certification.

The Permaculture Guild of Houston consists of Permaculture Design Certificate holders. Those teaching in the courses include Gary Edmondson, Diana Liga, Shawn McFarland, Dr. Bob Randall, Ray Sher, Kevin Topek, Jennifer Walker, Cas & Gita Van Woerden.

How to Know the Trees of Texas - Date: August 30; Time: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.; Location: Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin; Phone: 512/292-4100; Join authors of the newly released Trees of Texas, Carmine Stahl and Ria McElvaney, for a discussion of Texas trees, identifying characteristics and other interesting information about our Texas trees. Meet the speakers/authors at Wild Ideas: The Store, directly after their talk, who will sign their new book Trees of Texas from 1-3pm. Presentation is free with your admission to the Wildflower Center.

Hooked on Tropicals--Specialty Programs on Hibiscus and Plumeria - Date: September 6; Time: 10:00 a.m.; Location: Brazoria County Extension Office, 1800 C. R. 171, Angleton; Phone: 979-864-1564, 979-388-1564, 281-756-1564. Marti Greg, BCMGA, will present a program on hibiscus. Harris County Master Gardeners will present a program on plumerias. Open to the public. \$5 registration fee. Please pre-register. Advanced training credit.

Wildflowers - Date: September 18; Time: 10:00 a.m., Location: Brazoria County Extension Office, 1800 C. R. 171, Angleton; Phone: 979-864-1564, 979-388-1564, 281-756-1564. Ruth Milburn, Executive Director of Houston Arboretum, will give a presentation on Wildflowers. Books also available. \$5 registration if pre-registered. Advanced training credit.

At the Extension Office:

Irrigation System - The installation of the irrigation system at the Extension Office began on July 14 and has been completed and is up and running.

News to Know:

Back Home - John Alcorn is at home as of Saturday, July and is doing much better. We send him our love and prayers for a speedy recovery.

August Speaker - BCMGA intern, DiAnna Munson will be speaking on cooking herbs that can be used as medicines and how to make them into medicines. She'll be showing how to make tea, decoctions, tinctures, creams, ointments, soaps and syrups.

Volunteer Teaching Opportunity - Rhonda Myers at Alvin Community College is looking for someone to do a program for a senior group on August 14 from 1:30 to 2:15. Ms. Myers can be contacted at 281-756-3729 or rmyers@alvin.cc.tx.us.

Did You Know - July is National Water Gardening Month!

Plant Propagation Specialist - This year's class is full. However, anyone interested in taking the course next year needs to contact Tom LeRoy at the Conroe Extension Office (call Sandra for the number). There is already a waiting list, and Tom is only accepting two MGs from each county per class.

Junior Master Gardeners:

HELP!!!! The Junior Master Gardener Program (JMG) is looking for a few good people!

How much fun it is to see the faces of children learning and being so excited about nature. One of the best ways to spread gardening knowledge in our area is to educate our youth.

At the moment we have one group of JMG's and would like to broaden our program. There are groups who would like to participate, but without YOUR HELP we will not be able to accommodate them. We need people who are willing to spend 1 ½ hours per month (and if we have enough volunteers, not even that much time) with the class, teaching them from the JMG Handbook about gardening. The lessons and activities are already planned and written out for you. The groups supply their own materials for the activities.

Our Brazoria JMG program was started by John Alcorn and Paula Craig, and we would like to see it grow. If you are interested in helping with the JMG please call Viki Brushwood.

Meet a Master Gardener - Mayor of Wild Peach?

from Viki Brushwood

Our featured MG this month is Ray Michalik (Master Gardener class of Spring 2000). When I first met Ray and found out that I lived near him in Wild Peach he asked me if I turned out to vote for him for Mayor. Well, there is no mayor of Wild Peach but he had me "hook, line and sinker" - he is a prankster. Ray was born in Palacios, the "City by the Sea." He served in the Army and was trained at Fort Carson, Colorado, as a medic. He was stationed in Germany. Upon returning from his tour of duty, he worked for Alcoa and then BASF and retired in spring of 1996.



Ray has been married to Peggy for 36 years and has two sons. When they first moved to Brazoria, they lived in "town" but his country roots pulled him out into the country where he has 5 acres of land. Ray has been composting for 22 years. When he first started the beds in his garden, they would compact and be difficult to turn. Now his beds are naturally raised by composting, and he has no compaction, so they are easy to turn. He is a big proponent of composting. Ray has pecan and citrus trees plus his vegetable garden. He works at the MG greenhouse and helps with the plant sales. He is always around to lend a helping hand (and tell a story or two). When asked why he became a master gardener, he said it was to become a better gardener and to learn more what to garden. He enjoys the learning and intermingling with the other Master Gardeners. Ray is easy to pick out in a crowd, just look for his handlebar mustache and his big grin. He's a blast!

On the Herbal Side - Hibiscus:

from DiAnna Munson

I thought I would follow the Hibiscus lecture at our last meeting with an article on Hibiscus. The species that is used in herbal medicine is *Hibiscus sabdariffa ruber*. The medicinal parts of the plant are the flowers. This plant originates from the area around the source of the Niger, but now can be found worldwide in the tropics. It is also cultivated in Europe for its medicinal properties.

Hibiscus flowers can be found in many commercial tea products that are formulated to enhance muscle relaxation, making it an antispasmodic. Being rich in vitamin B complex and C, hibiscus is also a natural diuretic, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. It has also been used to treat scurvy in the tropical regions of the world. The tea is also used as an astringent antiseptic for bleeding wounds. (I can testify to its effectiveness as a coagulant, thanks to my dog being cut on a holiday. The tea stopped the bleeding on contact and the area did not become infected. No vet bill!!!!) Other indications and usages listed in the Herbal PDR for this herb include: loss of appetite, for colds that affect the respiratory tract and stomach, to dissolve phlegm, for disorders of circulation and as a gentle laxative. Applied topically in cream form, it improves skin conditions and may promote hair growth.



This is one herb that actually tastes as good as it looks, lending a sharp, fruity taste and crimson color to teas.

Garden Talk - Juniper Bag Worms:

from Tom Collins

Two years ago I almost lost a Juniper (species) that was planted on the side of my home. I noticed that it was dropping large number of leaves and when I did a closer examination, I had my first encounter with Bag Worms. The tree appeared to be in fairly grave condition as several limbs were already dead. Almost every limb had from 5 to 20 of the rather diamond shape bag covered with the juniper leaves. I decided to start an aggressive "pick and smash each bag" program. As it turns out this is probably the most effective method to control them. Well last year I was clear of the bag worms, but they returned again this year and once more I picked and smashed about 50 bags. I also decided to keep a few in my butterfly terrarium and wait to see what the moth looks like when and if they hatch out. I did a web search on this insect and found the following information that may also be useful to you.

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Psychidae

Scientific Name: *Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis*

Common Name: Bag Worm

Description: Female bagworms are wingless, legless and grub-like (they never leave the bag). Males are small, brown, hairy moths with dark wings that clear with age. Eggs are spherical or oblong and about 0.8 millimeters by 1.0 millimeter. Eggs are found in the mother's bag inside her pupal exuviae. The bagworms are 2 to 52 millimeters long, depending on age. The head and forward parts are dark and sclerotized and the rest is paler and soft. The bags are made of white silk with bits of the host plant spun onto the outer surface. The pupae are dark brown. Male pupae are slender and female pupae are fatter. The pupal stage occurs inside the bag.

Bagworms overwinter in the egg stage inside female bags fastened to twigs. Eggs hatch in late May and early June, and larvae feed until August or early September. The first evidence of infestation is the presence of 1/4 inch bags which are carried almost on end by the young caterpillars inside. As larvae grow, leaf fragments are added to the bag, which may reach a length of 2 inches by the end of summer.

Bagworms feed on many species of trees and shrubs, but are most common on evergreens trees and shrubs. A single bagworm does relatively little harm as it feeds on leaves. Excessive defoliation may kill conifers within one or two seasons. Juniper, arborvitae, pine, and spruce may be killed if completely defoliated.

Control infestations on small trees and shrubs by removing bags during the winter and spring before the eggs begin to hatch in late May. Destroy bags by burning, immersing in kerosene or by crushing. If bags containing larvae are discarded on the ground, the larvae can return to host plants.

Insecticides are effective if applied during the early stages of bagworm development. For most effective control and prevention of early season damage, apply from early to mid June. This is a very good time to spray with BT. If the larvae make it to adults a stronger pesticide will be required, such as malathion, diazinon, carbaryl (Sevin), or acephate (Orthene.) Always follow label directions.

Plant Feature - Dwarf Poinciana:

Thanks to Barbara Ross, I can share information on this plant with you. She is the one who told me the Latin name for it. I've had a Poinciana, Pride of Barbados variety, for many years. Most of its life was spent in a pot. Two years ago, probably when I was trying to clear things out of the yard to prepare for a hurricane, I decided to plant it in the yard. The first summer, it grew bigger than it ever had in the pot, but this summer it has gone out of its way to become a spectacular addition to our yard. It's become about as tall as I am and has gobs of stunning bright yellow and red-orange blossoms. I have to rave about this plant because to not only survive but flourish in my yard it must be a low maintenance plant. It gets water when it rains or when we water the grass or citrus trees, and it has to steal fertilizer from what we put on the citrus trees. It is pretty cold hardy, surviving the freezes of the last two winters without being covered. Best of all, it loves the hot Texas summer. The hotter it is, the more blooms it makes. You just can't ask for more than that! Here's some information I found of the internet about this plant:

Latin Name: *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*

Common Names: Dwarf Poinciana, Pride of Barbados, Peacock Flower

Family: Fabaceae

Genus: Caesalpinia (ses-al-PIN-ee-uh)

Species: pulcherrima (pul-KAIR-ih-muh)

Synonym: Caesalpinia Bird of Paradise; *poinciana pulcherrima*, *poinciana bijuga*

Category: Shrubs Tropicals/Tender Perennials

Height: 4-6 ft. (1.2-1.8 m); 6-8 ft. (1.8-2.4 m)

Spacing: 4-6 ft. (1.2-1.8 m)

Hardiness: USDA Zones 8-11; In zone 8 , it is a returning perennial. In cooler climates it can be grown as a annual.

Sun Exposure: Sun

Water Needs: Average; Water regularly; do not overwater

Soil pH requirements: alkaline to acidic soil

Toxicity: Seed is poisonous if ingested; Parts of plant are poisonous if ingested

Bloom Color: Red, Bright Yellow

Bloom Time: Late Summer/Early Fall/Mid Fall/Blooms all year

Foliage: Evergreen

Other details: This plant is attractive to bees, butterflies and/or birds; Self-sows freely; deadhead if you do not want volunteer seedlings next season; The root and stem seem to be cytotoxic.

Propagation Methods: From seed; direct sow after last frost and cuttings.

Seed Collecting: Bag seedheads to capture ripening seed; Allow pods to dry on plant; break open to collect seeds

This decorative flowering tree is widely planted in South Florida. Use this plant as a small evergreen perennial shrub or tree. It originates from the West Indies, can grow to 10 - 15 feet high with alternate, bipinnate leaves. The stem and branches are armed with spines. The red, orange, yellow and pink flowers grow at the end of the prickly branches. This small, graceful tree flowers throughout the year and is a beautiful garden plant. The Peacock Flowers variety has beautiful bowl-shaped flowers in the colors red, orange, orange-red and yellow. The variety of Pride of Barbados with red flowers is also called red bird of paradise, while the yellow species is called yellow bird of paradise. The fruits are legumes, 3 - 4" long; when ripe they split open and release the brown bean. In Suriname's traditional medicine the leaves are purgative and used against kidneystones, malarial fever and bronchitis.

Sources: <http://www.tropilab.com/caesal-pul.html> (7-29-03); <http://plantsdatabase.com/go/2247/> (7-29-03)

In the Garden:

Ode to a Flower

Way, way out in the garden,
way out to the edge of the field.
Nature has worked her magic
on a little brown seed she's unsealed.

Way, way out in the garden,
in a place where nobody goes
with the help of old mother nature
a tiny blue flower grows.

A delicate, lacy blossom,
fruit of a tiny brown seed
'tis a wondrous event of creation,
a truly magnificent deed.

Way, way out in the garden
in this spot quite hidden away.
A beautiful reflection of heaven
sways with the breeze of the day.

Way, way out in the garden
far from the prying eye.
She'll show-off all her beauty
to the sun and the clouds and the sky.

Absorbed in her wind blown dance
only nature's voice she'll heed.
And she'll live her life in fullness
without knowing she's only a weed.

Author Unknown / Submitted by Donie Stowers

Happy Birthday!

August Birthdays -

Mary Kathryn Pickle - August 5

Tom Harris - August 10

Greg Marsh - August 12

Doll Mayfield - August 15

Marvin Petter - August 21

D. C. Grindle - August 27

Linda Gibson - August 31

Viki Brushwood is lacking about 50 birthdays for Master Gardeners. Please get your name and birthday to her either by email, by phone or sign up at the next meeting. Thanks!

Happy Gardening!!!

Anna Gawlik - Newsletter Editor

_____ The Brazoria County Master Gardener Association shall not be affiliated with any commercial enterprise for the profit of an individual member or group of members. No member shall use their position with the Association to further the manufacture, distribution, promotion or sale of any material, product or service in which they have either a direct or indirect financial interest.



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