

# What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

August 2003

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## **Fall Plant Sale:**

**Raffle Donations** - Pat Gerard and Pat Cayer have volunteered to help Jeanette Shane with solicitations for donations in the Lake Jackson area. If you can help with collecting raffle donations, please contact Jeanette.

**Update** - Since the four workdays in July, 35-40 flats have been planted and are doing well. We have also transplanted many plants from the demo garden flowerbed which should be in great shape by Plant Sale day. Thanks to everyone who has helped with the seeds and plantings.

Remember, check your beds for babies to transplant. If you are bringing plants from your yard, please let Cindy know what kind and how many, so she can get the information into the plant list. Cindy said that for the last plant sale our plant list was in the newspaper and people came with the list in hand already marked as to what they wanted to buy. Knowing what is available is bringing more people to the sale.

Plants have been selected from Treesearch. Delivery is tentatively scheduled for the Thursday prior to our sale. Volunteers will be needed to help unload the plants. If you are interested in helping, contact Cindy, so she can keep you posted with the exact delivery time.

**Calling All Trailers** - We will need your trailers again to move the plants from the Greenhouse to the sale. Let Cindy know if you have a trailer to volunteer.

**Roping** - Two volunteers are needed to rope off the gazebo area on Friday the 19th. Let Cindy know if you will help her with this.

**Plant Sale Chairs in Training** - Cindy will be passing along her plant sale wisdom to Barbara Brown, who will be co-chair for the Spring Plant Sale. Carol Farmer and Evelyn Moon will be helping and learning as well.

## **At the Demonstration Gardens:**

A lot has been happening at the Demonstration Gardens. The heart-shaped rose bed has been completed and other new beds have been installed. Stop by and check it out.

**Barbara Ross' List of Wants** - If you can help out with getting any of these items for the Demonstration Gardens, it would be greatly appreciated:

- bird feeders
- bird baths
- sculptures
- yard art
- stepping stones
- person sized scarecrow or dummy in a MG shirt

**Looking For: Tree Trimmer** - Someone is needed who is knowledgeable in trimming oak trees. If you are that person, or know someone who fits that description, please go out to the Demonstration Gardens on one of the work days or call Ray Michalik.

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

**Mark your calendars for these  
September work days:**

|              |              |               |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| September 2  | September 5  | September 9   |
| September 12 | September 16 | September 19* |
| September 23 | September 26 | September 30  |

\*Third Friday

## **At the Meeting:**

**Speaker** - Our speaker this month was BCMG intern, DiAnna Munson, who writes our monthly *On the Herbal Side* column. DiAnna gave a fantastic presentation, which probably made more than one of us feel the need to change our eating habits. Check out her column for recipes from her presentation.

| <b>Calendar of Events:</b>    |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>*see below for details</i> | <i>new items in bold</i>  |
| <b>2003 Dates:</b>            |   |
| September 6:                  | Hooked on Tropicals   |
| <b>September 6:</b>           | <b>Xtreme Hummingbird<br/>Xtravaganza</b>                         |
| September 9:                  | Fall Master Gardener Classes begin                                |
| September 9:                  | September Meeting   |
| <b>September 9:</b>           | <b>Hands-On 1: Backyard<br/>Composting*</b>                       |
| <b>September 10:</b>          | <b>Costa Rican Flora and Fauna*</b>                               |
| <b>September 10:</b>          | <b>Using Land Effectively with<br/>Sustainable Design begins*</b> |
| <b>September 11:</b>          | <b>Attracting Butterflies and<br/>Hummers *</b>                   |
| <b>September 12-14:</b>       | <b>Fall Houston Home Show*</b>                                    |
| <b>September 13:</b>          | <b>Wildscapes Workshop*</b>                                       |
| September 18:                 | Wildflowers   |
| September 19:                 | Third Friday  |
| September 20:                 | Fall Plant Sale   |
| <b>September 20:</b>          | <b>Weeds, Weather, and Other<br/>Garden Woes*</b>                 |
| <b>September 20:</b>          | <b>Rose-ted Pepper Fest*</b>                                      |
| <b>September 22-24:</b>       | <b>Landscape Design Study<br/>Course*</b>                         |
| <b>September 23:</b>          | <b>Hands On 2: Working With Soils<br/>and Mulches*</b>            |
| <b>September 27:</b>          | <b>Harris County Master Gardeners<br/>Fall Plant Sale</b>         |
| Sept 29-Oct 1:                | Advanced Hort Food Crops<br>Symposium                             |
| October 4-11                  | Brazoria County Fair  |
| <b>October 4:</b>             | <b>Daylilies*</b>   |
| <b>October 7:</b>             | <b>Hands On 3: Fertilizing<br/>Fundamentals*</b>                  |
| <b>October 8:</b>             | <b>Tool Talk*</b>   |
| October 14:                   | October Meeting   |
| October 17:                   | Third Friday  |
| <b>2004 Dates:</b>            |   |
| October 31-                   |   |
| November 2:                   | Fall Festival of Roses-Antique<br>Rose Emporium                   |
| November 11:                  | November Meeting  |
| November 18:                  | Brazoria County Pecan Show  |
| November 21:                  | Third Friday  |
| December 9:                   | December Meeting  |
| December 19:                  | Third Friday  |
| 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  |

**Hands-On 1: Backyard Composting** - Date: September 9; Time: 6:15 p.m.-8:15 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Compost is one of the best soil amendments you can add to your garden. It improves plant health, makes the soil more fertile, helps retain water in dry periods and decreases soil erosion and disease damage during wet ones. One way to get good compost is to buy it, but an even better way is to make it using garden refuse, yard waste and other organic

materials that are available free. As well, you get healthful exercise and reduce landfill and pollution. In this class, you will get hands-on lessons in composting so come ready for gardening. John Cleveland is past president of Urban Harvest Community Gardens and is a Certified Master Composter. Fee.

**Lunch Bunch: Costa Rican Flora and Fauna** - Date: September 10; Time: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Bring a sack lunch and join Nancy Greig from the Cockrell Butterfly Center as she shows slides of her treks through Costa Rica. See the beautiful plants and animals of this tropical paradise.

**Using Land Effectively with Sustainable Design** - Dates: Sept. 10 and 24, Oct. 8 and 22, Nov. 5 and 19, Dec. 10 and 17, plus 2 field trips: Oct. 18 (9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.) and Nov. 15 (10:00 a.m.-5:00p.m.) Time: 7p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Location: Richmond/Kirby area; Presented by: The Permaculture Guild of Houston; Registration: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). This is not a gardening course, but it is essential if you want to design your garden wisely. Sustainable design is an effort to make good plans. These accomplish goals efficiently and productively without negative future consequences. Sustainable designs result in people living better with less effort and waste. This class provides basic tools needed in such design. There is a 4-hour, guided field trip to two urban Houston gardens. Each reflects the physical characteristics of the surroundings and contains an abundance of native and adapted flowering plants, fruit trees, herbs, vegetable gardens, and ponds. These gardens provide the setting for a hands-on observation study. There is also an all-day guided trip to a farm 90 miles west of Houston. This will allow you to study patterns in nature, landscape flow, edge, slope, and zone in a more natural setting; includes hands-on sheet composting projects, garden bed layout, seed and tree planting and care. Fee: \$120 + \$20 for materials & food; Advanced registration required.

**Attracting Butterflies and Hummers** - Date: September 11; Location: City of Bellaire, Recreation Center, 5125 Laurel, Bellaire; Phone: 713-662-8280; Fee: \$20 - Bellaire residents, \$30 - Houston residents. Speaker: Jay Kolvenosky, digital Powerpoint, handouts.

**Fall Houston Home Show** - Date: September 12-14; Location: George R. Brown Convention Center; Phone: 713-529-1616.

**Wildscapes Workshop** - Date: September 13; Time: 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; Location: University of Houston, Central Campus. Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Native Plant Society of Texas will hold their sixth WildScapes Workshop on September 13 at the central campus of the University of Houston. Join us for educational programs including the incredible migration of the monarch butterfly, building a healthy soil, an exciting native plant sale, and the best of Texas Backyard Habitats and how to create one for your backyard. Registration includes an ample packet of information, admission to all programs and the plant sale, drinks and a tasty lunch. Preregistration is required. For information contact Glenn Olsen, Past President 281-345-4151 or visit the website at [www.npsot.org](http://www.npsot.org).

**Weeds, Weather, and Other Garden Woes** - Date: September 20; Time: 9 a.m.-11:00 a.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Join Greg Harmison as he discusses quips, quotes, and thoughts on gardening. This program mixes humor with practical advice to provide a fun look at gardening attitudes and how they apply to the practice of gardening.

**Rose-ted Pepper Fest** - Date: September 20; Time: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., with demonstration, tasting and music from 11:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.; Location: Antique Rose Emporium, 10,000 Highway 50, Brenham; Phone: 800-441-0002. Autumnal Equinox - Best time for planting in Texas! Buy one rose and get one free - or - Bring any homemade dish with pepper included (hot or not) and get one free rose bush or a free bottle of Antique Rose Emporium organic liquid fertilizer. Taste Hatch Chili Stew and salsa while tasting local brew. Contact: Jean Shoup at [roses@industryinet.com](mailto:roses@industryinet.com) or 979-836-5548.

**Landscape Design Study Course** - Date: September 22-23; Location: Christ United Methodist Church, College Station, Texas; Master Gardeners who complete a course may apply 12 hours of credit to their requirements for continuing education. There will be many presentations, including: *Development of Landscape Design* by Barbara Thronton, *The Private Garden* by Bill Welch, *Public Landscapes* by Mike Teel, and *Landscape Design Resources* by Michael Murphy. Registration forms may be requested from Lenora Sebesta, Department of Extension Horticulture, 2134 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-2134, by telephone (979) 845-7342, or by e-mail at [lasebesta@tamu.edu](mailto:lasebesta@tamu.edu). For additional information, check out the website: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/landsep03.html>.

**Hands On 2: Working With Soils and Mulches** - Date: September 23; Time: 6:15 p.m.-8:15 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). In this class you will learn the basics of soil preparation, bed building, estimating soil amounts needed, selecting soil blends and amendments, and how to select and use mulches. This class will also include a primer on soil structure and the soil food web. The soil food web relates to the relationship between nutrients, water, organic matter cycles, beneficial microorganisms and their interactions with the soil and surrounding environment. Bring a small baggie with some of your garden soil. John Ferguson owns Nature's Way Resources, a manufacturer of bulk compost, soils and mulches. John has a soil science background and is considered one of the top lecturers on this subject in Texas. Fee.

**Garden Workday: Daylilies** - Date: October 4; Time: 8 a.m. -12:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Help Mercer staffers dig, divide, pot, and replant the daylily collection. Staff members will discuss caring for these beautiful plants while working. Wear garden work clothes; you will get dirty.

**Hands On 3: Fertilizing Fundamentals** - Date: October 7; Time: 6:15 p.m.-8:15 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). This class will explore the many excellent organic fertilizers available on the market today. The basics of soil fertility and plant nutrition will be covered. Application tools and techniques will be profiled as well as fertilization schedules. Pete Cangelosi is an organic specialist with San Jacinto Environmental Supplies, a local wholesale supplier of organic gardening products. Dr. Bob Randall is the executive director of Urban Harvest, Houston's community garden organization and author of Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers for Metro Houston.

**Lunch Bunch: Tool Talk** - Date: October 8; Time: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Bring a sack lunch and join Greg Harmison, program manager, for a program on the proper gardening tools and how to care for them.

### **News to Know:**

**BCMGA Website** - If you haven't already gone there, check out our new website: [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazoria](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazoria).

**Volunteer Hours** - Please turn in your hours. You can bring them to the next meeting or mail them to Mark Snyder.

**Courthouse Rose Beds** - Carol Farmer, Donie Stowers, Linda Sanders and Gwen Collins have begun cleaning the beds at the Courthouse. If you are interested in helping, give one of them a call to find out when.

**Hummingbird Pictures** - If you haven't already, go to <http://community-2.webtv.net/hotmail.com/verle33/HummingBirdNest/> to see pictures of a hummingbird in her nest with her eggs and then chicks. They are fascinating.

### **Meet a Master Gardener - Jazzy Barbara Ross!**

*from Viki Brushwood*



Barbara Ross was born far away? - in Alcoa and then moved to Alvin when she was 5 years old. After she married, Barbara moved to Angleton, which is still her home. She has 2 sons, 5 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. Barbara is an avid reader. She reads 4 to 5 fiction books each week, mainly focusing on thrillers, spies and murders. Although she grew up listening to Rhythm and Blues, her favorite music is Jazz, and she has an extensive collection of Jazz music. She must do her gardening to the tempo of jazz because she seems to have endless energy in the garden. (And, it seems, in everything she does!) Barbara was an LVN and a Medical Laboratory Technician for 30 years until her retirement. She told me she had to mix up a lot of chemicals for testing and was happy never to have blown up the lab!

Barbara has always loved the garden. Her favorite flower is the Hibiscus. She used to go up to Houston on nursery runs to buy plants. On one of her visits she saw the Harris County MG Demonstration Gardens and decided that someday Brazoria County would have gardens equal to theirs, or gardens that would surpass theirs. She attended the second class of the Master Gardeners in 1996, graduating in 1997. She has worked in many areas of the program such as Intern Class Coordinator, Vice President, and all around volunteer. She also spent 3

years landscaping the Brazoria County Fairgrounds. Currently she is in charge of the flowerbeds at the greenhouse. All of her flowerbeds at home are full (not to mention beautiful) and working at the greenhouse beds gives her a chance to thin out her beds and share them. Also, she can put in new plants and see them grow. Her favorite thing about the program is the camaraderie and fellowship with other gardeners. Barbara puts in between 4 and 5 HUNDRED hours a year! You can only imagine what our gardens, greenhouse and programs would be like if we all put in that much time! It is truly a labor of love! She's a keeper!!!

## **On the Herbal Side - Recipes for Soap, Hand Cream and Bug Spray!**

*from DiAnna Munson*

### **Herbal Glycerin Soap**

2 Cups glycerin soap base,  
2 Cups fresh herb or 1 Cup dried herb  
1 Cup water  
1/2 Cup glycerin

Place herb, water, and glycerin in blender, process at chop for 5 minutes. Strain this mixture through several layers of cheesecloth, discarding the remaining plant matter. (Good stuff for the compost pile.) Melt glycerin soap base, cool to a temperature of 135 to 140 degrees F. Combine melted base and herbal mixture. Stir until blended. Pour into molds and cool. Store in a cool place. Depending on the herb used, the potency usually lasts about a year.

### **Universal Hand Cream**

2 C. Oil (Almond, Grapeseed, Safflower, any good cooking oil)  
1 T. beeswax grated  
2 t. borax  
2 C. water

Melt beeswax in oil, place in blender on low speed. Heat water. Dissolve borax in water. Slowly pour water into oil mixture while mixing in the blender. Continue blending for 2 minutes. Pour into glass jars. Cream will thicken as it cools. To make an herbal blend cream make an infusion/decoction of the herb and water and substitute the infusion/ decoction for the water listed above.

To make an infusion (flowers or leaves) - chop herb into small pieces, cover with hot water (not boiling) and let set for 3 to 5 minutes.

To make a decoction (bark, stems, roots) simmer herb in water for 10 to 15 minutes.

### **Organic Bug Spray**

1 large onion unpeeled  
1 whole head of garlic  
3 cups of water  
2 teaspoons cayenne powder

Cut onion into quarters, separate garlic into individual cloves. Simmer onion and garlic in water until both are mussy. Add cayenne pepper and remove from heat.

To use: Mix 2 teaspoons of mixture in 1/2 gallon of water with 1 teaspoon liquid soap. Spray on vegetation to control insects. Can be repeated every two days to remove existing pests or weekly to prevent infestation.

## **In the Garden - Hummingbirds:**

*from Tom Collins*

September is the time to watch and feed hummingbirds. Thousands of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will be migrating south, and if you keep your feeder up, keep it clean, and use fresh food you should have lots of hummingbirds to enjoy. At the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) in Lake Jackson we already have 30 hummingbird feeders up and lots of hummers coming in to feed. We even had our first Rufous Hummingbird show up there last week and now have one at the Sea Center Texas Hummingbird Garden as well.

The following guidelines can help make your hummingbird viewing more fun:

1. Use a 25% solution of sugar water - 1 cup sugar to 3 cups water.
2. Boil the water and sugar solution. Store prepared food in a clean bottle in the refrigerator. Many people do not boil the water, and this is OK as long as you plan to change the feeder frequently.
3. Clean the hummingbird feeder to remove any mildew - use a mild bleach solution. Discard any solution left in the feeder and rinse well.
4. Fill the feeder about 1/4 to 1/2 full to see how fast the food goes down. Increase the amount as the number of hummers increases.
5. Change the food and clean the feeder every 3 to 5 days.
6. I keep 7 feeders up, the more feeders you have the more hummers you will have.

DO NOT:

1. Use red food coloring
2. Use artificial sweeteners

If you don't have a hummingbird feeder, try getting one from the GCBO Nature Store as the model they carry is by far the best made, will last for years, and it's easy to clean.

You have a much better chance of having lots of hummers if you also have native plants such as Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii*), Scarlet Sage (*Salvia coccinea*), Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*) and vines like Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) or Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis radicans*). The non-native Pentas are also very good plants for hummers. Remember that a hummer will test any plant or feeder once, but if the sugar content is less than 15% or sour, it will not return.

Come to the GCBO Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza on September 6 from 9am to 3 pm to see hummers up close and learn more about them as well. Better yet, volunteer to help. There will be work days September 4 and 5. Contact GCBO for details: 480-0999.

## *Happy Birthday!*

**September 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.



Paula Craig  
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