



What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

June 2004

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At the Meeting:

Speaker - Our speaker this month was Linda Knowles of the Native Plant Society of Texas. She gave a presentation, including slides, on native shrubs, trees, flowers, and grasses. Some books she recommended are:

- Wildflowers of Texas by Geyata Ajilvsgi
- Wildflowers, Trees and Shrubs of Texas by Delena Tull and George Oxford Miller
- Trees of East Texas by Robert A. Vines
- The Grasses of Texas by Frank w. Gould
- Wildflowers and Other Plants of Texas Beaches and Islands by Alfred Richardson
- Wild Orchids of Texas by Joe Liggio and Ann Orto Liggio

Master Gardener Hotline - We are getting a lot of calls on the hotline - too many for just the interns to handle a couple days a week. John Alcorn has requested that every MG sign up to answer phones and/or respond to messages. We need people every day from March through October. Please call Sandra at the Extension Office to sign up. Also, if you sign up, show up. If you can't show up, call Sandra and let her know.

Open House - The First Annual Master Gardener Open House was held on June 5, and it went really well. There were refreshments: cookies and peach tea; and LD, Ted and Henry solved the parking problem (hope they remember what they did, so they can repeat it for the fall plant sale!). The Master Gardeners received a lot of compliments.

Volunteer Hours - Don Gerard has a lot of blank spaces in his spreadsheet when it comes to hours. Please turn in your time to him. You can mail it, bring it to the meeting or bring it to the MG office. Don't wait until the end of the year. He won't have time to input everything if you do!

Grant Application - John Alcorn and Ann McClain are working on the application for the Dow grant. We are applying for funds to install a fruit orchard at the DG, which would include funds for soil work and an irrigation system for the orchard. Plans are to plant at least two varieties of all citrus, apples, persimmons and blackberries...

Brazosport College-Landscaping on the Go Series - Kathy Walton and Don Gerard are in the process of finalizing the class schedule. If you are interested in being an instructor, contact Don. Kathy is preparing a training session on presentation skills. The date will be announced as soon as it is set.

At the Demonstration Gardens:

New Gardens at the DG - One of the farmers who was at the farmers market said that he would turn soil for us for some new gardens. Plans are to install another veggie garden and a tropical garden.

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

Mark your calendars for these July work days:	July 2	July 6	July 9
	July 13	July 16	July 20
	July 23*	July 27	July 30

*Third Friday

Calendar of Events:

**see below for details*

new items in bold

2004 Dates:

July 1: Gardening with Nature
July 3: Trough Planters*
July 8: Rain Gardens - a Small Inexpensive Way to Deal with Flooding*
July 13: July Meeting
July 14: Beyond Butterflies*
July 17: Tropical Workshop*
July 17: The Natives are Friendly*
July 18: Hibiscus Show
July 22: Rain Gardens - a Small Inexpensive Way to Deal with Flooding*
July 23: Third Friday
July 24: Honeybees at Jesse Jones Park*
July 25: Dragonflys and Damselflies*
July 31: Plant the Fall Vegetable Garden*
August 10 : August Meeting
August 20: Third Friday
Sept 14: September Meeting
Sept 17: Third Friday
Sept 18: Fall Plant Sale
Oct 12: October Meeting
Oct 22: Third Friday

Nov 9: November Meeting
Nov 19: Third Friday
Dec 14: December Meeting
Dec 17: Third Friday

2005 Dates:

Jan 11: January Meeting
Feb 8: February Meeting
Mar 8: March Meeting
Apr 12: April Meeting
May 5: State MG Conference
May 10: May Meeting
June 14: June Meeting
July 12: July Meeting
Aug 9: August Meeting
Sept 13: September Meeting
Sept. 20-21: Landscape Design Study Course III*
Oct 11: October Meeting
Nov 8: November Meeting
Dec 13: December Meeting

Trough Planters - Date: July 3; Time: 10:00 a.m.; Location: Buchanan's Native Plants, 611 E. 11th, Houston; Phone: 713-861-5702. Presented by Becky Lane & Pam Owens, Buchanan's Staff. Learn how to make a Tufa Trough Planter with a demonstration by Pamela & Becky. Sign up for a future hands-on workshop and make your own trough planter.

Rain Gardens - a Small Inexpensive Way to Deal with Flooding - Dates: July 8; July 22; Time: 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.; Instructor: J. Kolenovsky; Location: City of Bellaire, Recreation Center, 5125 Laurel, Bellaire; Phone: 713-662-8280. Learn what a rain garden is, how to construct one, what they do and what plants can be planted in one. Find out how you can design one for your yard that is a representation of yourself. Learn how to build a simple one or a complex one. They can be quite inexpensive or as fancy as one likes. Learn how they offset subsidence and foundation shifting. Min 3 participants. 1 day. Fee: Res: \$20; NRes:\$30

Lunch Bunch: Beyond Butterflies - Date: July 14; Time: noon- 1:00 p.m. Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Eddie Holik with the Cockrell Butterfly Center will discuss the plants that attract bees, moths, birds, and beetles. Eddie also discusses why butterflies are not the only welcome visitors to the garden! Bring a sack lunch to enjoy during the program.

Tropical Workshop - Date: July 17; Time: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. This one-day workshop includes four speakers, lunch, a participants only plant sale, and a tour of Mercer's tropical garden. Local and out-of-town experts will discuss bamboo and why they can be a great addition to even a small landscape; palms and cycads to add a tropical or prehistoric look to your yard; root-hardy tropicals that will come back annually; and tender tropicals that take extra care, but are well worth the effort. Between lectures, participants can take a break and purchase a wonderful variety of select tropical plants for their home and landscape. Class size is limited to 50 individuals and reservations are guaranteed through payment on a first-come, first-served basis. The Mercer Society members fee is \$40 and the non-members fee is \$50. Make checks payable to The Mercer Society. To print a registration form in pdf visit: <http://www.cp4.hctx.net/mercerc/mprogram.htm#July>.

The Natives are Friendly - Date: July 17; Time: 11:00 a.m.; Location: Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6 Navasota; Phone: 936-870-4111. Native Plants Seminar presented by Tim Kiphart.

Honeybees at Jesse Jones Park - Date: July 24; Time: 2:00 p.m. Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Phone: 281-446-8588. Join a local beekeeper for a discussion and close look at the many facets of beekeeping. Peer into a working beehive and learn how bees create honey. For more information, call 281-446-8588. Free.

Urban Nature Series-Dragonflies & Damselflies - Date: July 25; Time: 2:00 p.m.; Location: Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway, Houston; Phone: 713-681-8433. Bob Honig will present a program on dragonflies and damselflies. The presentation, followed by a short walk, will focus on how these easily observed insects make their livings. Bob will discuss their life histories – including feeding, reproduction, and habitat – and introduce you to some of the common species in southeast Texas. Come hear about these fascinating and beautiful animals. Free.

Plant the Fall Vegetable Garden - Date: July 31; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). It is still hot, but experienced gardeners know that a great fall garden starts with preparation and effort now. Do the basics right this fall. Learn how to prepare the soil with compost and organic fertilizer; get the right seeds; transplant your tomatoes and other crops without killing them; grow great beans, corn, cabbage broccoli, lettuce and other crops. Dr. Bob Randall is author of Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers for Metro-Houston. Diana Liga has her B.S. in Horticulture from Texas A&M and is staff horticulturist and community gardens coordinator for Urban Harvest. \$20, \$10 for members, free for community gardeners.

Landscape Design Study Course III - Date: September 20-21; Location: Christ United Methodist Church, 4201 State Hwy 6, College Station, TX 77845; Presented by the Texas Garden Clubs, Incorporated & Texas Cooperative Extension.

This is the third in the Landscape Design Study Course series which is offered in four separate schools, approximately six months apart, in the Bryan-College Station area. Participants may take the four courses in any sequence. Garden Club members, Master Gardeners, nurserymen and others who are interested in furthering their knowledge of landscape design are welcome to attend.

This year a very interesting Special Topic lecture, 'Decorating with Gourds,' will be presented by Mrs. Betty Kent of New Ulm, Texas.

Master Gardeners who complete a course may apply 12 hours of credit to their requirements for continuing education. Members of Texas garden clubs affiliated with Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. who successfully pass the examination for all four courses are eligible to become nationally accredited Landscape Design Consultants. Texas Certified Nursery Professionals who pass the course may apply this to their requirement for recertification with the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association (TNLA).

Registration materials may also 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 l-sebesta@tamu.edu. After June 15th you may also download the application form at: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/sglandex2.html>

Registration for the course will be \$75 (two lunches included). The text, good for all four courses, is Stewards of the Land, and may be purchased for an additional \$40. The book will be reserved for participants to pick up the first morning of the course. This text replaces in large part the syllabus which accompanied the course in previous years.

Overnight accommodations have been reserved for course participants at Quality Suites, 1010 University Drive, College Station, Tx 77840 (979) 695-9500 (\$76.00) and Manor House Inn, 2504 Texas Avenue South, College Station, Tx 77840, (979) 764-9540 (\$56.00).

Call Extension Horticulture (979) 845-7344 (Cynthia Mueller) (979)845-7342 (Lenora Sebesta), Texas A&M University, or Mrs. Nell Zeigler, Chairman, at (254) 865-2904 if you have any questions.

News and Notes from the Coordinator:

from Paula Craig, CEA

The heat of the summer is upon us, vegetable gardens are playing out and all this rain has brought out mosquitoes by the score. Still, in this most oppressive of Texas summers, a loyal contingent of Master Gardeners arrives every Tuesday and Friday at the gardens to plant and weed and mow. Thanks to all of you.

Thanks also to everyone who helped with the open house and vegetable show. It went very well and the newspaper coverage was great.

Coming up are some fall seminars and an herb fest. If you have any special topics you would like to see covered, please let me know. There are also plans for a volunteer training on PowerPoint presentations and one on effective speaking. We will have more information at the next meeting.

Don't let me forget to thank John Alcorn and Ann McLain for preparing a grant application to DOW for a new fruit orchard. Keep your fingers crossed. Finally, thanks to our newsletter editor, Anna Gawlik, for a wonderful publication.

See y'all at the meeting!

News to Know:

Future Speakers - Our July speaker will be Don Oates who will discuss and demonstrate how to "plant" and grow Stag Horn ferns. For August, we will have Mark Walton speaking on plant breeding and genetics.

Volunteer Position Open - Master Gardener Program Coordinator:

In order to have seminars available for the community, we really need someone to fill this position. Here's the description of the Program Coordinator's responsibilities:

- I. Duties
 1. Select topics for public educational seminars/workshops and for Master Gardener advanced training other than that offered at monthly meetings.
 2. Coordinate with extension secretary Sherry Linnet to reserve the auditorium and any equipment needed.
 3. Determine fee, if any, to be charged. This will depend on where the event is held, whether or not there will be refreshments, whether or not the speaker charges a fee, etc.
 4. Coordinate with Sandra Smith on flyers, mail-outs, news releases, sign-in sheet, registration forms and copying of any materials.
 5. Provide refreshments.
 6. Set up equipment, sign-in sheets, handouts and registration table.
 7. Clean up and close up.

Any or all of the above listed duties may be delegated to committee members and or volunteers. However, ultimate responsibility rests with the coordinator.

- II. Planning and Reporting
 1. Meet with the horticulture agent and the Master Gardener Association President to discuss program plans.
 2. Attend Master Gardener executive board meetings to give progress reports and to discuss program outcomes.
 3. Report to the horticulture agent on all duties listed above. The agent must okay topic, speaker, date and time, etc. before the event is put on the Extension Office calendar.
 4. Submit approximate date, topic and location of events for the upcoming calendar year to the horticulture agent by September 1st of the current year.
 5. Turn all sign-in sheets to Sandra Smith following an event.

It's easy to volunteer for this position. Just call or email John Alcorn or Don Gerard and let them know.

Garden Checklist - July/August:

- ✿ Caladiums require plenty of water at this time of year if they are to remain lush and active until fall. Fertilize with 21-0-0 at the rate of 1/3 to 1/2 pounds per 100 square feet of bed area and water thoroughly.
- ✿ Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions.
- ✿ Prune dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning from now until mid-winter. Severe pruning now will only stimulate tender new growth prior to frost.
- ✿ Grow gourds for birdhouses.
- ✿ In August, sow seeds of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, calendulas, and other winter flowers in flats for planting outside in mid- to late fall.
- ✿ It's time to divide spring flowering plants such as irises, Shasta daisies, ox-eye daisies, gaillardias, cannas, daylilies, violets, liriopes, and ajugas.
- ✿ Plant bluebonnet seeds in August. This winter annual must germinate in late summer or early fall, develop a good root system, and be ready to grow in spring when the weather warms. Plant the seeds in well prepared soil, 1/2 inch deep, and water thoroughly.
- ✿ Make your selections and place your orders for spring flowering bulbs to arrive in time for planting in October and November.
- ✿ Mid-summer pruning of rose bushes can be beneficial. Prune out dead canes and any weak, brushy-type growth. Cut back tall, vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning, apply a complete fertilizer, and water thoroughly. If a preventive disease-control program has been maintained, your rose bushes should be ready to provide an excellent crop of flowers this fall.
- ✿ Establish a new compost pile for the fall leaf accumulation.
- ✿ Picking flowers frequently encourages most annuals and perennials to flower even more abundantly.
- ✿ It is not too late to set out another planting of many warm-season annuals such as marigolds, zinnias, and periwinkles. They will require extra attention for the first few weeks but should provide color during late September, October, and November.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/jul03/art3jul.html>
Date: June 23, 2004

On the Herbal Side:

from DiAnna Munson

Many culinary herbs like fennel, rosemary, and cumin belong to a group of herbs called carminatives. These herbs contain volatile oils that not only enhance the flavor, but also increase the digestibility of the food. This is one of the benefits of cooking with herbs: they improve taste plus adding medicinal qualities. Recently published research has shown that cilantro and cinnamon have a regulating effect on blood sugar levels; turmeric is an anti-inflammatory and is soothing to the digestive system; coriander helps quiet spasm in the stomach. Included in the article was the following recipe for Fresh Coriander Chutney. This chutney is a wonderful detoxifier that will improve digestion.

Fresh Coriander Chutney

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup water

1 bunch fresh coriander leaves and stems, chopped fine

1/4 cup grated coconut
2 T. fresh grated gingerroot, chopped
1 t. honey
1 t. salt
1/4 t. fresh-ground black pepper

Blend well until it forms a paste. Can be stored, covered, in refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Reflections from the Garden Goddess:

from Lee Withers

It's RAINING! Yes - it's raining again! Not just sprinkling, but pouring in giant buckets - huge sheets of the wet stuff. It never really sprinkles here along these northern reaches of the Coastal Plain of Texas. Unless you call that brief initial few drops before the bottom drops out a sprinkle. I just call that the Two Minute Warning. It's like the one in a football game except it's not signaling the game is about to be over. It's telling you that you had better drop whatever you are doing or grab it quick and run like the dickens or you are going to get drenched.

Of course, I have to be different. I have been known to keep working out in the rain - you see my Daddy told me at times he thought I hardly had sense to get out of the rain (that was mostly during my teenage years when I was trying to find myself), but now I do it on purpose - probably to irritate my husband at times. You see, it does give him something to do - fuss at me about getting wet and telling me for the forty-seventh hundredth time that I am going to catch my death of cold. I never do -

Even though rain is good for my garden I sure think it makes it hard to get anything done outside which is a major problem for me. I would rather dig a ditch (which I have dug several lately) than be inside doing housework. Yard work is much more preferable than housework, at least that is what I have concluded about myself and my husband agrees. Getting sweaty and dirty is much more desirable than wearing an apron and appearing proper. My most time-consuming project to date is an example of that self proclaimed conclusion.

That project would be the DRAINAGE PROJECT from H - E - Double L. You see it all began about the time I started the Master Gardening course in January this year. After a few classes we had Carol Commack talk to us about landscaping design and she pounded in my head about planning and taking care of drainage problems before you began planting. Well one out of two ain't bad - I could plan it and if I did that well maybe my drowning plants would survive.

I knew I had a problem with too much water from the first time it rained after we moved to this property two years ago. You would have thought the black front sidewalk and the circle concrete step stones placed on top of the sidewalk would have been a major clue to this problem but I guess I wasn't paying close attention. Not one of my brighter moments. Well after the first heavy rains came whereby you could have floated a boat to the front door I realized that something major had to be done. Not only could you have floated an armada to the front door, but for several days later water stayed on most of the front sidewalk and the adjacent parts of the driveway. Something drastic had to be done.

So after much thought and little real research I began digging the smaller version of the Panama Canal. I first thought about digging a trench to the street and let it drain into the front ditches but the ditches were small. The thing that really stopped me was when I rented the Ditch Witch (I know why it's called a witch now). That was a site to behold - me - all of 5'4" trying to shove this humongous piece of equipment and make it do what I wanted it to do. After some interesting discussions with that witch, (in the rain-of course) and finally calling out the BIG GUY (my son), I gave up, and finally he did too - the tree roots and the mud got to us both. I realized that a higher being was trying to tell me that I was going about this the wrong way and I literally was. So I headed the opposite direction.

I headed to the back of the property which backs up the Cowards Creek (really BIG ditch) with my trench, bought me a special shovel just for digging such a creature and sent back the DITCH WITCH and began digging. It was now February and raining like it is now so that was good for digging - Soft ground you see - sometimes too soft. What a funny slurping sound the mud makes sometimes - like the sounds in some old monster movie where the monster is sucking all the brains out of the people. Well my teenagers, some of their friends and myself dug over 200 feet of trench and some of it was in the rain. Then the Little Red Hen in me really got to working. Several loads of pea gravel in my Daddy's truck (he thought I was holding it hostage for a while), lots of trips to the

hardware store for pumps, pipe, connectors (couplings for you real plumbers) and lots of other various and sundry parts and finally about two months later the project was finished. The pipe in the trench was covered, glued first, pipe shot under the slab; pump was wired and ready to go. When I got stuck on the engineering side a call to Engineer Senior (my daddy) from Engineer Junior (me) cleared it up quickly. All it had to do was rain to prove to me (really my husband) that it was all worth it.

So you see it's really not so bad it's raining at my house. The water fills my trenches into the black corrugated pipe, travels across and under the driveway slab to my big bucket buried beside the driveway and the sump pumps it to the creek. Every now and again I go outside and move the big rock I placed over the sump pump and admire my work. I've been seen standing out in the rain with my big golf umbrella, (makes my husband happy for me to do what he thinks I should do) looking down into the big bucket that holds my sump pump and watching it fill up and go kew-chewsh, kew-chewsh, kew-chewsh. These sounds bring a big smile of satisfaction to this quirky woman. I know what they mean when someone says "happy as a clam."

Give it a Grow:

from Suzanne Jerabeck

Vines. Glorious vines. They come in every color, shape and size. From the simple cypress and sweet pea vines to the showy Mexican flame and sky flower vines, the array of climbers available today makes it easier than ever to create awesome garden focal points, embellish fences, hide eyesores, lure butterflies and bees, and even screen out the sun. But, some of the lesser-known varieties are well worth growing, too.

I joined the Master Gardeners (Class of '99) as an avid vegetable and edible flower grower. It was practical, after all. My plants not only bloomed, but gave me food to eat. The only ornamentals I planted were to ward off nematodes. Then along came Carol. Her flower gardens were magical. But her vines were, well, DIVINE! Just one visit turned my gardening world upside down.

That was nearly five years ago. My job and family leave little time to garden, but I love experimenting with vines. Several years ago Ebay's auction provided me with a cache of interesting seeds from all over the world, including the horned melon vine. It certainly lived up to its name as this invasive beast took less than two months to completely devour my vegetable garden! Plus, when the curious-looking fruits grew to about three inches in diameter, the entire vine shriveled up and died from what I think now was powdery mildew. (Need to add this to "What NOT To Plant In Brazoria County list!")

But one of those Internet buys was a real winner. The Ipomoea (Mina) lobata 'bicolor' (also called Exotic Love, Spanish Flag and Firecracker) vine turned out to be a one-of-a-kind beauty! It's one of those steady growers that you hardly notice except for its dark green foliage with an unusual fleur de lis shape. But, watch out. One day in late summer (when you least expect it) this vine will knock your socks off with hundreds of exotic arching sprays of yellow and red with up to 12 beautiful 2" tubular flowers on each spike. I could almost swear it bloomed for nearly a month or more. It was gorgeous!

This vine takes a little work up front, though. First, you'll need to scarify and soak the seed in water for 12-24 hours before planting in sandy, well-drained soil. It's also important that you use peat pots or plant seeds directly in soil to avoid disturbing the roots. Ipomoea (Mina) lobata needs full or part sun and prefers continuously moist (not wet) soil. Plus, you'll get faster growth and more blooms when the roots are constricted, as in a pot.

No need to tie this compact, twining vine. It is very well behaved and easily attaches itself to any support you provide. Grow it on a trellis, a fence, or even in a hanging basket. Expect on average a 6-8 feet height. Mine grew to about 6' in a 15" clay pot in part sun (mostly hot afternoon). Even though a trellis was nearby, the vine ultimately used my cuphea bush for support.

If you're a bit adventurous, try it. I'll guarantee -- from such little effort will come a big reward! A limited amount of seed will be available to share at the July monthly meeting.

Happy Birthday!

Happy July Birthday Wishes...

Ruth Tvedt - July 22

Larry Lewis - July 23

Lillie Licklider - July 25

Gary Gardner - July 26

Thanks - Anna Gawlik, Editor

Happy Gardening!!!

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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