

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

August 2005

Vol. 5, Iss. 3

OK - Here is the August newsletter. I tried really hard to get it out before the September meeting, but just didn't do it. Since it's so late, I decided to put it on the website only, and I will start the next one right away and hopefully get it out before the October meeting! Wish me luck!

At the Meeting:

In Memory of Dick Merrifield - BCMGA gave \$50 to Keep Pearland Beautiful for a tree to be planted at the Pearland Recycling Center as a memorial for Dick. If you want to make a donation in Dick's name, you can do so to BCMGA or the American Cancer Society.

Job Openings Filled - Since Kathy Walton left, two people have stepped up to take over her duties. Christine Kern is now our advertising/marketing person and Donie Stowers is the Interim 2nd VP of Programs.

Brazosport College Classes - We will continue to have classes through Brazosport even though Kathy is not there anymore. They will be coordinated through Gemi Powell.

Extension Office Beds - Intern, Shannon Foley, has volunteered to take over the care of the Extension Office beds. If you are interested in helping, she would love to have you come out. Just give her a call.

Fall Plant Sale - The Plant Sale is September 24. Put that date on your calendar, so you can come out to help. If you have plants that are in pots, bring them out to the greenhouse. It's too late and has been too hot to propagate anything, so we'll have to purchase most of the plants for the sale. Caldwell's will be donating a bunch of roses as they are closing their doors.

Barbara Brown gave thanks to Ray and company for installing the sprinkler systems. The plants thank them also.

File Cabinet - BCMGA will be purchasing a locking file cabinet for our files. I guess they have little feet and periodically wander off. This way they will be captured and can only be released with the special key that is in the hands of the President, 1st VP and Ann McLain.

Flower Fund - The fund needs to be replenished. If you want to donate some money toward it, Barbara Ross is collecting.

At the Demonstration Gardens:

from Ray Michalik

The sprinkler system is completed and working fine in the shade house. Barbra B. is very happy with it.

Jesse plowed the ground where we will plant the new garden. It needs a lot more work though, as it hasn't been worked in many years. Henry sprayed it with roundup to help kill the grass. The garden spot directly east/next to the rainbow building has been covered with plastic to solar kill all seeds and whatever in prep of using it for organic gardening.

The Angleton Chamber of Commerce approached us about two weeks ago looking for a place to store and keep watered 300 crepe myrtles that were donated to them, so we prepared them a spot. In appreciation they will give us 25 to sell at our fall plant sale and we will make \$5.00 off of each sale. They will also insert a flier in each brochure they send out to their members, which is about 500, advertising our fall plant sale.

Also the county and TAMU were to sign the agreement on the grounds where we are in September. Judge Willy has it in his office and is supposed to put on the commissioners court agenda for this month.

For the people who weren't at the meeting when John made the announcement, Dow turned us down on the grant we applied for. Gary Gardner has done a lot of preliminary work on the irrigation system for the citrus orchard, but has come to a stand still since we didn't get the Dow grant and the county and A&M haven't signed the long term agreement.

Caldwell's Nursery in Rosenberg was getting out of the rose business, and Katie asked us if we wanted some roses. So several of us went there and picked up 450 potted (3 or 4 gal.) potted roses for free. We'll be selling them at our plant sales in the future. Update on the county and tamu signing of the land agreement.

Work Days - Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:30/8:00 a.m. until noon. Feel free to come out on non-workdays. You'll always be able to find some weeds to pull if nothing else!

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

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| September 2 | September 6 | September 9 |
| September 13 | September 16 | September 20 |
| September 23 | September 27 | September 30 |

Calendar of Events:

NOTE: Normally there is a huge list of events going on with descriptions of what they are and how you can find out more information on them. The calendar of events is actually the most time consuming part of the newsletter, and I was unable to do it for this month. Hopefully, I'll be able to do it next month.

If anyone is interested in helping me with the Calendar of Events, please email me. I'll always take help with the newsletter. It just takes time looking at various websites and doing a short writeup of the event - mostly cutting and pasting. At the same time you could keep track of the events and related urls so I could fairly quickly put it on the web.

Fall Plant Sale - September 24 - BE THERE!!!

2005 Meeting Dates -
Sept 13: September Meeting
Oct 11: October Meeting
Nov 8: November Meeting
Dec 13: December Meeting

Wetland Garden Workday - Sea Center Texas needs volunteers to assist with maintenance of their hummingbird and wildflower gardens. They will start having garden workdays on the third Thursday of each month.

Anyone interested in helping is invited. Meet at the Sea Center Texas wetland walkway on Thursday, September 15 at 8:00 a.m. If you have gloves and a pair of garden trimmers, please bring them along. They plan to work until noon. There will be plenty of drinks and snacks for everyone willing to help.

If you have any questions you can contact Connie at 979-292-0100 ext 23 or by email at connie.stolte@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Matt Family Orchard - As of July 16th we are picking figs, six different varieties. Figs will be in season through September. Asian dates (Jujube) are getting ripe, should have a large supply by July 22nd. Very popular fruit, may be sold out by mid August. We have four varieties. Asian Pear (Hosui) will be ready around mid August. Short supply this year. Asian Persimmon will be ready for picking first of October. Trees are loaded with fruit this year. We have four varieties. Persimmon season will last through November. Satsuma and other citrus fruit will be ready late October through late November. Our Pumpkin Patch opens around the first of October and closes November 1st. Tours and Harvest Festival can be booked at anytime of the year. A minimum of 15 is required for a tour.

Matt Family Orchard , Rick Matt, 21110 Bauer Hockley Road, Tomball, Texas 77377-5767, 281-351-7676, 281-467-9758, Fax: 281-255-5576, www.mattfamilyorchard.com.

Master Composter Class - Keep Pearland Beautiful will sponsor a Master Composter Class on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Pearland College Center, 2319 N. Grand Boulevard. The instructor will be Karen Overgaard of Overgaard and Associates consulting firm. Karen has conducted classes for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Houston-Galveston Area Council and numerous cities and other governmental entities in Texas. At the conclusion of the two-day class, participants will be asked to do 20 hours of community service prior to receiving certification as Texas Master Composters. The cost for the class is \$45. For more information or to register, call the KPB office, 281-652-1659.

Southeast Texas Regional Master Gardener Conference - Montgomery County is hosting this conference. It will be held November 4-5. For more information, you can check out their website at: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/montgomery/Regional%20Conference.htm> or call them at: 281-354-8985.

News to Know:

Volunteer Hours - Don Gerard is bored and is hoping that some of us will turn in our hours. Apparently his spreadsheet is pretty empty. Take a minute and get your hours together, so Don will have something to do!

2005 Graduating Class - Congratulations to our 2005 MG Class:

Dorothy Babbington
Cathy Chalfant
Lisa Darby
Edna Davis
George Gabriles
Louise Head
Jesse Knight
Elizabeth Lee
Vanessa Lovett
Bernadette Maness
Michelle McClane
Ann McLain
Dick Merrifield (deceased)
Maureen Moulden
Betty Van Hoeven
Mary Anna Vance
Lee Withers

Help Wanted - I'm accepting help with the newsletter from anyone who is interested. In addition to helping do the "Calendar of Events" section, I have an opening for the "Meet a Master Gardener" column. All it involves is interviewing other MGs and write a little about them. It would be nice if you could take a digital photo of the interviewee, so we know what they look like. If you think this sounds like your kind of thing, send me an email or call me. Of course, if you would like to another type of column, that would be great also!

Who's Doing What - OK - There have been some changes in jobs and some new ones added, so John has supplied me with a current list of who's doing what:

Officers:

2nd Vice President Programs: Donie Stowers
-all other officers remain the same as voted last year

Committee Chairs:

Spring Plant Sale: Barbara Brown, Carol Farmer
Green House: Ray Michalik

Jr. MG: Jessie Knight
Newsletter: Anna Gawlik
Extension Beds: Shannon Foley
Chairman of Marketing: Christine Kern
MG Training Classes: Shannon Foley
Flower Fund: Barbara Ross
State Committee: Pam and David Peltier
Chairmen of Seminars: Ann McLain
Systems Analyst: Ann McLain
Audit Committee: Patty Varnado, Ray Michalik, Gil Livanec
Scholarship Committee: Barbara Brown, Sandy Taylor

News and Notes from the Coordinator:

First, let me say WELCOME BACK ANNA! And thank you for continuing as our Editor in Chief (even though I bet two boys are at least twice as hard as one). Some quick notes:

- ✿ The fall plant sale is just ahead of us. I hope that the majority of you can and will attend the pre-game preparations on Friday, September 23 as well as the sale itself. Please think about donating a portion of the proceeds to Katrina recovery.
- ✿ Upcoming horticulture programs include:
 - ✿ "Small Acreage Horticulture Business for Beginners" on October 19, 6 to 9 p.m. Various speakers will discuss tax exemptions, potential crops, growing methods and license requirements.
 - ✿ Holiday Ideas, on November 1, 6-8 p.m. This is a joint program between the Horticulture and Family & Consumer Sciences departments and will feature recipes, decorating, crafts and the latest trend in gifting.
 - ✿ Holiday Herbs, on November 15 will feature the talents of our own DiAnna Munson, Ann McClain and Lee Withers. Lee hasn't said 'yes' just yet, but I'm hoping she will.
- ✿ We at the Extension Office are watching our county email, hoping to see the Texas Agriculture Experiment Station (site of our demo gardens) on the next Brazoria County Commissioner's Court agenda. Once the court has approved the lease agreement with Texas Cooperative Extension, the lease will go to the Texas A&M Board of Regents for final approval. The board meets at the end of September.
- ✿ Brazoria County Extension will hold a Volunteer Appreciation Bar-B-Q at the Demo Gardens on October 6, beginning at 6:30 p.m. John Alcorn has graciously offered to cook the burgers and dogs. All Extension volunteers and their families are invited.
- ✿ Every Monday in October from 3 to 4 p.m. at Northway Baptist Church in Angleton I will be holding gardening classes for 8-12 year olds. If you would like to help us build terraria, cactus gardens, herb baskets and other fun stuff, please let me know.
- ✿ The Freeport Garden Club visited the Demo Gardens on September 8, 2005. The ladies had such a great time, they stayed for over 3 hours and went home with plants, seeds and cuttings.

Prayers for the evacuees.

Prayers, love and hope for the Cooper family.

On the Herbal Side - De-Stress Yourself for Your Own Good:

from DiAnna Munson

Cont. from February...

Chronic illnesses have been linked to viral and bacterial infections, accidents, autoimmune diseases like arthritis, hypothyroidism, exposure to synthetic chemicals, and heavy metal poisoning.

The one clear fact is that many toxic environmental influences can cause immune suppression in individuals who have become run-down through constant stress, times of heavy emotional upsets, poor nutrition and hereditary factors. Because we can not avoid all these toxic influences, it is important to strengthen ourselves at the source with many healthy habits gained through awareness and constant practice.

Genetically, we are who we are. If we are born with the predisposition to a certain illness, there may be nothing that we can do to change that specific weakness. However, there is one wonderful thing about nature and our incredible bodies: we are all designed to be healthy. People get sick either because of what they are doing to themselves or because of what someone or something else is doing to them. The symptoms they get are a result of their bodies' best efforts to return to a state of health. For example, the symptoms of a cold actually are the body's attempt to cure itself. A fever is there for a reason – to kill the virus. The nasal discharge is there to flush out the toxins that accumulate in your body during the illness. When you suppress these events with fever-reducing medications or antihistamines you are suppressing the body's effort to return to health. In more complicated illnesses, the answers are usually still there, they are just harder to see.

This is where prevention comes into play. Make the most of what you do have, and the rest will take care of itself. This means in your daily living you need to eat a variety of foods and spices, drink plenty of clean water, get your heart rate up, smile and laugh at the fun things that come your way, be thankful for what you have and the friends that you can share your life and dreams with.

As members of this group, we have 90% of everything Dr. Chong listed for a healthy life; good friends, good food, good attitudes and good activities. Good for us!

In The Garden - Floral Clocks:

from Ann McLain

I have always been fascinated with floral clocks, those improbable flower beds that keep time. When I was a child going for drives around northern Ohio with my parents, one of the best parts was stopping at county courthouses to admire the gardens. Our part of Ohio was still very rural. In some of those counties the county seat wasn't the biggest town in the county, it was the only town. So there were a lot of traditional courthouse squares that still had all the amenities. Big courthouse, usually limestone, centered in a generous square of lawn. Lots of big trees, mostly American elms. Old cannons and war memorials, often one on each corner. Flowers spilling out of cast iron urns on the steps. Cast iron benches along the sidewalks, complete with old codgers spitting tobacco. Patterned flower beds, perfectly trimmed. Sometimes one of the beds spelled out the name of the county, or the town, or said "Welcome". Sometimes the bed on the other side of the sidewalk was a floral clock.

The original floral clock was something quite different from those carpet-bedded delights. Linnaeus worked out a flower clock, based on plant movements, in eighteenth century. We know him today as the guy who set up the modern plant classification system, but he taught medical botany at Uppsala University in Sweden, and he was a very enthusiastic gardener with a very big and diverse garden. Other gardeners had long known that some flowers open and close daily at fairly regular times. The common names of some plants reflect that, such as morning glory or four o'clock. Linnaeus watched his plants very closely, and kept careful records of exactly when flowers opened. He proposed that it would be possible to set out a bed of these time-keeping plants that would tell us exactly what the hour was. For instance, "it's a bit past dandelion but not yet calendula." That sort of thing.

Unfortunately, various plant cultivars may differ from the original wild form in their opening times – after all, we breed them to be open longer. Environmental conditions also alter the responsiveness of the flowers; on a cloudy day some flowers don't open, or don't close. In many cases, once the flower has been pollinated, it no longer closes. And if it doesn't close, it can't open again at the appointed hour. On top of all these wrenches in the clockworks, the factor that triggers flower movements is often linked to day length. So as we move from spring equinox to summer solstice, the hour of dandelion gets earlier and earlier, relative to the hour measured by a mechanical clock. It's no wonder that the Linnaean flower clock never really caught on.

Back to those charming floral clocks on the courthouse lawn. Most floral clocks are laid out to be a decorative clock face, with an actual mechanical clockworks and hands set into the center. Floral clocks generally are tipped at an angle. They're hard to read if they are flat on the ground, unless they are quite small. On the other hand, a

planted bed imitating a vertical clock face would be a challenge, considering the requirements of soil and water. So slanted is the only practical option.

In addition to the necessary numbers on the clock, there is usually a decorative border around the outer edge and patterns on the face. All of these features need to be planted with the sort of plant material you would use in a small knot garden: compact plants that grow densely and slowly. The plants need to look good even after frequent trimming, and that usually means a plant with small leaves. It's nice if the plants naturally grow uniformly in shape and size; it definitely spoils the look if one plant suddenly starts growing faster or changes its texture. And it's also nice if the plants can be found in a range of colors that can form those patterns.

The most extravagant floral clock I have ever seen was in Guelph, Ontario. The good folks in Canada seem to be very enthusiastic gardeners, and their public spaces are crammed with flowers during those few months when it isn't snowing. The floral clock there was huge, perhaps 30 feet across. It was nestled against a small hill, and a walkway traveled around its rim, so the visitor could look down on the face from all angles. The numbers on this clock were made with the rosettes of hen-and-chicks, so you can get an idea of the scale. Just over the hill was a small greenhouse, where the spare parts were grown. This clock not only told the viewer the time, it also delivered the day and date. This is where the spare parts came into play. The letters and numbers needed for the date were grown individually in neat little metal trays, and mulched with white gravel. Each morning the gardener simply lifted the out of date bits from the day before and inserted the appropriate new trays to change the date.

The attention to detail required by a floral clock is beyond the budget, patience, and skill of any but the most devoted gardeners these days, and so they have largely disappeared from public places. That marvelous clock in Guelph was in a public park, but it was established as a memorial to a favorite son, and I think it was privately endowed. I hope it still ticks on.

As I was writing this, I Googled on "floral clock" and discovered something surprising. I found several companies that will sell you the weatherproof clockworks for your very own floral clock. You even have a choice of solid hands or ones that are planting trays so that they can be flower-covered too. And there are some pictures. Wow! Floral clocks may be having a comeback! (If you know of any floral clocks in this part of Texas, please let me know. I feel a road trip coming on.)

Groovy Gardener News:

From Viki Brushwood

JMG Groovy Gardeners will be starting up again in September meeting the third Friday of the month from 2:00 to 3:30 at the Extension Office. We will be studying "Operation Thistle" which is the level 2 handbook. It is great for the kids to be so excited about gardening!

Garden Checklist:

by Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University

- ✿ Rejuvenate heat stressed geraniums and begonias for the fall season by lightly pruning, fertilizing, and watering.
- ✿ Caladiums require plenty of water at this time of year if they are to remain lush and attractive until fall. Fertilize with ammonium sulfate at the rate of 1/3 to 1/2 pound 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.
- ✿ Remove weak, unproductive growth from crape myrtles and roses to stimulate new growth for all beauty.
- ✿ Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning until midwinter. Pruning now may stimulate tender growth prior to frost.
- ✿ Sow seeds of snapdragons, pinks, pansies, and other winter flowers in flats for planting outside during mid to late fall.

- ✿ Prepare the beds for spring flowering bulbs as soon as possible. It's important to cultivate the soil and add generous amounts of organic matter to improve the water drainage. Bulbs will rot without proper drainage.
- ✿ Divide spring flowering perennials such as irises, shasta and oxeve daisies, gaillardias, canna lilies, daylilies, violets, liriopes, and ajugas.
- ✿ Fertilize and groom verbenas, perennial salvias and lantanas by lightly pruning and removing non-vigorous wood, to stimulate a long and productive fall season.
- ✿ Christmas cacti can be made to flower by supplying 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness and cool nights (55 degrees F) for a month starting in mid-October. Keep plants on the dry side for a month prior to the treatment.
- ✿ As they begin to dry naturally on the plants, cut ornamental gourds and store in a well ventilated, dry place for several weeks prior to use.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/sept05/GdnCkl9,5.html>

Date: September 9, 2005

Happy Birthday!

Happy September Birthday Wishes...

Ray Michalik - Sept. 4

John Alcorn - Sept. 9

Beverly Straughan - Sept. 9

Mark Snyder - Sept. 10

Leroy Walker - Sept. 10

Barbara Ross - Sept. 12

Heather Vincent - Sept. 13

Mary Lou Christi - Sept. 21

Carole Wenny - Sept. 26

Wow! - That's a lot of birthdays!!!!

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.



Paula Craig
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Brazoria CountyBrazoria