

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

December 2005

Vol. 5, Iss. 6

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

2006 Executive Board Election:

Introducing the 2006 Executive Board

President - George Gabriles

1st VP/ Volunteer Coordinator - Gary Gardner

2nd VP/Advance Training programs for MG monthly meetings - Christine Kern

Treasurer - Ted Jagen

Secretary - Judy Wood

From the Program Committee

from Ann McLain

We've been talking about how we can get a broader audience to come to our events. Sometimes we feel like we are preaching to the choir, and we think we should be doing more to help inexperienced gardeners learn to have fun growing things in Brazoria County.

In aid of this goal, we are planning several events for 2006 that we hope will expand our audience. The first one is coming up on January 21, and we hope all of our members will join in, as volunteers or simply as attendees.

This first event is tentatively being called the Pruning Party. It will be on Saturday morning, January 21, from 10 am to noon, at the demonstration garden. There will be two main attractions: a pruning workshop from 10-11, and a rose tour from 11-noon. At the same time as these events, there will be information tables featuring handouts about what to do in the garden at this time of year, best varieties to grow in our area, and much more. There will a station where visitors can learn more about pruning tools. There will be general tours of the gardens. And there will be refreshments.

What we need from the Master Gardeners, apart from focusing all your good thoughts on making it a nice day, is the following. We need help in tidying the gardens and setting up for the event. We need volunteers who can help with the information tables, who will lead general tours, who can serve refreshments. We particularly need all the help we can get in publicizing the event.

The committee is planning at least two more similar events through the year, and we would welcome good ideas, volunteers, whatever. Join us! And if you have any suggestions about publicity, or if you would like to volunteer for the Pruning Party, please contact Paula (p-craig@tamu.edu or 979-864-1564) or Ann (amclain@annsgarden.com, or 979-798-2284).

Fall Plant Sale Update:

from Ted Jagen

We netted \$1400 from the Fall sale. By comparison, the Spring sale brought in \$7500. While the rescheduling due to Rita had a major impact on buyer turnout, we have always made significantly less in the fall than in the spring. Given the amount of work involved in preparing for a sale, most of which is done by the same small group of members, and the difficulty in maintaining sale plants through the summer heat, it was decided that the payback wasn't worth the effort of continuing the Fall sale. It will be replaced by a fruit tree sale to be held in

February, which will be coordinated by Gil Livanec. Our great success with the citrus sale this year with a limited selection and no advertising gives us every reason to believe that it will be very successful.

Budget Meeting:

from Ted Jagen

The annual MG budgeting process was kicked off with a planning meeting held on November 29. There was a good turnout to consider recommendations by the committee chairs for 2006 funding for their areas. Proposals for new projects and major purchases during the year were also discussed with agreement to include in the budget the estimated cost of purchasing a garden tractor; creating new memorial, cactus, vegetable, and earthkind rose gardens; and building a pergola and leveling the slab between the greenhouse and the herb garden. Additional items were proposed for which cost estimates are still pending. The budget will be finalized and presented to the Board for approval on December 13 at 5:30 pm, prior to the Christmas party.

Fruit Study Group

from Gary Gardener

As most of you know, there is a "Fruit Study Group" that is made up of mostly BCMGA members, but is also open to other interested people. There was \$2,000 in the 2005 BCMGA budget to develop a demonstration fruit orchard at the old A&M Experiment Station property. None of this money was spent this year since we didn't want to expend the money and labor without assurance that we could use this property long-term. We now think that an agreement to assure this long-term use is imminent. At the November 29, 2005, BCMGA budget planning meeting, not a person was in attendance to champion this project. Most of the people in attendance were making sure funds got in the budget for their pet projects, but most would be happy to see this project just go away, especially if it would mean less funds for their projects. I asked who was the chair of this group and was told it didn't currently have one. I did then volunteer to become the chair of this group and provide a request for 2006 funds for a fruit orchard infrastructure.

To carry this project forward will require a critical group of members willing to put in the time required. This will include clearing land, installing some underground water distribution piping, helping design the orchard, selecting varieties to plant and continued care. Later activities may include greenhouse construction, root stock propagation, grafting, irrigation installation, weekly spraying and weed control. I think this can be a great project that can be one of the premier if not the premier endeavor of BCMGA. Currently the focus is citrus fruit, stone fruit and berries. I propose that we expand this to also include nuts. A name change of the group may also be in order. I have always been partial to horticulture efforts that result in something one can eat, make jam and jelly out of or ferment.

Current members of this group, are you willing to work on it to make it happen?

Non-members of this group, do you want to join and help us make it happen?

Please contact me to register your interest if you haven't already done so:

Gary L. Gardner Sr., 1st VP BCMGA
120 Post Oak Rd.
Lake Jackson, Texas 77566
979-297-2366 home
979-480-4424 mobile
glgardne@quik.com email

At the Demonstration Gardens:

from Ray Michalik

A load of crushed granite gravel was purchased and delivered. Part of it was spread under the shade house where the plants will be kept in the summer. Before it was spread, ground cover was put down so the grass hopefully will not grow up through the gravel. Also, landscape timbers were put down from one end to the other to form walk ways between the plants. Now there will be no more broken down pallets in the shade house. Thanks to Barbara Brown - her idea has really made the shade house look good and very professional.

We also need to thank Jesse Knight for bringing his tractor and equipment out. He did a lot of work on the new veggie garden spot and also plowed the spot for Paula and her project. Jesse cut ditches around the veggie garden in hopes of draining water, should we get more rain than needed this winter.

There have been many cuttings, bulbs and seeds planted in the greenhouse. Also rose cuttings have been planted outside on the east side of the greenhouse. Mike Mayfield, who will be taking the spring MG class, has been coming out and bringing many cuttings and daylily bulbs out for us to plant. He is our daylily expert as he has hundreds of them around his house. He pollinates and develops his own daylilies.

There has been \$5000 budgeted for a garden tractor for this next year so if anyone knows of a garden tractor that is for sale or may be for sale in that range let Ray Michalik know. We will be needing one with Hi/Lo speed range so we can use a tiller, which we will be needing along with a 4 foot bush hog. Everyone keep their eyes and ears open for these items. Hopefully we can purchase one before spring.

There are still many roses at the greenhouse for sale. \$5 each can get you as many as you want. There is a nice selection and they look good.

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 January work days:	January 3	January 6	January 10
	January 13	January 17	January 20
	January 24	January 27	January 31

EarthKind Rose Trials:

We will be having EarthKind Rose Trials at the Demo Gardens in 2006. The bed is located next to the Tropical bed and is in the process of being prepared - tilling and composting. We will get the roses in late February or early March for planting. If you are interested in helping out with this project, contact Paula.

News and Notes From the Coordinator:

from Paula Craig

Youth Protection Standards Rules and Guidelines:

As established by Texas Cooperative Extension and State Master Gardener Coordinator Doug Welsh, all Texas Master Gardeners must undergo a criminal background check. The charge is \$10, payable to BCMGA (as decided by the BCMGA Board). New trainees will have the fee included in their registration fee, regardless of whether or not they have been previously screened.

Current Master Gardeners may provide evidence of previous screening and must have been screened within the last three years. Acceptable prior screening institutions include school districts, churches, youth groups and associations, law enforcement, Texas Youth Commission, Child and Youth Services, DED family programs. Concealed weapons licenses are also acceptable proof.

The deadline for BCMGA members is January 2, 2006.

Grievances, disputes and appeals may be filed with Extension Volunteer Specialist, Angela Burkham, 6500 Amarillo Blvd, West, Amarillo, TX 79106.

First Order of Business for the 2006 Executive Board:

A task that has been addressed and tabled every year since 1999 is revision of the BCMGA Bylaws. The task can no longer be delayed, despite the long and loud collective groan of the Board.

Amendment to the Bylaws will include a TCE requirement for a dissolution clause wherein, the membership must make provisions for BCMGA monies in case the association disbands.

A second amendment regards a code of conduct for members. Most have already expressed their support for this clause by signing the Code.

Current bylaws require that changes approved by the Board be likewise approved by a majority vote of the membership.

Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association, Inc. Code of Conduct

I acknowledge that as Master Gardeners we volunteer our time to educate and serve the community. We also enjoy the fellowship and conviviality of other gardeners within the group. As in any group, conflicts will arise, but we agree to resolve them in a calm, kind, and diplomatic manner. We act accordingly with the understanding that not doing so, and/or acting in an unpleasant, polarizing manner hurts the group, and may result in separation from the group at the discretion of the Board of Directors as per the Association Bylaws.

List of EarthKind Plants for Brazoria County:

As part of a new program called Dollars and Cents Gardening, I would like the assistance of BCMGA members in compiling a list of foolproof plants for Brazoria County. The plants should be those that not only survive, but thrive, with minimal care--those that are disease and pest resistant, heat tolerant, drought tolerant, flood tolerant, gumbo tolerant, little to no pruning required, etc. I have a list that is years old and includes the Chinese tallow as a recommended tree, so it obviously needs to be updated. The list will be used to develop a program that can be used at new homeowners associations, garden club meetings, etc. It could be posted on the website or mailed to county residents.

Master Gardeners can submit nominees in the following categories:

Ornamentals: Large trees and shrubs, medium trees and shrubs, small trees and shrubs, vines,
 & groundcovers
Vegetables: Cool season and warm season
Herbs
Water and Bog Plants
Fruits

We will begin testing nominated varieties in 2007. Please submit the common name, specific variety and botanical name (if possible). If you have a plant and don't see a category for it, send it anyway. You may make submissions electronically or use forms that I will make available at the greenhouse and at monthly meetings.

Calendar of Events:

*see below for details

new items in bold

2006 Dates:

Jan 6: Arboriculture 101 begins*
 Jan 7: Citrus Festival at the Farmers Market*
 Jan 9: How to Start a Community Garden*
 Jan 10: BCMGA Meeting
 Jan 10: An Introduction to Permaculture*
 Jan 11: Lunch Bunch: Companion Plants for Ferns*
 Jan 12: Backyard Orchard #2: Care Of Fruit Trees*
 Jan 13: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*
 Jan 14: Backyard Orchard #4: Peaches, Plums, Pomegranates & Other Fruit*
 Jan 17: Master Gardener CEU: Spring Bulbs*
 Jan 17: Permaculture—The Ecological Foundations of Land Design begins*
 Jan 18: Plant Propagation Workshop Series begins*
 Jan 20: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*
 Jan 20-21: Master Composter Class*
 Jan 21: Pruning Party*
 Jan 21: Container Plant & Rehab*
 Jan 21: Arbor Day*
 Jan 21-22: Arbor Day Celebration*
 Jan 21: Mighty Tree Tour*
 Jan 21: Native Trees in the Landscape*
 Jan 21: Texas Trees Garden Walk*
 Jan 21: Growing Fruit-Bearing Trees & Shrubs for Southeast Texas*
 Jan 21: Annual Fruit Tree Sale*
 Jan 23: Sell What You Grow at a Green Market*
 Jan 24: Growing Great Tomatoes!*
 Jan 26: Organic Vegetable Specialty Series begins*
 Jan 27: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*

Jan 28: Tree Talk & Winter Walk*
 Jan 28: Backyard Orchard #5: Berries, Figs & Grapes*
 Feb 17: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*
 Feb 20-21: Landscape Design Study Course II*
 Feb 24: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*
 Feb 25: Annual Citrus Sale
 Apr 22: Spring Plant Sale
 May 4-6: 2006 Texas Master Gardener Conference
 June 20-21: MG Specialist Training - Oak Wilt*
 June 22-23: MG Specialist Training * Rainwater Harvesting*
 Feb 3: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*
 Feb 4: Backyard Orchard #6: Apples, Pears & Persimmons*
 Feb 5: Attracting Birds to Your Yard*
 Feb 8: Lunch Bunch: Crape Myrtles*
 Feb 10: Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning*
 Feb 11: Swing into Spring*
 Feb 11: How to Make Hypertufa Pots*
 Feb 14: BCMGA Meeting
 Mar 14: BCMGA Meeting
 Apr 11: BCMGA Meeting
 May 9: BCMGA Meeting
 June 13: BCMGA Meeting
 July 11: BCMGA Meeting
 Aug 8: BCMGA Meeting
 Sept 12: BCMGA Meeting
 Oct 10: BCMGA Meeting
 Nov 14: BCMGA Meeting
 Dec 12: BCMGA Meeting

Arboriculture 101 - Date: Jan. 6, 7, 20 and 21; Location: Montgomery College in The Woodlands Contact: Texas Forest Service website at <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/pdf/urban/urban/arb101brochure9-05final.pdf>; Arboriculture 101 is series of 4 short courses designed to train practitioners in the care of urban trees and is offered through the Texas Forest Service. Each short course costs \$125. The registration deadline is December 30, 2005.

Citrus Festival at the Farmers Market - Date: Jan. 7; Time: 8:00am-noon; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

How to Start a Community Garden - Date: Jan. 9; Time: 4:00-6:30pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

An Introduction to Permaculture - Date: Jan. 10; Time: 7:00-10:00pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Lunch Bunch: Companion Plants for Ferns - Date: Jan. 11; Time: noon to 1 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Contact: 281-443-8731; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/pdf/MercerPRWinter2005.pdf>.

Backyard Orchard #2: Care Of Fruit Trees - Date: Jan. 12; Time: 6:15pm-8:45pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Backyard Orchard #3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning - Dates: Jan. 13, 20, 27, and Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Backyard Orchard #4: Peaches, Plums, Pomegranates & Other Fruit - Date: Jan. 14; Time: 9:30am to noon; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Master Gardener CEU: Spring Bulbs - Date: Jan. 17; Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Contact: 281-443-8731; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/pdf/MercerPRWinter2005.pdf>.

Permaculture—The Ecological Foundations of Land Design - Dates: Jan 17, Jan 31, Feb 7, Feb 21, Mar 7, Mar 21, Apr 4, One Sunday field trip February 19, 9:30am-5pm at farm approx. 2 hours west of Houston; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Plant Propagation Workshop Series - Date: Jan. 18 & 25 and Feb. 15; Location: Houston Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston; Contact: Precinct 2 Harris County Master Gardeners, 281.991.8437 or log onto their website at <http://hcmgap2.tamu.edu/> for a downloadable flyer/application.

Master Composter Class - Date: Jan. 20-21; Location: Pearland College Center; Contact: Keep Pearland Beautiful. 16 hour class. Karen Overgaard of Overgaard and Assoc., a noted consultant in the Houston area, will teach the class. Upon completion of the class and 20 hours of community service, each participant will be certified as a "Master Composter" by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Topics to be covered: the benefits of composting, the science of composting, composting bins, harvesting compost and worm composting. The cost will be \$45 and each participant will be provided a manual and materials for a compost bin. To register for the class, please complete a registration form (available at the Extension Office) and send a check for \$45 to: Keep Pearland Beautiful, 2947 East Broadway, Suite 300, Pearland, TX 77581.

Pruning Party - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 10:00 am to noon; Location: BCMGA Demonstration Gardens; Contact: Paula Craig, CEA, (p-craig@tamu.edu or 979-864-1564).

Container Plant & Rehab - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 9am to 1pm; Location: Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin; Contact: 512-292-4100 or http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=events_cal&datebase=20060101&data=calendar.

Arbor Day - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 8 a.m. to noon; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Contact: 281-443-8731; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/pdf/MercerPRWinter2005.pdf>.

Arbor Day Celebration - Date: Jan. 21 and 22; Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Contact: 281-446-8588; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/parks/pdf/WinterCal05.pdf>.

Mighty Tree Tour - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 9 a.m. Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Contact: 281-446-8588; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/parks/pdf/WinterCal05.pdf>.

Native Trees in the Landscape - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 2 p.m.; Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Contact: 281-446-8588; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/parks/pdf/WinterCal05.pdf>.

Texas Trees Garden Walk - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 10 - 11:30am; Location: Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas; Phone: 214-428-7176; For further information: <http://www.texasdiscoverygardens.org/events.html>.

Growing Fruit-Bearing Trees & Shrubs for Southeast Texas - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 11 am.; Location: Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6 Navasota; Contact: 936-870-4111; For further information: http://www.marthasbloomers.com/upcoming_events.html.

Annual Fruit Tree Sale - Date: Jan. 21; Time: 9:30am-2:00pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Sell What You Grow at a Green Market - Date: Jan. 23; Time: 4:00-6:00pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Growing Great Tomatoes! - Date: Jan. 24; Time: 6:15-8:15pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Organic Vegetable Specialty Series - Dates: Jan 26, Feb 9,23, Mar 9,23,30, Apr 20,27, May 11,18; Time: 6:15-8:45pm; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Tree Talk & Winter Walk - Date: Jan. 28; Location: Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin; Contact: 512-292-4100 or http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=events_cal&datebase=20060101&data=calendar.

Backyard Orchard #5: Berries, Figs & Grapes - Date: Jan. 28; Time: 9:30am; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Backyard Orchard #6: Apples, Pears & Persimmons - Date: Feb 4; Time: 9:30am; Contact: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday); For further information: <http://www.urbanharvest.org/classes/classesevents.html>.

Attracting Birds to Your Yard - Date: Feb. 5; Time: 2 p.m.; Location: Jesse H. Jones Park, Humble; Contact: 281-446-8588; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/parks/pdf/WinterCal05.pdf>. Reservations required beginning Thurs., January 26.

Lunch Bunch: Cape Myrtles - Date: Feb. 8; Time: noon to 1 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Contact: 281-443-8731; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/pdf/MercerPRWinter2005.pdf>.

Swing into Spring - Date: Feb. 11; Time: 10 a.m. to noon; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Contact: 281-443-8731; For further information: <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/pdf/MercerPRWinter2005.pdf>.

How to Make Hypertufa Pots - Date: Feb. 11; Time: 11 am.; Location: Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6 Navasota; Contact: 936-870-4111; For further information: http://www.marthasbloomers.com/upcoming_events.html.

Landscape Design Study Course II - Date: Feb. 20-21; Location: Christ United Methodist Church, 2401 State Highway 6, College Station, TX; Contact: 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 <lasebesta@tamu.edu>. You may also download the application form from the internet at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/index.html>.

MG Specialist Training - Oak Wilt - Date: June 20-21; Location: Tenroc Ranch, Salado, Texas 5471 W. Thomas Arnold Road, exit 284/Robertson Rd. from Interstate I-35; Contact: <http://www.texasmastergardeners.com/events/events.html> or www.bcmga.org or Dirk Aaron, CEA-Ag, Bell County Extension, 1605 N. Main St, Belton, Texas 76513, 254-933-9305.

According to Paula, Two of our members have already completed the training and really enjoyed it. Because Oak Wilt's presence in Brazoria County is highly probable at some point in the future, our certified members will be asked to train other members to identify this devastating disease.

MG Specialist Training * Rainwater Harvesting - Date: June 22-23; Location: Menard County Extension Office, Menard, Texas; Contact: Billy Kniffen, County extension Agent, Menard County, 325-396-4787 or b-kniffen@tamu.edu. The Master Gardener Specialist * Rainwater Harvesting is charged to increase awareness and provide training in Rainwater Harvesting. The Master Gardener is required to serve a minimum of one year as a Master Gardener Specialist * Rainwater Harvesting providing a minimum of 12 hours of service.

News to Know:

Committee Chairs - Our current ones are as follows:

Audits - Gil Livanec/Ray Michalik/Patty Varnado
Cactus Garden - Ron King
Cards and Flowers - Barbara Ross
Citrus Orchard - Gary Gardner
Citrus Sale - Gil Livanec
Data Collections for EarthKind Trials - Ann McLain
EarthKind Rose Trials - Paula Craig
Educational Programs Coordinator - Ann McLain
Extension Office Beds - Carol Wenny
Greenhouse and Demo Garden Maintenance - Ray Michalik
Hospitality and Registration for Educational Programs - Carol Farmer
JMG Vegetable Garden - Jesse Knight/
Marketing - Chris Kern
Memorial Gardens - Ron King
Opportunity Grants - Barbara Brown/Patty Varnado
Organic Garden - Ellen Pedisich
Plant Sale - Barbara Brown/Carol Farmer
State Representatives - Pam & David Peltier
State Representative, Alternate - Evelyn Moon
Training Coordinator - Shannan Foley
Tropical Gardens - Barbara Ross
Vegetable Garden - Ellen Pedisich

2006 Dues - 2006 membership dues (\$13) must be paid by the end of the year. Send your payment to Ted at: Ted Jagen, 13805 CR 282, Alvin, TX 77511.

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!

Historian Needed - Do you like to scrapbook??? If so, we need you to be the BCMGA Historian. We have gobs of pictures. Most are organized. If you are interested, let me know.

On the Herbal Side - How the Body's Defenses Function:

from DiAnna Munson

The body has a myriad of defenses in addition to the immune system. There are organs that correct imbalances and counter pollutants that enter the body. Our food can provide the fuel our body needs for these functions to prevent illnesses.

General Advice

1. Maintain good hygiene habits. Reducing the number of micro-organisms entering the body will help lighten the workload of the immune system. Of all the things Mom taught you, hand washing is the best way to stop micro-organisms. (As a side note - cinnamon will stop strep and staph in their tracts. Eat it; Wash with it; Gargle with it; It works!)

2. Combat stress. It is okay to plan down-time in your day. Try yoga, meditation, or just establish "Me Time."

3. Eliminate preservatives from your foods. Most preservatives contain heavy metals. While these are not harmful in minute quantities, they do add up. Check the ingredient list and see the total intake of preservatives you consume on a weekly basis. These chemicals are not easily eliminated from the body, and most are stored in the fat cells for as long as three years. These metals rob the body of minerals and eventually depress the immune system.

Helpful Foods

* Fruits and Vegetables top the list. Those with the deeper colors contain more nutrients than lighter colored ones. Example: Red bell peppers contain more antioxidants than the green ones. Red grapes have more flavonoids than green grapes. Sweet Potatoes have higher amounts of beta-carotene than white potatoes.

* Whole Grains, Nuts and Seeds. These provide fiber. There are two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. Apples, for example, contain mainly soluble fiber, whole grains, nuts and seeds are high in insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber forms a sticky gel in the digestive system that acts like a protective coating that prevents harmful substances from doing damage. Example: the cholesterol from a steak would be held in the gel formed by a vegetable providing the soluble fiber, thus preventing the cholesterol from being absorbed into the system. Soluble fiber has one other benefit, it causes nutrients to be absorbed more slowly, thus giving a feeling of fullness after eating for a longer time, resulting in less between meal snacking. Insoluble fiber is the "roter-rooter" for the bowel. It absorbs many times its weight in water as it passes through the intestines. As a result, this fiber cleans the intestines as it passes through, helping to expel harmful substances before damage in the form of cancers can occur.

* Yogurt with active cultures; Garlic; Cranberries; Honey. These contain antibacterial and antifungal actions. Live yogurt and raw garlic work as a probiotic that encourages beneficial bacteria growth in the intestines. This action aids in digestion and absorption of nutrients. Garlic has also been shown to be antiviral as well.

* Onions and Cruciferous Vegetables. These contain sulfur compounds that are thought to counter some carcinogens. Study after study have shown that people that consume these foods have lower rates of cancers.

* Hard Cheeses - especially Parmesan, are rich in easily absorbed calcium, and in vitamin B2, protein, and zinc.

2006 Texas Master Gardener Conference:

The conference will be held in College Station on May 4-6, 2006. Following is a list of accommodations:

AmeriSuites Hotel (3.5 miles to Reed Arena) Cutoff: April 11
1100 University Drive E., College Station, TX 77840.
979-846-9800 / 800 833-1516. Reservation Code: TXGARD.
Suites only with kitchenettes, \$80. Internet, fitness facility, continental breakfast.

Courtyard by Marriott (5 miles to Reed Arena) Cutoff: April 4, 2006.
3939 State Highway 6 South, College Station, TX 77840.
979-695-8111 / 800 321-2211. Reservation Code: MGAC.
Rooms (\$79) and suites. Internet, fitness facility, motor-coach parking.

Hampton Inn (2.5 miles to Reed Arena) Cutoff: April 14, 2006.
320 S. Texas Avenue, College Station, TX 77840.
979-846-0184 / 800 * HAMPTON. Reservation Code: TMG. Rooms only, \$79.
Internet, complimentary breakfast. Free airport shuttle.

Hilton Hotel/Conference Center (3 miles to Reed Arena) Cutoff: April 13, 2006.
801 University Drive E., College Station, TX 77840.
979-693-7500 / 800-HILTONS. Reservation code: TMGA.
Rooms (\$89) and suites. Internet, fitness facility, valet, laundry.
Hot tub and outdoor pool. Pets allowed. On premises restaurants/bar.

La Salle Hotel (6 miles to Reed Arena) Cutoff: April 15, 2006.
120 S. Main Street, Bryan, TX 77803.
979-822-2000 / 866-822-2000. Group Code: TMG or Texas Master Gardeners
Restored national historic landmark surrounded by unique shopping, antique stores and restaurants. Rooms, \$70, and suites, \$95.
Internet, complimentary airport shuttle, designated smoking rooms, continental breakfast.
Queen parlor suites feature Jacuzzi tub and TV in bathroom, microwave/refrigerator, full-size sofa sleeper.
No pets.

Manor House Inn (3 miles to Reed Arena) Cutoff: April 28, 2006.
2504 Texas Avenue S., College Station, TX 77840
797-764-9540 / 800 231-4100. Reservation code: CGCA #1. Rooms, \$59, and suites.
Shuttle to Reed Arena, complimentary breakfast, refrigerator/microwave, HBO/cable, free movies/sports, pool,
1-day laundry service, internet, fitness facility. Complimentary coffee and fruit 24 hrs/day. Recently
renovated.

Hawthorne Suites (3.5 miles to Reed Arena) Rates apply before April 13, 2006.
1010 University Drive E., College, Station, TX 77840
979-695-9500. Group #3228.
Suites only, \$79. Internet, fitness facility, motor-coach parking.

Super 8 Motel (2.5 miles to Reed Arena) Rates apply prior to April 4, 2006.
301 Texas Avenue S., College Station, TX 77840.
979-846-8800 / 800-800-8000. Group Name: Texas Master Gardeners.
Rooms only, \$55. Internet, free continental breakfast.

Garden Checklist - January-February:

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

- ✿ Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs while they are dormant.
- ✿ Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before the rush of spring planting. Time spent in armchair gardening before the fireplace will pay off in improved plant selection. Besides, it is fun to page through the garden catalogs.
- ✿ Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias, and impatiens should be sown in early January. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles, should be sown in late January or early February.
- ✿ Apply a light application of fertilizer to established pansy plantings. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every 4 to 6 weeks, depending on rainfall. Dried blood meal is also an excellent source of fertilizer for pansies.
- ✿ Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting.
- ✿ Select and order gladiolus corms for February/March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.
- ✿ Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs overwinter in the pouch, and start the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand removal and burning of the pouches are ways of reducing the potential damage next spring.

- ✿ The life of the plant received as a Christmas gift can be prolonged with proper care. Keep the soil moist, but provide drainage so that excess moisture can flow from the pot. Keep the plant out of range of heating ducts and away from heating units. Keep in a cool room at night, preferably at 60 to 65 degrees F.
- ✿ Don't fertilize newly set out trees or shrubs until after they have started to grow, and then only very lightly the first year.
- ✿ When buying plants, the biggest is not always the best, especially when dealing with bare-root plants. The medium to small sizes (4 to 6 feet) are usually faster to become established and more effective in the landscape than the large sizes.
- ✿ Prune bush roses during February or early March. Use good shears that will make clean cuts. Remove dead, dying, and weak canes. Leave 4 to 8 healthy canes, and remove approximately one-half of the top growth and height of the plant.
- ✿ Now is an excellent time to select and plant container-grown roses to fill in those bare spots in your rose garden.
- ✿ When pruning shrubs, first prune out any dead or damaged branches; then thin out by removing about one-third of the canes or stems at ground level, removing the oldest canes only; and last, shape the rest of the plant, but do not cut everything back to the same height.
- ✿ Plant dahlia tubers in late February and early March.
- ✿ In Central and South Texas, the following flower seeds may be sown directly without protection in well prepared flower beds in February or March: nasturtiums, annual phlox, California poppies, coneflowers, and larkspur. Petunia plants may be set out in sunny, well drained locations, with little chance of cold damage except in far North Texas.
- ✿ Water foliage plants as well as other containerized plants only when needed and not by the calendar.
- ✿ Climbing roses should be trained but not pruned. Weave long canes through openings in trellises or arbors and tie them with jute twine or plastic/wire plant ties. Securing canes now prevents damage from winter winds, and contributes toward a more refined look to the garden when roses are blooming. Wait until after the spring flowering period to prune climbing or once-blooming shrub roses.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/jan05/hujan05.html>
 Date: December 28, 2005

Happy Birthday!

Happy January Birthday Wishes...

Don Gerard - January 4

Barbara Greeley - January 14

Ellen Pedisich - January 14

John Rosser - January 24

If your birthday is in January and you aren't on the list, let me know, so I can add it! Thanks.

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
 CEA - Horticulture
 Brazoria County