

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter
Heather Vincent, Editor

May 2006

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2006 Executive Board Officers:

President - **George Gabriles**

1st VP/ Volunteer Coordinator - **Gary Gardner**

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

Treasurer - **Ted Jagen**

Secretary – **Donie Stowers**

Little Known Facts....

May's flower is the Lily-of-the-Valley

Botanical Names: *Convallaria majalis*

Other Names: May Bells , Our Lady's Tears

Description: Small bell like blooms on a short delicate stem.

Colors: white, pink

Season: All year round

Meaning: Sweetness, you complete my life, return of happiness.

Bloom Size: 5 to 10 mm in diameter

Color Pattern: solid

Facts: Is said to have been the favorite flower of Queen Victoria. All parts of the plant are

poisonous if ingested. Very popular for weddings and corsage designs.

News...

Words from the President...

By George Gabriles

The Spring Plant Sale was a success, and though it did not bring in a large amount of money, as in prior years, we did manage to net an estimated \$6500.00. From the standpoint of membership participation it was a big success, particularly with the number of new Interns that came out to help.

If you have visited the Greenhouse lately you have, hopefully, noticed the 50 ft. x 165 ft. plowed section of ground ready for planting, thanks to the hard work of **Jesse** and **Ray**. Here is your opportunity to stake a claim to a section and plant veggies of your choice and make them grow. You can do this individually, or recruit some other members to help. In any case, whomever stakes the claim is responsible for that plot of ground and no one else can tamper with it without the permission of the designated person or persons. **Jesse** and **Ray** have volunteered to help in the planting process, if help is needed. Thanks to all of you that continually give of your time and talent, you are the backbone of the MG organization.

From the Organic Gardener...

By Ellen Pedisich

Greetings from the Organic Garden!

I went to the tractor safety program in Brazoria on a Friday in March. Afterwards, I went to the garden site and Jesse let me drive his tractor with the plow attached to it. I made a few passes in the area designated for Paula's rose garden. Jesse gave me hand signals to help me so I could raise the plow, turn and not hit the cement structure, and even back the tractor into the barn.

I felt like a child again and thought of riding on top of the gas tank of my father's Fordson tractor.

The following Tuesday when I arrived at the garden site Jesse's tractor was gone. He took it home.

That's all right because I am still smiling and here's my haiku:

Big tractor wheels roll.
The steel plow cuts the clay soil.
Smile, big as the sky.

Spring Plant Sale Update...

By Ted Jagen

We had a successful plant sale on April 22nd. We took in almost \$8,000. With sale related expenses of \$2,300, we had a net income of \$5,700. While somewhat less profitable than the past two spring sales, it meets our goals for supporting the financial needs for all projects and activities that have been budgeted for this year.

At the Demonstration Gardens...

By Ray Michalik

First the BCMGA should give **Heather and Shannon Vincent** a big THANK YOU for the gourmet meal they prepared for all to enjoy the day of our annual fund raising plant sale. Thank you. And also to all who brought the sides. Update on the tractor problem. The clutch has been repaired and is in good working order. We have been putting the tractor to work. We need to thank **Robert Peters** with the County precinct for the mechanic work he performed for us. Paula's trial rose bed is nearly prepared. Once the mulch is spread and tilled in, the roses can be planted. This should happen maybe May 12, or next Tuesday, May 15. The veggie garden site is finally prepared. There are about a dozen 175 foot rows available for anyone who wants a spot to plant veggies. Contact Paula for a spot. Contact Jessie or Ray if you need help with more soil prep. The junk rooms in the barn and head house are being clean out and rearranged. All junk is being discarded and shelves have been installed and all items we need and use will be put on the shelves. The storage rooms are looking very nice. Hopefully, we can keep it this way. Thanks to all the **Carrol's** and **Barbra's** for heading up this task. The County precinct will put our grounds in their 5 week mowing rotation so our area will be mowed every 5 weeks from now on and should look very nice, like it used to. The veggies that were planted in the early spring are producing very well. Come hand help harvest them on Tuesday or Friday then you can take some home. If you feel real energetic, you can come out on the work days and help with the normal jobs and join in with all the good conversation that goes along with the work. You may even pick up on some new ideas for your home.

Demonstration Garden 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!

News and Notes From the Coordinator...

By Paula Craig

News and Notes from the Coordinator

Congratulations to our new class of certified Master Gardeners **Ed Barrios, Laruel Brinson, Shannan Foley, Roy Morgan, Candace Novak, Theresa O'Leary, Kermit Schlameus, Beverly**

Straughan and Heather Vincent. As a group, this is one of our most involved classes in recent years.

We had a tremendous turnout for the graduation/plant-swap/pot luck. It's been two days and I'm still full from all the great food. **Lee Withers** gave a terrific talk on Natives and habitat creation. If anyone wants the reference materials, please let me know.



Congratulations as well to our **Master Gardener of the Year, Mr. Ted Jagen.** Ted has done an invaluable service as our treasurer, handling accounts that get increasingly difficult to manage as the organization grows. He is also a regular out at the greenhouse and helps whenever and wherever he can. In addition to his mental and physical contributions, Ted is kind of nice to have around.

Former BCMGA President, **Suzanne Jerabeck** has offered to take over publicity and marketing for the organization. If I know Suzanne, she will do an excellent job. Anyone with an item should simultaneously contact Suzanne, Heather Vincent, Don Gerard and me.

I am trying to find someone to coordinate another ordering of MG shirts. We currently have two types of shirts: regular t-shirts bearing the TMGA logo and chambray (denim) shirts with our BCMGA logo. The more we order of the chambrays, the cheaper they are. Please be ready to order at the next monthly meeting.

As we head into the summer doldrums, bear in mind that the National Weather Service is predicting lower than average rainfall for the remainder of the summer, so take measures to conserve water while protecting your gardens.

2006 Calendar of Events:

May 4-6:	2006 Texas Master Gardener Conference
May 9:	BCMGA Meeting & Graduation
June 13:	BCMGA Meeting
June 20-21:	MG Specialist Training - Oak Wilt*
June 22-23:	MG Specialist Training * Rainwater Harvesting*
July 11:	BCMGA Meeting
Aug 8:	BCMGA Meeting
Sept 12:	BCMGA Meeting
Oct 10:	BCMGA Meeting
Nov 14:	BCMGA Meeting
Dec 12:	BCMGA Meeting

NEWS AND NOTES:

- ❖ MG signed up to bring refreshments for June are Barbara Ross, Shannon Foley, and Evelyn Moon Beverly Straughan. If you would like to bring June refreshments, please contact Donie Stowers.
- ❖ Anyone wishing to replace a lost name badge should contact Sandra Smith at the Extension Office. New badges are \$6.00, payable at the time of the request.

June 1 - The Perfect Storm Preparation. A seminar to educate the residents of Brazoria County on hurricane preparedness. 2 pm – 4:30 pm. Lake Jackson Civic Center

May 11 - Master's Touch Program - Lawns: Grasses. Turf management in landscape, Tomatoes and Vegetables - Lubbock County Master Gardeners.

May 13, 2006 "Living the Country Life" - Glen Rose, TX - Somervell and Hood County Extension Office

May 13, 2006 - Rain Garden Workshop and Plant Sale - Houston, TX – The Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2

May 13, 2006 - Spring Home Garden Tour - Tyler, TX - Smith County Master Gardeners

May 13, 2006 - Garden Tour - "Walk in the Garden" - Denton, TX – Denton County Master Gardeners

May 13, 2006 - Rockwall County Tour of Gardens - Rockwall, TX - Rockwall Master Gardeners

May 13, 2006 - Festival of Flowers - San Antonio, TX - Bexar County Master Gardeners

May 13, 2006 - Pass-along Plant Sale - Nacogdoches, TX – Nacogdoches Master Gardeners

May 15 &16, 2006 - Hill Country Living 101 - Kerrville, TX – Hill Country Master Gardeners

May 18th & 19th, 2006 - "Tough Plants for Texas" - Snyder, TX – Windmill Ranch Preserve

May 19, 2006 - Botanical Drawing for the Complete Beginner - Humble, TX Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

May 20, 2006 - Botanical Painting For The Complete Beginner - Humble, TX Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

May 21, 2006 - Botanical Miniatures - Humble, TX - Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

May 24-28, 2006 - Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference - Nacogdoches, TX - The Pineywoods Native Plant Center Visit <http://www.texasmastergardeners.org/> "Calendar of Events" for additional information and Events for the remainder of 2006 and 2007

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.

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 bkniffen@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.

Give it a Grow...

By Suzanne Jerabeck

FOR COLOR AND FRAGRANCE, THIS HONEYSUCKLE'S A REAL WINNER!

While vacationing in England last May, I couldn't help but fall in love with the prettiest honeysuckle vine I'd ever seen. I'd never run across it in our area – although many of its relatives abound here. Now, a year later, I discovered that *Lonicera periclymenum* Serotina Florida has reached America – and is soon to grace my very own backyard.

'Serotina Florida' is beautiful, fast-growing, and extremely fragrant! According to Park's Gardens, this particular Late Dutch Honeysuckle cultivar was a big winner in the Boskoop Trials in Holland. Also, the Royal Horticultural Society gave it their 2005 Award of Garden Merit and listed it "the more vigorous" of honeysuckles tested in 2004.



No wonder. From early summer through fall, this twining climber boasts an incredible display of colorful, two-lipped tubular flowers up to 2" long. Yes, hummingbirds love this large-flowered feeder! Its crimson buds are creamy white inside and purple-red outside, fading to yellow as they age. The bright red translucent berries that follow are not only showy, but act as magnets for migrating birds.

In our hot, muggy area, 'Serotina Florida' does best planted in partial shade in normal or loamy soil. This spectacular climber is quite well-behaved (so unlike our native honeysuckle!) but can reach as high as 20'. It needs support and is perfect grown on fences, pergolas,



and trees. Plus, the vine's compact and quick-covering habit makes it ideal for screening. But watch for signs of powdery mildew or leaf spot and treat immediately.

Oh, and don't be fooled. Contrary to its name, Honeysuckle 'Serotina Florida' is not from Florida. Instead, its natural range includes North Africa and Europe, and even grows as far north as Sweden. This plant is hardy up to -30 degrees Fahrenheit and will stay green all year long in Brazoria County.

Several internet nursery sites I checked are already sold out of this fabulous honeysuckle. However, Park's Gardens and Wayside Gardens still had some bareroot stock available for \$12.95 each. For a little bit of Europe in YOUR backyard, place your order at www.parkseed.com or www.waysidegardens.com. And, enjoy!

The "Peggy Martin" Rose

*by Dr. William C. Welch,
Professor & Landscape
Horticulturist, Texas A&M
University*

Peggy Martin has been a mainstay in the New Orleans Old Garden Rose Society for many years. She and her husband, MJ, lived in Plaquemines Parish a few miles across the Mississippi River from the city of New Orleans. My wife, Diane, and I were her guests several years ago when I accepted a speaking engagement for the NOOGRS.

Peggy graciously cared for us during our visit and entertained us in her home with a memorable Louisiana style seafood boil that had been harvested by her husband just hours before. Peggy's garden included a wonderful collection of old roses assembled with love and care over the years. There were many wonderful specimens that appealed to me but one rambler in particular caught my eye. I am always interested in thornless roses and Peggy was particularly enthusiastic about a large, healthy specimen she had collected in 1989 in New Orleans. According to Peggy "I was given cuttings of the thornless climber in 1989 by Ellen



found rose "Peggy Martin" at the country home of Bill & Diane Welch

Dupriest who had gotten her rose cuttings from her mother-in-law, Faye Dupriest. Faye had gotten her cuttings from a relative's garden in New Orleans. When I first saw this rose it was in full bloom and smothered the 8ft wooden fence in Ellen's back yard. It took my breath away! I had never seen a rose so lushly beautiful with thornless bright green foliage that was disease free. All along the canes there were clusters of roses that resembled perfect nosegays of blooms".

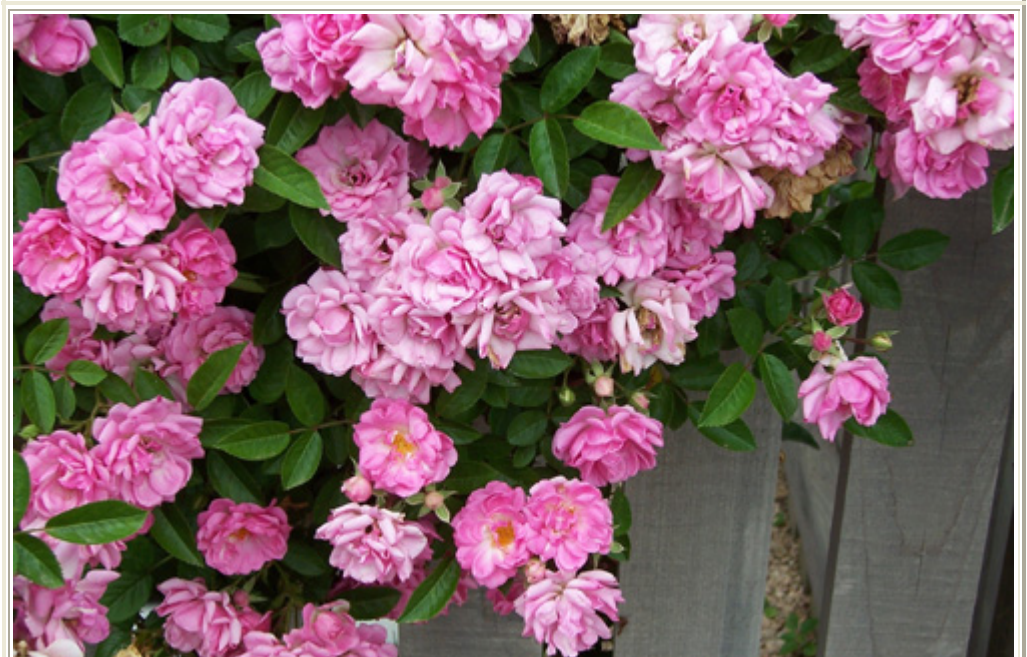
I departed from New Orleans in the late summer of 2003 with several cuttings of Peggy's thornless climber. I was pleased that the cuttings rooted quickly and immediately set one on the fence that encloses the A/C equipment at Fragilee, our weekend home in Washington County, TX. I was a little dubious of the site I had selected because the soil was less than ideal. My concern soon disappeared as I saw the cutting quickly mature into a vigorous specimen that spans most of the 12-15 linear feet of 4' tall picket fencing.

I didn't allow myself to get overly excited about the plant because I assumed that it would be a "once bloomer" with a fairly short flowering season in the spring. On a subsequent visit with Peggy she indicated that my plant would rebloom in the fall after it had been established for a couple of years. I must admit that I had some doubt about the rebloom in our hot and sometimes very dry Texas climate. Last year Peggy's rose rewarded us with a nice bloom from September through November. Even with being covered by ice for two days during mid-December '05 we have had some scattered bloom all winter.

'Katrina' takes its Toll

We fretted about many of our New Orleans friends during the 'Katrina' storm. Getting information was not easy with so much of the communications system inoperative. We were uneasy about traveling to Birmingham for

an annual meeting with the gardens staff for Southern Living. We spent the night of September 7, at our home in Mangham, La. Mangham is in the northeastern part of the state and 'Katrina' had only brushed by as it veered to the east through Mississippi. We were relieved that our cotton and soybean crops received only minor damage and the old pecan trees in our yard suffered little more than loss of most of this year's crop.



found rose "Peggy Martin" at the country home of Bill & Diane Welch

Upon arrival in Birmingham we checked into the Marriott Courtyard located near the Southern Living headquarters. Early the next morning we went to breakfast and were seated adjacent to two couples who sounded like they had New Orleans accents. After introducing ourselves we learned that they were from Plaquemines Parish and had lost their homes. Birmingham was the first place they were able to find shelter. I asked them if they knew Peggy Martin and her family and they said they knew them well and were we familiar with the tragedy of their losses? It seems that Peggy lost both her elderly parents in the flood that inundated nearly all of Plaquemines Parish. We were, of course, deeply saddened that Peggy had lost her parents, her home, and commercial fishing boat that her husband used to supplement their income.

An Inspirational Survivor

It took a couple of months for me to reestablish communication with Peggy. She and her family have moved to Gonzales, LA which is close to Baton Rouge on Interstate 10. I asked Peggy about her roses and home and she indicated the house and garden were under about 20' of salt water for two weeks following the hurricane. When she was finally able to return to visit their property she was heartened to see the lush growth of her thornless climber, a testament to its toughness and status as a true survivor. This rose and one crinum were all that remained of the once beautiful garden.

I had already been convinced that this rose deserved to be widely available and enjoyed by gardeners in other locations. Its disease resistance, thornless stems and colorful displays of bright pink flowers along with a graceful vining form make it a logical choice for creating beautiful garden pictures. My specimen is literally covered with clusters of dark pink flowers each spring from mid-March through May. It starts blooming again in late summer and repeats until a hard frost slows it down for the winter.

A Way to Help

In mid-January I was pleased to receive a notification that my friend Nancy Godshall, a member of the Garden Club of Houston and currently Zone IX Director for the Garden Club of America had given a donation in my name to a recently established Zone IX Horticulture Restoration Fund. The fund was established for the purpose of restoring parks, gardens and green space in New Orleans, LA, Laurel, MS and Beaumont TX, following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I was pleased to learn that Nancy Thomas, also from Houston and a former GCA President was closely involved in selecting projects for the restoration fund.

An idea came to me several weeks ago "in the middle of the night" about growing the "Peggy Martin" rose as a fund raiser for Zone IX Horticulture Restoration Fund. First, I checked with Peggy to see if she would be in agreement then I went to Mike Shoup, owner of the Antique Rose Emporium. Mike is enthusiastic and has already stuck the first small crop of cuttings we provided a couple of weeks ago. He is certain that he can produce a good crop by fall '06 and has pledged a dollar per plant will go to the Fund.

Jason and Shelley Powell, owners of *Petals from the Past Nursery* in Jemison, AL were impressed with the rose while visiting here in late October, '05 and took quite a few cuttings at that time. Jason reports that they already have sixty or seventy rooted cuttings. Jason received his Master's Degree from Texas A & M and was an early recipient of my scholarship sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc..

Mark Chamblee, owner of *Chamblee Rose Nursery* in Tyler, TX has received a small stock plant and is enthusiastic about marketing the rose as is Aubrey King, owner of King's Nursery in Tenaha, TX. Addresses and phone numbers for these sources are included below. A first crop from these growers should be available as early as the fall of '06 with larger numbers in '07. Each of these growers has pledged a \$1.00 per plant donation to the Garden Restoration Fund for each plant. Reduced or wholesale prices may be available for Garden Club Plant Sales, Master Gardener Events, etc.. This would allow more opportunity for contributions.

This is going to be fun! A great rose and a great cause. This is a hard combination to beat! I am fully convinced that the resilience and fortitude of our friends and neighbors in New Orleans, Beaumont and Mississippi is matched by the beauty and toughness of the "Peggy Martin" rose. The 'Peggy Martin' rose is a beautiful symbol of survival on the Gulf Coast. Please join us in this celebration.

Current List of Cooperating Growers for the "Peggy Martin" Rose:

Antique Rose Emporium 9300 Lueckmeyer Road Brenham, TX 77833 800-441-0002
<http://www.antiqueroseemporium.com>

Chamblee's Rose Nursery 10926 US Hwy 69 North Tyler, TX 75706 800-256-ROSE
<http://www.chambleerose.com>

Petals from the Past Nursery 16034 County Rd. 29 Jemison, AL 35085 205-646-0069
<http://www.petalsfromthepast.com>

King's Nursery Hwy 84 East, Tenaha, Texas 75974 409-248-3811

Cocoa Mulch

Cocoa Mulch is manufactured by Hershey's, and they claim that "It is true that studies have shown that 50% of the dogs that eat Cocoa Mulch can suffer physical harm to a variety of degrees (depending on each individual dog). However, 98% of all dogs won't eat it."

True information about the mulch can be found at
<http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/cocoa.htm>

Cocoa Mulch, which is sold by Home Depot, Foreman's Garden Supply and other Garden supply stores, contains a lethal ingredient called "Theobromine".

It is lethal to dogs and cats. It smells like chocolate and it really attracts dogs. They will ingest this stuff and die. Several deaths already occurred in the last 2-3 weeks. Just a word of caution ? check what you are using in your gardens and be aware of what your gardeners are using in your gardens.

Theobromine is the ingredient that is used to make all chocolate ? especially dark or baker's chocolate ? which is toxic to dogs.

Cocoa bean shells contain potentially toxic quantities of theobromine, a xanthine compound similar in effects to caffeine and theophylline. A dog that ingested a lethal quantity of garden mulch made from cacao bean shells developed severe convulsions and died 17 hours later. Analysis of the stomach contents and the ingested cacao bean shells revealed the presence of lethal amounts of theobromine.

Garden Checklist – MAY

By Heather Vincent

- Remove flower buds from caladiums, coleus, and copper plants for larger leaves.
- Move potted orchids and bromeliads outside.
- Pick tomatoes at first blush. Ripen on windowsill.
- Replace spring annuals with summer flowers such as gaura, Mexican zinnia and scaevola.
- Prune off any remaining freeze-damaged limbs and stalks.
- Feed amaryllis (after blooming), caladiums, Louisiana iris with bulb food, bonemeal or superphosphate. If squirrels are a problem, don't use bonemeal.
- Feed crape myrtle, hummingbird bush, barlaria and other summer blooming shrubs.
- Plant cantaloupe, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, squash, sweet potatoes, Swiss chard, and watermelon. Cage rather than stake, tomatoes to keep fruit from bruising.
- Plant impatiens deeper than they were in pots for more drought tolerance in summer.
- Plant new shrubs before it gets any hotter.
- Watch hibiscus for yellow spots (spider mites). Hit leaves with strong water stream.
- In the water garden, remove decaying water lily leaves and spent flowers.
- Mow the lawn and water often to encourage the grass to spread into thin areas.
- In very hot, dry, sunny spots, try bulbine, Copper Canyon dasies, flame acanthus, rock rose, trailing lantana, scaevola, and yarrow.
- Remove early althaea buds and crape myrtle seeds to make flowers larger overall.
- Prune summer-blooming shrubs after flowers fade.
- Consider moving non-blooming roses and daylilies into more sun.
- In shade, try barlaria, gingers, firespike, hosta, indigo, pigeonberry, and Virginia sweetspire.
- Try shredded sandpaper, crushed egg shells and or seaweed at the base of plants to discourage snails and slugs.
- Try crushed egg shells, coarse sand in ring around plant stem to discourage snails.
- Give all the plants a manure tea treat: Mix in washtub: ½ rotted (or bagged) manure and ½ water (preferably rainwater). Let sit overnight. Drain off water and pour over plants. This tea is high in nitrogen, so don't use more than once a month on blooming plants.

Committee Chairs...

Audits - **Gil Livanec/Ray Michalik/Patty Varnado**
Cactus Garden - **Ron King**

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 Equipment Maintenance - **Ray Michalik**
Hospitality and Registration for Educational Programs – **Doni Stowers**
JMG Vegetable Garden - **Jesse Knight**
Marketing - **Chris Kern**
Opportunity Grants - **Barbara Brown/Patty Varnado**
Greenhouse Supervision and Plant Sale - **Barbara Brown/Carol Farmer**
Training Coordinator - **Shannan Foley**
All Flower Gardens - **Barbara Ross**
Vegetable Garden - **Ellen Pedisich and Jesse Knight**

Happy May Birthday Wishes
Ed Barrios May 12
Ted Jagen May 21
Don Gerard May 25

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.



21017 CR 171

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Angleton, TX 77515

