

# ***What's Growin' On . . .***

***The BCMGA Newsletter***

**Heather Vincent, Editor**

**July 2006**

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## **2006 Executive Board Officers:**

**President - George Gabriles**

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

**2nd VP/Advance Training - Christine Kern**

**Treasurer - Ted Jagen**

**Secretary – Donie Stowers**

## **Little Known Facts....**

**July's flower is the Water Lily**

**Botanical Names:** Delphinium elatum

**Other Names:** Candle Delphinium, Larkspur

**Description:** Spikes with clusters of trumpet shaped, disc shaped or dolphin shaped flowers.

**Colors:** blue, lavender, red, white, pink, purple

**Season:** All year round

**Meaning:** Comes from the Greek word, delphis meaning dolphin. Flight of fancy, ardent attachment, agility.

**Bloom Size:** 8 to 20 inches long

**Color Pattern:** solid, spotted, striped

**Facts:** Extracts of the plant has been used in herbal medicine. Often used as filler in arrangements. The juices of the flower will create a blue ink when mixed with alum.

## News...

## Words from the President...

By George Gabriles

The recent rains have accelerated growth on everything planted outside of the Greenhouse, including weeds. If you have not visited the site I would encourage you to do so, you will be pleasantly surprised and your help appreciated.

Work continues on finalizing changes to the By-Laws. Seems like we continue to make changes to the changes and hope one more meeting will see a closure to this task so it can be presented to the membership for approval. We have only one entry for the Greenhouse naming contest and the deadline for all entries is the end of August. Put on your creative thinking caps and submit your entries to any of the Officers or to Paula. There is a \$50.00 award for the winning entry.

Attendance at our monthly meetings has fallen and hopefully it is due to summer vacations and not a lack of interest. We have experienced last minutes program cancellations in June and July through no fault of our Program Chairperson and this is not acceptable. Good Programs are essential for good attendance and we must renew our efforts to assure this is done. We have a lot of talent within our membership and therefore a good source for programs that can be blended with other speakers outside of our organization.

The strength of any organization lies within the interest and dedication of its membership. I would appreciate any suggestions or comments you may have which would help to improve the level of interest in our Association.

Hope to see and visit with you at the Greenhouse and remember we meet the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm.

HAPPY GARDENING!!!!

## At the Demonstration Gardens...

By Ray Michalik

Thanks to Rich Tillman, the county has brought in several loads of soil that they have been gotten from cleaning out the ditches on Hospital Drive in front of the A& M research grounds, which will help with our drainage problems when they are finished. The county has also dropped off new culverts, to replace the old small ones that are clogged up, at the entry to the green house. In time the soil they brought in will be moved into the new garden area to help elevate the garden spot.

We purchased a rebuilt starter for the John Deere lawnmower as the starter Bendix was getting very weak and was not starting the engine as it was supposed to. All is working fine now.

I drove by the World In Need establishment to check on the oak trees we helped plant several months ago and all appear to be growing nicely. Looks like one of them had gotten broken off about four feet off ground level but it seems to be sprouting new growth. I don't know how the willow trees are doing around the lake.

The irrigation system has been ordered for the trial rose garden and should be delivered shortly and will be installed when it gets in. As of needing it now we don't with all the rain we've been getting but that will change more than likely, knowing Texas weather.

Pam Peltier has met with Charlie ?, who over sees the folks who have to do community service, and we now will be getting these folks probably at least once a week on one of our work days to help us do the heavy work. So, if you have a heavy job that needs to be done, help is available.

The vegetable garden is suffering from all the rain we've been getting. We picked a few cantaloupes and they are edible, but without much flavor. The water melons are coming along but we will have to wait and see how they develop and how they taste. The okra is growing well but without production. I have the same variety in my garden and I am having the same results. The plants are as sturdy as oak trees and look very healthy. I don't know what varieties we have, as the seeds were given to me by a friend who received them from a friend. They may start producing, but I'm not going to hold my breath.

Don't forget the "Name the Greenhouse" contest. Entries must be submitted no later than the August meeting. Entries can be sent to [dstowers1@houston.rr.com](mailto:dstowers1@houston.rr.com) or turned into Donie Stowers at the August

meetings. The winning entry will be announced at the September meeting and a \$50 prize will be awarded. The only stipulation is the word *education* must be in the name.

### **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

Debbie Soderman, Class of 2007, is taking orders

### **STONEWASHED DENIM**

shirt in short or long sleeves with embroidered BCMGA logo:

Mens Sizes XS-XL - \$20

XXL-4XL- \$21.50

Women's Sizes XS-XL \$20

Plus 1X-2X \$21.50

### **POLO SHIRT**

colors- Stone or Banana

Men's Sizes XS-XL -\$20

2x-4x \$21.50

Women's Polo shirts

Sizes XS-XL \$20

Plus 1X- 2X \$21.50

### **CAPS and VISORS**

colors- Khaki or Gold

Price for each \$10.50

### **T-SHIRTS**

with screen print TMGA logo

Men's T-shirt colors- Khaki, Yellow Haze, Lt Blue

Sizes SM - XL \$6.50

2X - 3X \$7.50

Women's Scoop Neck T-shirt

colors - Yellow Haze, Blue Spruce, Lt Pink

Sizes SM - XL \$6.50

Women's Tank Top colors - Yellow Haze, Blue Spruce, Lt Pink

Sizes SM - XL \$6.50

Aprons colors-Blue Denim, Stone

Price \$8.00

You can contact Debbie at [debsoderman@yahoo.com](mailto:debsoderman@yahoo.com)

Or call her at (979) 345-4942

Monica Krancevic, Class of 2007, is our new Training Coordinator. Monica will be recruiting and scheduling speakers for the spring Master Gardener Training Course. The 5-week course will run Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 am to 3:30 pm from March 6 through April 5, 2007. Hospitality hosts are needed to provide snacks. Please contact Monica at [mkrancevic@yahoo.com](mailto:mkrancevic@yahoo.com) or (979) 709-6556

Gil Livanec, Class of 2000, is working his booty off researching and planning the first ever BCMGA fruit sale. Mark you calendars for Saturday, February 17, 2007. You'll find Gil at [glivanec@sbcglobal.net](mailto:glivanec@sbcglobal.net).

Texas Master Gardener Website <http://texasmastergardeners.org>

The TMGA website is worth a look. You'll find a calendar of events that includes educational programs, classes and certification workshops for gardeners. You'll find newsletters and Power Point presentations that you can download and use in your own presentations. The password is "sunset".

## The Organic Gardener...

By Ellen Pedisich

I am getting ready for the Junior Master Gardeners to join me in tending this organic garden plot. A few weeks ago I met with them and their parents for a composting class and we made tentative plans for them to come to the site and make a compost pile. After we do that we will follow our guidelines for planting a fall garden. I am looking forward to working with these enthusiastic young gardeners. Come and join us on a Tuesday or Friday morning.

## *Chinese hibiscus, Hibiscus sinensis*

**by Dr. William C. Welch, Extension Horticulturist,  
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX**

**C**hinese hibiscus offer an excellent source of summer color in the landscape, and are among our most popular tropical and subtropical flowering plants. Popularity in Texas appears to be increasing in recent years, although insects, diseases, and winter injury limit their use. Even the southernmost extremes of Texas occasionally experience sufficient cold to kill this plant. With this in mind, hibiscus rosa sinensis should be grown as an annual or container specimen in most of the state. In areas where winter does not cause damage, hibiscus is a perennial, and



may be used as a more permanent landscape plant.

The glossy green foliage varies considerably in size and texture among the many varieties. Flowers range from 4 to 8 inches in diameter, and may be double or single. Hibiscus belong to the mallow family and are closely related to cotton, hollyhock, Turks cap, the mallows, shrub althaea, Confederate rose, and okra. Colors vary from white through pink, red, yellow, apricot, and orange. Generally, the single-flower hibiscus bloom more, and, therefore, offer a bigger show in the landscape, but doubles are sometimes preferred for their spectacular individual flowers.

Hibiscus flowers are popular for decoration. They need not be placed in water to prevent wilting, which adds flexibility to their use. An objection is that the flowers of most varieties last only one day, especially during hot weather. To keep flowers open until evening, pull blooms as soon as they are fully open in the morning, and keep in the refrigerator until just before using. If no leaves are pulled with the blossoms, picking does not damage the plant or reduce the total amount of flowering.

Hibiscus prefer a sunny location and well drained soil containing plenty of organic matter and nutrients. From April through September, small monthly applications of a complete fertilizer are beneficial. Container-grown plants will require more frequent applications. To bloom and grow profusely, hibiscus must have sufficient water. As with most other plants, watering should be done thoroughly and not too frequently. Some protection from strong winds is necessary, since the flowers are easily damaged.

It should be remembered that hibiscus are not cold hardy. If your area is subject to freezing temperatures, your Chinese hibiscus must either be treated as annuals and allowed to freeze or be protected during cold weather. During mild winters, plants may freeze to the ground and then sprout from the base the following spring. Applying a loose mulch, such as pine straw or oak leaves, around the base of the plant before cold weather sometimes prevents severe winter injury. Certain varieties are more susceptible to cold damage than others. If greenhouse space is available, plants may be dug, placed in containers, and replanted in the landscape after the danger of frost has passed.

In recent years, there has been an increase in use of hibiscus as container plants. Small plants may be purchased early in spring or summer, placed in large pots (at least 12 inches in diameter) and enjoyed until frost.

### **2006 Calendar of Events:**

Aug 8:	BCMGA Meeting
Sept 12:	BCMGA Meeting
Oct 10:	BCMGA Meeting
Nov 14:	BCMGA Meeting
Dec 12:	BCMGA Meeting

### **NEWS AND NOTES:**

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ We will be ordering new BCMGA shirts at the August monthly meeting. Come to the meeting and find out all of the details.

# Garden Checklist – JULY

By Heather Vincent

- ✚ Move hibiscus into less afternoon sun if they wilt excessively, drop buds or sunburn.
- ✚ Watch water gardens; levels may drop dangerously low due to evaporation.
- ✚ Raise the lawnmower blade. Cutting grass too short exposes the roots to heat and drought.
- ✚ Replace spring annuals with summer flowers such as gaura, Mexican zinnia and scaevola.
- ✚ Clean hummingbird feeders every 3-5 days.
- ✚ Keep azaleas well watered. They're setting next years flowers now.
- ✚ Deep water plants to force roots to grow downward instead of sideways.
- ✚ Put a bird bath near tomatoes if birds peck at the fruit. Often they are looking for moisture.
- ✚ Keep an eye on trees. If they show stress, rich compost spread beneath the canopy has been known to produce dramatic results. For large old trees, seek professional help. Large trees may die from the inside out, producing new foliage even though the core is dead.
- ✚ Plant cantaloupe, okra, squash and sweet potatoes.
- ✚ To banish ants, blend garlic, liquid dish soap, hot peppers, water; strain and pour over mound.
- ✚ Seed or plant heat loving annuals: Coleus, cosmos, globe amaranth, mistflowers, nasturtiums, pentas, purslane, yarrow, and zinnias. Seed morning glories along bare fence line
- ✚ In very hot, dry, sunny spots, try bulbine, flame acanthus, Copper Canyon daisies, rock rose, trailing lantana, scaevola, and yarrow.
- ✚ Feed perennials, like bee balm, regularly to increase bloom production.
- ✚ Remove weeds.
- ✚ Pinch flower buds off coleus and copper plants for prettier leaves.
- ✚ Consider moving non-blooming roses and daylilies into more sun.
- ✚ Pinch hydrangea leaf tips after blooms have faded to encourage more lush growth.
- ✚ Hit insect-infested plants with a hard water spray early in the day.
- ✚ Remove spent crape myrtle flowers to prolong the bloom period.
- ✚ Try herbs, vegetables in hanging baskets.
- ✚ Sprinkle earthworms over lawn and gardens. They work wonders.
- ✚ 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 July Birthday Wishes

Ruth Tvedt 22nd

Larry Lewis 23<sup>rd</sup>

Lillie Licklider 25<sup>th</sup>

Gary Gardner 26<sup>th</sup>

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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