

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

Heather Vincent, Editor

October 2006

Vol. 12, Iss. 13



Little Known Facts.... October's flower is the Cosmos

Botanical Names: *Cosmos bipinnatus*

Other Names: Mexican Aster, Chocolate Cosmo

Description: A single flower atop a delicate, sometimes hairy stem.

Colors: white, red, pink, brown, orange, yellow, purple

Season: Summer to Fall

Meaning: Comes from the Latin word *kosmos* meaning beautiful.

Bloom Size: 2 inches in diameter

Color Pattern: solid, striped, bi-color

Facts: Hummingbirds are very attracted to this flower. Very fragrant. Chocolate cosmos even smell like chocolate. Are suitable for drying.

News...

The Minutes...Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association Minutes of General Meeting, 10-10-06 By Donie Stowers

President George Gabriles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Christine Kern introduced tonight's speaker Don Gerard who presented a program on roses.

Barbara Ross announced that we are hosting a luncheon on October 26, for Precinct 2 employees who have given us so much help at the Education Station. She passed around a list for members to sign up to bring food.

Barbara also said we need to see the newest "pretty" in the tropical bed, a 7' heron eating a fish that our own Larry Lewis sculpted from metal.

Barbara also asked that we keep Elizabeth Lee and her family in our thoughts as her son struggles to recover from a head injury sustained in an accident about 2 months ago.

George asked for corrections or additions to minutes and as there were none they were accepted as presented.

Treasurer, Ted Jagan gave his report which showed a current balance of \$12,809.00. Ted said there will be a budget proposal meeting on Friday, November 17, at 12:00 p.m. at the Extension Service and a budget approval meeting on Tuesday, December 12, @ 5:30 p.m. If you plan to request money for an upcoming MG project, or have input concerning the budget, please plan to attend these meetings. Ted is also collecting dues for next year. Single membership is \$13.00 and family membership is \$18.00. Carol Farmer made the motion to accept the treasury report as presented and BeBe Brown seconded it. The motion carried.

Donie Stowers presented a check for \$50.00 to Monica Kranevic as the winner of the Name the Greenhouse contest. The new name is the Education Station.

Christine read some minor corrections in the by laws. These corrections will be made and the by laws will be sent to members for the final review. The changes in the by laws will be voted on at the November meeting.

BeBe announced the plant sale date has been set back to April 21, 2007.

BeBe also asked for a moment of silence for our members who passed away in 2006, including Ted Cooper, Dick Merrifield, Jim Christie and Ernie Jank.

Ann McLain announced our open house on October 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. MG are asked to please show up and make yourself available to answer questions. We will be having tours and some demonstrations. We want to put on a good show.

Ann also announced we will have a couple of new articles in our newsletter. We will spotlight a plant of the month and an article on plants wanted, plants and seed members have available to swap or give away. If you have plants and/or seed please contact Ann, e-mail: amclain@annsgarden.com, phone: 979-798-2284.

Carol Farmer, nominating committee member, announced the slate of officers and also asked for nominations from the floor. The slate consists of: Present, Barbara Ross, First Vice President, Ed Barrios and Gary Gardner, Second Vice President, Lee Withers, Secretary, Ann McLain, Treasurer, Ted Jagen, State Directors, Roy Morgan & Debbie Soderman and David & Pam Peltier.

Candace Novak asked that survey forms be completed and returned to her tonight. She also announced she will be speaking on herbs at next month's meeting and said if anyone has a favorite herb recipe to please let her know. There being no further business Christine made the motion to adjourn with a second by Barbara Ray.

News from the President...

By George Gabriles

If you missed the October meeting, you missed a good one, and those of us that attended, hopefully agree with me. Don and Pat Gerard presented an excellent program on Roses, proving once again the tremendous talent that we have within our membership. The attendance at our meetings continues to improve and I am convinced the secret is good programs. Please let it be known if you are interested in presenting a program in an area of your Gardening expertise at some future date.

Monica Krancevic was the happy recipient of the \$50.00 winning award for her entry in the "Name the Greenhouse". It is now THE MASTER GARDENER EDUCATION STATION. She had several offers to help spend the \$50.00, all of which were declined. Thanks to all that participated, we had excellent entries and it was tough selecting the winning entry.

The Nominating Committee reported on the slate of Officers for 2007. The following BCMG's have been nominated: For President: Barbara Ross for 1st VP: Ed Barrios and Gary Gardner for 2nd VP: Lee Withers...for Secretary...Ann McLain for Treasurer: Ted Jagen and for State Directors: Roy Morgan, Debbie Soderman, Pam Peltier, and David Peltier. Please come and cast your vote at the November meeting!!! Also in November, Candace Novak will present a program on selection, planting, caring, and cooking with Herbs. You don't want to miss this one. Bring guest, specially prospective members, a new class starts in March, 2007.

We have scheduled a meeting to work on the 2007 Budget on Friday, November 17, 2006, at 12:00 pm at the Extension Office. If you are heading a Committee your input is important. Please make a special effort to attend.

We need a good turnout at the October 21 Open House at the MASTER GARDENER EDUCATION STATION. There will be demonstrations, plant diagnostics, and garden tours from 10:00 am to noon. A good opportunity to bring guest. Hope to see you there.

News from Ted Jagen....

2007 dues are being collected. The dues remain \$13 with \$2 going toward our dues to the Texas Master Gardener Association and \$1 going toward insurance. Checks should be made

payable to BCMGA. If paying by mail, please address the envelop to Ted Jagen 13805 CR 282 Alvin, Texas 77511.

At the Demonstration Gardens...

By Ray Michalik

The county precinct employees are in the process of digging/cleaning out the interior road ditches to the greenhouse and are dumping the soil, or most of it, in our veggie garden bed. This will raise the bed considerable. It will take much work to get the beds in shape after all the soil is all dumped in but hopefully we can get the county to give us some help to spread the dirt, then we can use our tractor and tiller to put the final touches on it. We have been unable to use the county probationers to help us for the last several work days due to they are all being used at the county fair grounds and a couple of other places that need hurry up help. Hopefully we will be able to get them back to help us spruce up the green house area for the up coming open house. The ground cover is being put down in between the trial rose bed in preparation of covering the area with mulch. With the mulch down the area should really look good. Last Fri. we had a couple of visitors seeking information on how to plant and what to plant this time of year in the way of vegetables. We assisted them and they were very appreciative. WE also gave them a tour of what we have left in our garden and sent some fresh vegetables home with them. They appreciated the help and the fresh vegetables. We invited them to come back any time. Come one out on a week day and have some fun. and maybe pull a weed or two. We always have the coffee pot on.

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!

BCMGA PLANT EXCHANGE...

What gardener doesn't have a wish list of plants to try? And what gardener doesn't occasionally have a surplus of something that needs a good home? Those of us who are able to work at the Education Station regularly, pass our surpluses back and forth among ourselves. But I think that the time has come for this to be more organized and accessible to all our membership, and I am willing to be the match-maker. My idea is that in each issue of the newsletter there will be one list of things BCMGA members are looking for, and another list of other members' surplus plants free to a good home.

My idea is that this not be a barter system. At various times in the lives of our gardens, we may need to be takers, and at other times we are able to be givers. So, unless we have some who take advantage, I would rather that we not keep score. However, this plan will work best if each participant does do a little of both giving and taking.

I suggest that the exchange work this way. If you're looking for a clump of magenta garden phlox, you contact me, and I will post that in the Plant Exchange feature of the

newsletter. Then if someone has some magenta phlox, they contact me to be put in touch with you. Same thing in reverse. You don't know yet that you want magenta phlox, but I post on the Exchange that someone has a surplus of phlox, realization sets in, and you contact me to set it up.

The easiest way to accomplish the physical exchange may be for the plant material to be brought to our monthly meeting. But the two involved in the exchange could make other arrangements. It seems fair that the person who has to do work - that is, the one who digs, divides, gathers seed, or whatever - should determine the time and place of exchange.

Are you interested? Do you have suggestions for how this might work differently? I hope so. Contact me, Ann McLain (amclain@annsgarden.com, 979-798-2284) with suggestions and ideas. We would like to get this underway with the January newsletter, so start developing your wish list and/or surplus inventory now.

Habitat for Humanity...

By Gary Gardner

The Master Gardeners didn't participate in the last build in Clute due to all the rains. The site remained flooded and they were not able to get fill dirt into the site. The Habitat people in charge finally told me for the Master Gardeners just to pass on that build and they would put some plants in when it finally dried up enough. I don't know if it has yet. It was a swamp with boards placed from piles of sand to keep workers out of the water. This was a very small lot that wouldn't have required hardly any landscaping anyway.

Now the next build officially starts 10-27-06 and is house no. 57. Work such as the slab and underground plumbing has already started. It is at 608 Magnolia in Angleton. Landscaping is scheduled for Saturday, 11-4-06.

All Master Gardeners that signed up for this committee need to step up and make a showing for this build. I will get a plot plan ASAP and be giving members a call so that perhaps we can meet at The Learning Station (is this what it is called now?) within the next week or two and make a landscaping plan. It would help if some of the members would go by and look at the site beforehand.

News and Notes From the Coordinator...

By Paula Craig

Get Gardening! – Saturday, October 21, 10 a.m. to Noon at the Education Station. Ann McLain, Carole Wenny, Don & Pat Gerard and Barbara Ray, Barbara Brown, Carol Farmer and Donie Stowers will demonstrate fall planting, transplanting, dividing, propagating and other garden chores for fall. We will give away potted plants and divisions. Jesse Knight will be on hand to answer vegetable questions and I will be available for pest diagnostics. Barbara Ross will be available for tours of the gardens. We need people to help beautify the gardens and

clean the barn on Friday, Oct 20 and Tuesday, Oct. 17. We also need a couple of people to bring goodies. If you would like to participate in this event, please contact Ann, Carole or me.

Appreciation BBQ – Thursday, October 26, 2:00 p.m. at the Education Station. The BCMGA will host a BBQ for the Precinct 2 Road and Bridge crew for all the work they've done on the roads, ditches and elsewhere at the Education Station. Volunteers are needed to bring side dishes. Please call Barbara Ross to see what is needed.

Extension Appreciation Dinner – Thursday, November 16. Exact time and place to be determined. An appreciation dinner for all Extension volunteers and members of the Commissioners' Court. Invitations will be out soon. Spouses, children and friends are welcome.

Master Gardener Spring Training – A tentative schedule is now available for the Spring 2007 MG training. The training will begin Tuesday, March 6 and run through April 5. Take a look. Monica Krancevic will be looking for volunteers to help with refreshments.

Prayers for "Miss Ellie" Ellen Pedisich following her recent surgery and Don Fragnoli for a swift recovery.

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

Thanks you for the card and your get-well wishes. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and hope to be back at the site soon.

I am reading a book, entitled Defiant Gardens, by Kenneth Helphand. "He calls defiant gardens – gardens created in extreme social, economic, or cultural conditions."

I like to expand on this and call defiant gardens – gardens created in extreme physical conditions. This small plot experiences extreme physical conditions with heavy prolonged rain, periods of drought, high temperatures, fire ants, pill bugs, and root nematodes.

What vegetable can defy these setbacks for growth? What can I plant to give me hope, to give the soil a chance to nourish growth, to reward me for my labor?

Haiku:

The carefree onion,
mindless of the nematodes,
grows defiantly.

Ann's Corner...

By Ann McLain

The first fall we lived in this house, I was quite startled one morning to see some big, showy, bright red flowers standing in a bed of monkey grass, where nothing had been the last time I looked. They turned out to be Lycoris, the red spider lily, aka the hurricane lily. As I read up on them, I discovered they were relatives of the pink things my mother had grown in Ohio; she called them surprise lilies, but they're also known as naked ladies. The naked part refers to the fact that the bloom appears when the plant has no other above ground parts showing. I never much liked those pink naked ladies, but these red spider lilies are a knock out.

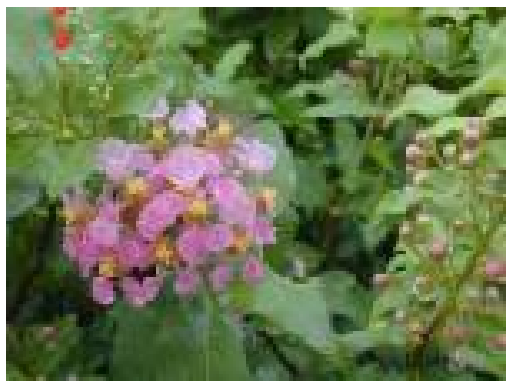
This past summer I decided to remake the old monkey grass bed into something more interesting, so I did a lot of digging there, tearing out monkey grass and planting a whole new cast of characters. I worried about the Lycoris, which I hoped to keep, but by the time I did this project, the Lycoris leaves had died down. And anyway, Lycoris leaves look a lot like monkey grass.

I had parked some plant stakes next to the flowers last fall, but they turned out to be fairly useless in finding the Lycoris bulbs this summer. In the end, I found them by chopping into them. Ouch! I salvaged the ones that still seemed to be mostly intact at the base, and potted them up to keep them safe. Once the new things were in place, which was several weeks later, I remembered the Lycoris, and took a look for signs of life. When I tapped them out of the pots, the pots were full of roots! Surprise lilies indeed. So I tucked them in near where they had begun the summer. Once again I marked them with plant labels, this time describing the extent of each one's damage, and then promptly forgot them again.

A few weeks ago, the least damaged bulb sent up its flashy red flower right on schedule. Its friends didn't manage to bloom, but their new foliage is popping up now. Apparently, even damaged bulbs can live survive and be rehabilitated. The real surprise lily this fall was the one that suddenly pushed its flower up right next to one of the new plants I had put in. I must have spaded and dug all around it and missed it by a hair. So all's well, and I have managed to have a new bed and keep the red spider lilies, too.

My Favorite Plant for this Month...The Barbados Cherry

By Donie Stowers



The Barbados Cherry (*malpighia glabra* L.), my favorite plant this month, is in full bloom and has the sweetest scent imaginable! This large, bushy, evergreen shrub has been growing in my yard somewhere around six years and by mid fall it gets pretty scraggly, so I cut it back and it responds beautifully.

It puts on a full flush of blooms in mid spring followed by a few red cherries. I don't know why they are called cherries because they are about the size of a chilipiquin pepper.

These little "cherries" are edible but not worth the trouble. They have one large seed with a tiny bit of fruit pulp covering it, and a slight tart flavor. A plus for

the cherries is their high vitamin C content. The shrub continues to bloom sporadically, during the summer, with another full flush of blooms about mid-summer and again in early fall. It also continues to produce cherries but never very many.

The best thing about this plant is its wonderful scent. The clusters of tiny soft pink blooms give off a light, very sweet scent which is at its strongest early in the day. And even though the blossoms are tiny there are hundreds of them. When I look out my kitchen window I see a cloud of pink!

The Barbados Cherry, originated in the West Indies and Central and South America likes well draining soil in full sun to partial shade. It should be mulched well for the winter. It can be propagated by air layering lower branches or with leafy hardwood cuttings. It can also be grown as a small tree if lower branches are trimmed.

This truly is one of my favorite plants, not only for this month but all year long!

Education News...

Master Gardener Training Classes for 2007: To begin March 6 2007 . Full schedule in the Nov. Newsletter.

<u>2006 Calendar of Events:</u>	<u>NEWS AND NOTES:</u>
<p>Oct 21: Autumn in the Garden at the Education Station from 10 am till noon. Bring everyone you know!!!! Free</p> <p>Nov 14: BCMGA Meeting</p> <p>Dec 12: BCMGA Meeting</p>	<p>Education opportunity for MGs and MNs. Mrs. Consilio, 4th grade teacher at Jane Law Elementary in Freeport is looking for a program on habitat/wildlife gardens. There are 4 one-hour classes. The program should be hands on. If you would like to get involved, please let me know. The program would be next January or February. Contact Paula Craig County Agent, Horticulture Texas Cooperative Extension 979-864-1558</p> <p>Keep Pearland Beautiful presents Plant Thyme Fall Luncheon Herb Sale & Silent Auction October 13, 2006 at 11:30 A.M. Westside Event Center 2150 Country Place Parkway Pearland, TX Guest Speaker Susan Wittig Albert Author of the China Bayles Herbal Mysteries</p>

Give It A Grow

By Suzanne Jerabeck

PLANT BULBS NOW FOR A GLORIOUS SHOW OF SPRING COLOR

After an incredibly hot summer season, it's finally fall – and time to plant bulbs, corms, tubers, and rhizomes for spring blooming.

If you haven't tried bulbs, you're missing out on awesome color displays – that take hardly any effort. In fact, bulbs are like buried treasure in the fall that deliver a bounty of blooms in the spring.

They come in every color, shape, and size. Some bulbs, like the hyacinth, deliver a heady fragrance, too. Crocuses are some of the earliest bloomers, while the Grape Hyacinth is one of the best colonizers. Others like allium and daffodil are deer-resistant while scilla is one of the best bulbs for shade. There's truly a spring bulb for every situation and setting.

For bursts of color, blend bulbs into your perennial beds and borders. Plant them around spring-flowering trees (they'll bloom before the leaves appear). Scatter them in informal drifts throughout your lawn. But, always plant your bulbs in clusters for to achieve the greatest impact.

As an added bonus, many bulbs will naturalize in this area. Simply plant them and forget them. For naturalizing, try *Leucojum* (Snowflake), *muscaria* (Grape Hyacinth), *Narcissus*, and some varieties of daffodils. They're all easy to grow, and once established, most will spread quickly throughout your landscape. After a few years you'll want to dig up and divide overcrowded bulbs.

Some bulbs to plant in October include alliums (ornamental onions), anemones, *bletilla* (ground orchid), calla lilies, *Crocus*, Dutch iris, freesias, *ixia* (African corn lily), *Leucojum*, *Lycoris* (spider lily), *milla* (Spring Star Flower, also listed as *triteleia* and *ipheoin*), *muscaria*, *oxalis*, *ranunculus*, *scilla*, *sparaxis*, *triton*, *watsonia* (Bugle lily), *Zephyranthes* (rain lilies).

On Veterans Day (November 11), plant *Narcissus* "paperwhites." At Thanksgiving, plant alliums (garlic), *amaryllis*, *crocus*, daffodils, freesias, *ixia*, *Leucojum*, *milla*, *muscaria*, *sparaxis*, *watsonia*, and *Zephyranthes*. And, on Pearl Harbor Day (December 7), plant alliums, *amaryllis*, *ixia*, *sparaxis*, and *Zephyranthes*.

Don't plant tulips until New Year's Eve. (Place in your refrigerator's vegetable bin for chilling 45-60 days before planting.) Then continue planting every two weeks until Valentine's Day.

Some tips:

Buy the biggest, healthiest bulbs you can find. The fatter the bulb, the more blossoms are stored inside. Avoid bulbs that are soft to the touch or have signs of growth, such as a green tail.

Work the soil several inches down in a sunny raised bed. Add compost at a rate of about 15 bushels per 1,000 square feet and add some sharp sand to insure good drainage.

Follow planting directions carefully, paying close attention to the best planting depth and distance between bulbs.

Before setting the bulbs, work a teaspoon of bone meal or superphosphate into each hole. Holland Bulb Booster is often recommended. Then sprinkle a little sand and soil over it and place the bulbs on the sand. But, don't let the bulb touch the fertilizer. Superphosphate is better if squirrels have dug up your bulbs in the past.

Plant all bulbs that have appendages or roots facing down. If you are unsure, plant the bulb sideways.

Happy October Birthday Wishes

Pat Cayer Oct 1
Marti Graves Oct 25th
Evelyn Moon Oct 22nd
Kermit Schlameus Oct 22nd

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
Angleton, TX 77515

Educational programs of the Texas Cooperative Extension are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the county Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating