

What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

Heather Vincent, Editor

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Blue Bonnets and snow courtesy of Don Gerard

LORE OF THE BLUEBONNET

Bluebonnets have been loved since man first trod the vast prairies of Texas. Indians wove fascinating folk tales around them. The early-day Spanish priests gathered the seeds and grew them around their missions. This practice gave rise to the myth that the padres had brought the plant from Spain, but this cannot be true since the two predominant species of bluebonnets are found growing naturally only in Texas and at

no other location in the world.

As historian Jack Maguire so aptly wrote, "It's not only the state flower but also a kind of floral trademark almost as well known to outsiders as cowboy boots and the Stetson hat." He goes on to affirm that "The bluebonnet is to Texas what the shamrock is to Ireland, the cherry blossom to Japan, the lily to France, the rose to England and the tulip to Holland."

The ballad of our singing governor, the late W. Lee O'Daniel, goes, "you may be on the plains or the mountains or down where the sea breezes blow, but bluebonnets are one of the prime factors that make the state the most beautiful land that we know.

News...

NOTES FROM THE PREZ...

We did it!!! Another successful plant sale and we all survived. I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who helped with this sale in any way. I know that toward the final count down day, there were some frayed tempers. When you are under stress, these things happen. But the Master Gardeners are like a large family, and like brothers and sisters, we have our in family differences. And like family, we get over it, forgive, and forget.

I can't give you a final tally as that is treasurer Ted's job. But I do know it was better than last year. So when you see Bebe, Carol, or Doni, pat them on the back and tell them good job. Again THANKS EVERYONE.

In May we will have a class graduating. Party time and everyone brings food to that meeting.

Spring has now sprung and the Education Station Gardens are looking great. Ann McLain's mounds of purple petunias are show stoppers that you can see from the street! Beautiful!

Roy Morgan's hard work on the memorial area has made quite a difference, also Paula's

Earth Kind Rose Garden is a wonderful area to please your nose as well as your eyes.

There are still a few beds that would like to have a new owner. Come out, have a cup of coffee and look around. See you there.

Barbara Ross

APRIL GENERAL MEETING...

After the meeting was called to order by Barbara Ross, the minutes and treasurer's report were accepted as presented. Ted Jagen reported that we are still ahead of our budget projections for the year.

Gil Livanec reminded members that the deadline had arrived for ordering fruit trees for delivery next winter. Trees are being sold at cost. As the meeting progressed, it looked as though Gil was doing good business taking orders. Also, Gil is organizing a group order for a citrus leaf miner control; contact him if you are interested.

Ray Michalik reported that the John Deere at the Education Station is working again (cross our fingers), and that the air compressor donated by Roy Morgan also has been put back in working order.

Barbara Ross asked those new interns present to stand up and be introduced, and complimented them on their work so far. Our May meeting will be Graduation Day for last spring's interns. This will be a pot luck, and everyone should turn out to celebrate the occasion.

Don Gerard introduced the new Guidelines for Volunteer Recertification Hours, which summarizes the benchmarks Don has been using in processing our hours. This new guide will be distributed to all members.

In other announcements, Barbara Ross told us that Debbie Soderman is getting together another shirt order. The Flower Fund has been replenished, and we hope that we won't need it again for a long time. Thanks to all who chipped in. And sometime in July or August, there are plans to have a pot luck and plant swap for all members. No work, no business – just a good time!

At the conclusion of the business meeting, Barbara Brown filled us in on plans for the plant sale, and recruited helpers. By the time you read this, the sale will be over, so I needn't spell out details. But if you were not on board at this year's sale, resolve right now to participate next year. It's a lot of work, but it's great to see our membership come together to accomplish all the jobs that are necessary for a success. Remember, this is the main source of dollars for all the plants and soil and tractors and tools that we need to carry out our mission of demonstrating and sharing garden knowledge in Brazoria County.

News from the Demonstration Gardens...

By Ray Michalik

Here it is in the middle of April and it's still in the 50 degree range at night. That's not very good at all for the veggie garden and then throw in all the rain we've been getting...it's beginning to look like a crop failure unless things change in a hurry. We attempted to till our garden spot at the green house on the 13th and it's no where near dry enough yet. Even the beds are much higher in level than last year. Mother Nature must start cooperating with us if we are to have a tomato crop!

We have been successful in repairing our John Deere lawnmower. I thought for a while there that we were going to have to bring it to the \$60 an hour labor shop and have it repaired. A pressure switch was located for the large air compressor that Roy Morgan donated to the Master Gardeners and it was installed – it's in very good working order...Thanks Roy!

We haven't had much community worker help so far this month because of the Good Friday holiday and then the third Friday which is reserved for the Junior Master Gardeners. Hopefully, we will get help this

Friday to help set up and clean up prior to our annual Plant Sale. We have been getting a good turn out from our Master Gardeners and several new faces from the new class of interns that just finished classes.

Our work days are still on Tuesday and Friday mornings. If you don't have anything to do and want to enjoy some good company, come on out and pull on a weed. The coffee pot is always on and who knows, Jessie may bring one of his famous home made cakes for us to snack 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!

News and Notes From the Coordinator...

By Paula Craig

The Fungus Are Among Us

High humidity and mild temperatures create a perfect environment for certain fungi to party it up and reproduce. Leaf spots, powdery mildew and rust complaints are coming in from around the county. What can you do?

Cultural/Sanitation Practices

Remove affected plant parts and burn or bag and kick to the curb. Disinfect any tools, gloves, shoes that may have come in contact with affected plants before moving on to unaffected areas. Water plants from the bottom in the early part of the day. Avoid splash on the foliage.

If plants are affected year after year, you may consider moving them to an area with better air circulation. Plants close to your home's foundation, plants that are crowded together and plants in fenced in areas tend to be more susceptible. If you already have good circulation, consider giving the plant the old heave ho. Some plants are simply not suited to the Gulf Coast.

Fungicides

Neem Oil, lime sulfur and baking soda suspensions are safe treatments for powdery mildew. Lime sulfur also works on rust and black spot. New applications will be necessary as long as favorable environmental conditions persist and as new growth emerges.

Contact fungicides include Mancozeb, Banner and Funginex are some of the common chemical controls.

Baking soda suspension

- 1 tablespoon of baking soda
- ½ teaspoon of liquid soap
- 1 gallon of water

Apply to a test spot before spraying the entire plant. Do not apply in full sun. Discard any remaining spray.

The Organic Gardener...

By Ellen Pedisich

Last week I gave a presentation to the Master Gardener class. When I asked who composts at home many raised their hands and proceeded to tell me how they compost their kitchen and yard trimmings. The students, now interns, actively and verbally participated in building and turning a compost pile, and screening and applying compost. They are enthusiastic about the program, and I enjoyed being with them. Afterwards I thought how good it is that gardeners are composting, returning organic matter to their gardens. They enrich their soil and prepare it for new plant growth. The cycle continues.

My Haiku

He shows me his seed.
It's a Bird of Paradise.
Heavenly Delight!

Habitat For Humanity...

By Gary Gardner, Sr.

Due to increasing consulting job demands, I have handed off my duties as coordinator of the Habitat For Humanity landscaping projects to Roy Morgan, who has agreed to head this effort. Please support Roy in this high-profile effort. I will continue to help when in the area.

GULF COAST PALMS...

By Dan Roy

Howdy Folks,

I'd like to pass on some information which is rarely talked about in these parts, namely the care and planting of Palm Trees. First of all, not all palms will adapt and flourish here because of the temperature (20-30 deg), another problem is planting size-proportional plants, why plant a fifty foot tree on a small residential lot? I recently visited a home that had a beautiful circular drive surrounded by an eight foot wrought iron fence, it was beautifully landscaped except for the fifteen palm trees that were thirty feet tall that were planted ten feet apart around the circle drive and completely overwhelmed and dominated, drawing all attention away from the beautiful home and professional designed landscaping. A palm should be considered more of an accent plant in the average lot and not an anchor or focus plant.

This list of palms does best here on the upper Gulf Coast, they are mostly from five to twenty feet tall and are right for our Zone 9 temperatures (20-30 deg). I'm limiting the list to four of the best in each size category.

ZONE 9:

5FT:

Saw Palmetto
Sabal Palm (Cabbage)
Cat Palm
Sabal Texana Palmetto (native)

10FT:

Dwarf Phillipine Sugar palm
Chinese Date palm
Lady Palm
Miniture Coconut Palm

15-20FT:

Washingtonia (Mexican Fan)
Pindo Jelly Palm
Mediterranean Date Palm

In planting a palm tree, care should be taken to;

- 1) Plant in a well drained area, preferable near a good water source, contrary to popular belief, palms are not desert plants but always grow in an oasis near a constant water source
- 2) Plant no deeper than it was planted at the nursery or in its container.
- 3) Dig the hole twice as wide as the tree's width but no deeper than the tree is to be planted, add mycorrhizal treatment to the bottom of hole.
- 4) Water the new hole and tree ball before planting, this is not a deep soaking on the tree root ball but enough water in its container to moisten roots, this is so planting hole and root ball are somewhat in balance for water and does not rob water from the new tree roots. Water frequently, the first year.
- 5) Place dirt in hole by layers, firming in by hand reduces air pockets better than watering in alone.

Now here is where I depart from most folks, I'm a firm believer in using a fungal treatment called MYCORRHIZAL which grows around 99% of plants root systems, it is especially beneficial to palms, this fungus has a symbiotic relationship with plants, exchanging sugar & simple carbohydrates while giving the plant essential minerals and water, this process is especially beneficial for the roots on new transplants, accelerating their growth & extending roots by as much as 1000% . It makes the difference in planting a palm and watching it sit there for years while it adapts to the soil and builds its Mycorrhizal support system or enjoying your palm now.

There are two ways to use Mycorrhizal; The first and best way is to put Mycorrhizal tablets in a freshly dug hole before transplanting a new plant, it gets a much needed boost that new plants need. Older, existing plants can be treated by using a soil auger(about \$9.95) & drill to put holes around the root ball & place Mycorrhizal tablets in them, watering in by intense deep soaking after treatment.

Palm deficiencies exhibit themselves in several ways, the three most common are Manganese, Potassium and Magnesium.

MANGANESE:

Wilted, Yellow, Frizzled look, treat early or palm may not make it if its left too long.

POTASSIUM:

Yellow, Orange, Brown flecks-necrosis in older leaves

First frizzled leaves begin on older leaves

Treatment for Manganese & Potassium at the same time, too much Potassium causes a Manganese deficiency.

MAGNESIUM:

Older leaves yellow at the edge and remain green at the center, leaves can become necrotic.

Affects Date Palms, particularly.

Tree spikes of these individual minerals spikes are about fifteen dollars.

Palms Tree planting season runs from April 15 to Nov 1 but anytime the soil is over 75deg., the warmer the better. Palms can be an enjoyable accent when they are properly designed into the landscape but a garish eyesore when planted just anywhere. Enjoy your palm!

Daylilies...

By Michael Mayfield

Daylilies start to bloom mid April though June ,and peek mid May. Slugs and snails cause the most damage to the flower and foliage. Daylilies need no extra fertilizing to make good blooms but sun light 6 hours or more is needed. Now that you have all those flowers it is time to try your hand at hybridizing. Biggest problem here is finding out if it is a diploid or tetraploid. Most old lilies are diploid and new ones can be either. Some name tags will tell but most wont. Dips will not pollinate a tet. or tets on dips, just have and try .Take the pollen from the stamen(yellow looking) and put it on the pistil (white, no pollen) in morning is best. If a seed pod is developing then the flower will not fall off after 2 days. DO NOT PULL THE DRIED FLOWER OFF THE SEED POD. Seed pod takes about 45 days to develop an turns brown ,then splits open. Seeds on diploids can be small, on tetraploid will be larger the size of BB's an all will be black. I like to store the seed in refrigerator till planted. Put 20 or more in a gallon pot, seeds make up to 30 days to grow. They will look like nut grass so don't pull them out. Plant any time after summer heat has passed. Most likely will not bloom till second year. This is the best way to get a lot of daylilies at no cost.

News for MG's and MN's...

New Fact Sheet Addresses Concerns Regarding Outdoor Residential (Mosquito) Misting Systems EPA's new Web fact sheet on outdoor residential misting systems, also known as mosquito misting systems, will help consumers decide if residential pesticide misting systems are appropriate for their home, understand safety precautions for using outdoor misting systems, find related information on a variety of methods for mosquito control, and understand the role of the EPA and state agencies in regulating misters. EPA developed this fact sheet because an increasing number of households have purchased timed-release outdoor residential misting systems to control mosquitoes and other insects around the home. However, advertisers, the media, and other sources sometimes provide information about misting systems that is difficult to understand or might conflict with other information. The new Web page describes outdoor residential misting systems and discusses the pesticides used in the systems, their safety and effectiveness, and the regulatory authority of EPA and state governments regarding misting systems. The Outdoor Residential Misting Systems fact sheet is available on EPA's Web site at http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/misting_systems.htm.

We just cannot seem to remember from year to year how beautiful the gardens are in April. Veilchenblau is just now reaching its peak bloom and will continue stopping traffic for another month. The hedge of Carefree Beauty (formerly known as Katy Road Pink) planted last year started blooming a few weeks ago and hasn't slowed down. It is stunning.

(<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=qwko95bab.0.sycc75bab.p9yvjsbab.164&ts=S0241&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.vintagerosery.com%2Froses%2Fkatyroadpink.htm>) Marcia and I just cannot find enough time to spend with each of the hundreds of old garden roses, now giving us their best, scattered throughout the gardens. And we live here! What should you be doing in your gardens this month? Nothing! Just enjoy them. Other than insuring your plants are watered, deal with any pest problems you might notice. We saw some minor thrips damage this week and some blackspot due to the three weeks of on-again / off-again rain. Natural predators released last month will take out the thrips and these old garden roses will take care of the blackspot on their own. This Saturday, we have two excellent speakers scheduled. Please come be our guests and join us. Besides seeing and hearing about some wonderful plants we promise you will not be familiar with, our gardens are waiting for you to walk through and smell the roses. If you have any questions about old roses, organic gardening or even the Thursday Farmers Market, call, stop by or email us...Bob & Marcia

Largest Orchid Show the Metroplex has ever Seen Contact: Dotty Woodson, 817-884-1945 Arlington, Texas – Hundreds of orchid growers from all over the United States and other countries will gather in Arlington, Texas, for an Orchid Roundup. The Fort Worth and Greater North Texas Orchid Societies are hosting the 2007 American Orchid Society Spring Show, Sale and Meetings May 4th, 5th and 6th at the Arlington Convention Center. The Show and Sale are open to the public Friday, May 4th, and Saturday, May 5th, from 9:00 to 5:00 and Sunday, May 6th, from 9:00 to 4:00. Admission is \$5.00. The Arlington Convention Center is located at 1200 Ballpark Way off Interstate 30 halfway between Fort Worth and Dallas. This Show and Sale provides a unique opportunity to see the amazing diversity of the orchid plant family without having to travel all over the world. Thousands of flowering orchids in artist displays will attest to the dedication of the many orchid growers traveling to Arlington. Orchid vendors will sale orchids, orchid supplies, orchid jewelry and other items. This is the largest orchid show ever held in the Metroplex. If you think you have seen the most beautiful flower displays in the world, you haven't. Join us in Arlington for an Orchid Roundup. Other orchid organizations holding meetings in conjunction with

the American Orchid Society include Southwest Regional Orchid Growers Association, Slipper Orchid Alliance, International Phalaenopsis Alliance, Orchid Digest Corporation and Pleurothallid Alliance. For more information about the show go to <http://www.aosdfw2007.org/> For more information or an article about growing orchids, contact Dotty Woodson, president of the Fort Worth Orchid Society, 817-884-1945 or e-mail d-woodson@tamu.edu Dotty Woodson, Ed. D. County Extension Agent-Horticulture Texas Cooperative Extension 200 Taylor Street, Suite 500 Fort Worth, TX 76102-7308 Office (817) 884-1945 Fax (817) 884-1941 d-woodson@tamu.edu tarrant.tamu.edu www.txsmartscape.com P.O.Box 1540 Fort Worth, TX 76101-1540.

BRAZORIA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER RECERTIFICATION HOURS

Purpose: To assist the Brazoria County Master Gardener Association members in recording experiences on behalf of the communities they serve. Guidelines were adopted and adapted from “The Texas Master Gardener Management Guide”.

- I. To develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture.
- II. To expand the capabilities of the Texas Cooperative Extension Service to disseminate horticultural information to individuals and groups in the community.
- III. BCMGA Bylaws require 6 hours advanced training and 12 hours volunteer work annually for recertification.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: HOURS THAT COUNT

- Create and maintain demonstration gardens.
- Garden with the elderly and handicapped.
- Work at the Master Gardener booth at community functions.
- Work at Plant Sales

- Make home gardening visits when assistance is requested.
- Act as liaison for the Extension Office in a residential area by answering gardening questions and taking soil samples.
- Produce or contribute articles to the Master Gardener newsletter.
- Contribute approved articles to other publications.
- Conduct school gardening programs.
- Talk to groups interested in horticulture.
- Coordinate Master Gardener and Advanced Master Gardener programs.
- Instruct Master Gardeners (through programs, demonstrations, etc.)
- Coordinate videotape recordings of Master Gardener projects to be used in programs or publicity.
- Work in trial gardens at the Education Station.
- Conduct tours at the Education Station.
- Plan and implement public relations projects.
- Compile and/or distribute plant lists for the Gulf Coast of Texas.
- Photograph Master Gardener activities.
- Assist in creation of youth, community, or school gardens.
- Maintain an Extension Office/ Master Gardener library.
- Write and design brochures.
- Work in cooperative projects with the Texas Parks and Wild Life Association.
- Work the Master Gardener Hotline phones.

- Attend seminars, workshops, programs, demonstrations related to horticulture.
- Participate in organized, approved field trips for horticulture experiences.
- Participate in local garden clubs only if horticulture topics are presented or demonstrated (count only the time for the program).
- Work on committees related to strengthening the Brazoria County Master Gardener Association.
- Work in your home city on community horticulture projects (beautification projects, city gardens).
- Perform clerical work in the Master Gardener office.
- Meet with city, county or state officials related to the Brazoria County Master Gardener program.
- Attend monthly Master Gardener meetings (the entire meeting will count).
- Share horticultural knowledge with individuals.
- Other projects as approved by the Master Gardener Association

Members must obtain approval from the Horticultural Agent and the BCMGA Board prior to accepting a commitment as a representative of the Master Gardener Association.

Some exclusions apply. Examples of exclusions are social meetings of organizations; maintenance of church, agency, civic, governmental, or community gardens unless approved by the BCMGA as a project; working in you own business or place of employment while being financially compensated; personal gardening; other activities not directly related to the purpose of the Master Gardener Association. If a project is questionable, contact the Horticulture Agent or an officer for clarification.

Travel to a from all events will count. Actual time from home rounded to the nearest quarter hour. Report travel time under the particular category.

2007Calendar of Events:**April 21 Plant Sale****NEWS AND NOTES:**

Sandra Jackson, 979-345-5191, x 6050 would like some lessons for her 4th graders on soils plant adaptations plant vascular systems Classes are 45 minutes long. If you are interested in getting involved, please let me know. Paula Craig County Agent, Horticulture Texas Cooperative Extension 979-864-1558

Thanks to all who brought refreshments to the MG meeting. At this time I only have 2 people signed up to bring refreshments to the May meeting. Any volunteers may call me, Donie Stowers @ 713-594-9739 (cell) or e-mail me @ dstowers1@houston.rr.com Thanks!

For all of you who did not make the Master Gardener's Conference in Kerrville, you missed a great time! My tour group visited the Medina Nursery in Medina, Tx. They specialize in native plants, very interesting. We also visited Love Creek Orchards in Medina, Tx. They currently have about 700 apple trees, peach trees, figs and blackberries. They are also one of the few nurseries to raise the Big Tooth Maple tree. Our lunch that day was prepared by the Love Creek people in their restaurant and not only did we have a fresh apple (mine was a delicious Pink Lady), we had wonderful apple cake with apple butter spread between 2 slices. After lunch we visited their gift shop and restaurant and had apple ice cream! What a treat!

Our speaker at Friday night's banquet was Felder Rushing. I have his book, Pass along Plants that is quite humorous as is Felder himself. We all enjoyed hearing him speak.

Saturday we attended our training sessions where we heard more about native plants, water conservation and growing blue bonnets and other wild seed.

Next year's conference will be hosted by Ft. Bend County in Conroe and I hope we can all attend! Donie Stowers

Happy March & April Birthday Wishes

Barbara Brown April 27th

Paula Craig April 28th

Anna Gawlik April 18th

Dan Rhodes April 4th

Donie Stowers April 29th

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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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