

August 2019

Big Country Master Gardener
Association Newsletter
Bcmgtx.org

The Garden Thymes



UPCOMING EVENTS

- 08/13 6:00
Executive Committee Meeting
- 08/20 6:15
Social Time and Business Meeting
- 08/26 5:30-7:30
4th Monday Workday at Swenson House
- 08/31 9:00-12:00
Saturday Seminar -Dressing Up Your Yard

Watch emails and the calendar for additions and corrections such as workdays for the Demo Gardens, Meditation Garden, and Swenson House.



2019 BCMG Officers

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| President - | Gene Shelhamer |
| Vice President- | Cheri Drysdale |
| President Elect - | Sandy Shaw |
| Treasurer - | Sandy Dugger |
| Rec Sec - | Ann Clark |
| Cor Sec - | Misty Hayward |

GENE SHELHAMER, 2019 BCMGA
PRESIDENT

I think that my excitement right now relates to the two projects that have been in the mill a long time and now it looks like that they are going to happen....

The first one is the Demo Garden reconstruction at the Extension Office, and the second one is the Maple Street property.

We have been anticipating these for several months, and it looks like progress is starting to be made. It will take the whole BCMGA family to bring about the results that we've hoped for and dreamed about.

There will be a number of workdays with many hours available, and everybody can have a feeling of satisfaction for being a part of these projects.

As you know, "gardens just like to have fun!"

NECESSITY TEACHES A LESSON

By Molly Lorch

There is a saying, “Necessity is the mother of invention,” which is true in many situations. In my situation it was more like “necessity and frugality was the motivation for discovery.”

Last fall I found myself fostering 12 hibiscus plants. I needed to put them in larger pots and protect them from being damaged during the freezing weather. Even though the plants were considered ‘hardy’ I was concerned that being in small pots above ground could damage their young roots. Since the plants were not mine I did not want to take any chances in their survival.

I needed 12 large pots fast. With no money budgeted, I needed something cheap as well as fast to obtain. The plants with smaller root balls were put into Tidy Cat containers that I found at the neighborhood recycling center. The plants with larger root balls were a more difficult issue. I had pots that were either too big or too small. I looked at all the big box stores and was not happy with the pots offered for sale. Then I went shopping at my favorite place, Amazon.com. I was delighted to find a nice selection of fabric pots.

I had never used fabric grow bags. The sellers had glowing things to say about them and best of all, the price was right. The manufacturers claim the following benefits of using fabric grow bags:

1. **MATERIALS:** Non-woven fabric. Fabric allows roots to breathe and grow healthier, boosts plant growth and yields.
2. **STRUCTURE:** Prevents roots circling and air-prunes plant's root structure
3. **CREATES:** Improved overall root structure.
4. **BETTER:** Decreased risk of transplant shock.
5. **DESIGN:** It Provides Water drainage through the soil to eliminate over watering.
6. **TEMPERATURE:** Keeps plant warmer in winter and cooler in the summer.
7. **MOVE AND STORAGE:** Built-in sturdy handles for easy movement, indoor or outdoor use and easy to fold for storage.
8. **DURABLE:** Fabric is durable and reusable for a number of seasons.



There are several brands of fabric grow bags. The bags are cheap. Right now you can buy a multi-pack of 5 gallon bags for \$1.66/bag. The bags are available in black, tan, brown, gray, and brown. Fourteen sizes are available ranging in sizes from 1 gallon to 200 gallons. Fabric grow bags are also available for water lilies and pond plants as well as special potato grow bags.

Necessity Teaches a Lessoncont.

I was so pleased with the 7 gallon fabric grow bags that I later purchased 10 gallon ones.



This summer I repotted the hibiscus grown in Tidy Cat plastic buckets and observed that the roots were crowded and circling.

The plants were losing their vigor.



When I repotted the hibiscus grown in the fabric grow bags the roots were healthier.



It seemed obvious that the bags did allow for air pruning of the roots and promoted less circling. The fabric bags will be reusable and easier to store. It was easy to take the plants out of the fabric bags by just pulling/rolling down the sides of the bags.



You can see the roots can grow out of the bag.

The fabric grow bags can easily fit inside a larger pot for added protection or to fit into a decorative container. I surrounded the bag with mulch for even more protection from the weather.



What To Do in August

Jackie Sledge

- Plant fall flower seeds in flats so you can plant them outside in middle to late fall. Examples are dianthus, snapdragons, pansies, kale.



- Plant St. Augustine, Bermuda, zoysia, and buffalo grass early in the month so the grass will have time to get established before winter. Be sure to water morning and evening daily for the first two to three weeks.

- Plant bluebonnet and other spring wildflower seeds now. Bluebonnets need to germinate in late summer or early fall to develop a good root system so they'll be ready to do well in the spring.



- Regularly deadhead your annuals and perennials to encourage better growth and blooms.

- If your annuals such as petunias or verbenas get too leggy, prune them back to encourage new growth. Use the same method if they are in the ground or in containers.
- Remove old flower stalks and dead foliage from your perennials.

- Check your mulch levels, and add more if necessary.

- Plant fall-flowering bulbs like spider lily, belladonna and oxblood lily, and crocus.

- Add mums and zinnias for more fall color. They are hardy even in the heat.



- Plant fall-flowering perennials such as asters, Copper Canyon Daisy, and Mexican Bush Sage.



- Plant bean, cucumber, and squash seeds for your fall garden. Wait until late this month to plant broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, and cauliflower. Leafy and root crops should be planted very late this month.

- Fertilize lawn, landscape plants, and container plants.

- Watch for pests in your yards and gardens, and treat them as necessary.



- Don't forget to feed and water the birds. Change the water in bird baths regularly, and change your hummingbird feeders every other year to prevent bacteria and algae from forming.

August Crepe Myrtle Care

A reminder from Elaine Lee Nov. 2018-



.....from the Grumpy Gardener section (by Steve Bender) of **Southern Living Magazine**.



In a small blurb in the August issue he advised readers with crepe myrtles that during the first week of August each year to trim off any buds that had not yet bloomed. I had never heard that, but I had the opportunity to do so with two crepe myrtles that had been totally neglected during a six-year period while the homeowner lived in a nursing home and then succumbed.

Grumpy Gardener stated that the plants would bloom in the fall, not as heartily as before, but they would bloom. Guess what? He was right. Both plants did just that and the worst-looking one bloomed the most.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our monthly newsletter is a valuable source for communication and information to our organization.

We need people to write informative articles and help gather information important to our BCMG's.

It can be a one time article or a recurring series.

- Do you have something educational or interesting to contribute to the newsletter or just know how to use publisher and have a few hours at the end of every other month?
- Want to receive a few more education hours?

For more information contact:

Jackie Sledge– gjsledge@suddenlink

Susan Trice- Smgcampb@aol.com



Take control of weeds in August- The hot temperatures of mid summer make it tough to spend much time working in your garden, so take advantage of any cooler days to take care of grooming and weeding. Right now, your *primary* concern will be assuring an ample supply of water for your plants. Weed control is also very important, because with the warmer weather and increased watering, weed seeds will germinate and grow faster, and mature to the point of producing more seeds. Take advantage of your spare time to keep the weeds cultivated out of all parts of the garden.



WHAT'S COOKING IN THE KITCHEN

Dorothy's Trash (seasoned crackers to die for)

(This is my original recipe that I've been making for many years—my registrar office staff could hardly wait until I made it for them each year)



- 1 package Hidden Valley Original Ranch Buttermilk Recipe Salad Dressing Mix
- 1 package Hidden Valley Original Ranch Salad Dressing & Seasoning Mix
- 1 teaspoon dill weed
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup oil

Combine the above ingredients and pour over your *assortment of crackers, cereals, nuts, pretzels, etc.

I cook this in a big throw-away turkey roaster pan. Mix well and cook in 250 degree oven for one hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Let cool before putting in bags.

- * *Butter snap pretzels, mini-twisted pretzels, stick pretzels
- * Large pretzel sticks (broken in half)
- * Crispix
- * White cheddar cheese crackers
- * Plain Fish
- * Rye crackers (find at Drug Emporium)
- * Club minis
- * Bugles
- * Baby Swiss cheese-it cracker
- * Cheese-it crackers
- * Pecans



Last Saturday of the Month Workshops

By Jo Rake

We're almost to the end of this year's workshops for the public and Master Gardeners. It's been fun and rewarding to see so many people excited about "plants"!



August 31 will feature yard art...."Dressing Up Your Yard" and will be a lot of fun. We'll have at least one "make and take" project and learn "how to" on several others. Invite your friends and come for a fun morning. Registration at 8:30, program 9-12.

SPECIALIST TRAINING

	ARMYWORMS Feed on grass blades and sometimes roots. Damage can be scattered and not confined to patches.		FLEAS Beware of pets bringing these pests indoors.
	BILLBUGS Burrow in the grass and feed on the leaves and roots. Can damage large sections of grass if not controlled/eliminated.		WHITE GRUBS The most damaging turf insect pest. Grubs are the larvae stage of especially the Japanese Beetle and feed on lawn roots.
	CHIGGERS A parasite that feeds on animals & humans. They like fields, grasses, and weedy areas.		SOD WEBWORMS Feed at night on grass blades. Blades may appear ragged and brown spots left in lawns. May damage large areas of lawns.
	CHINCHBUGS A common pest that feeds on many grasses. Detected by large patches of lawn turning yellow or straw colored.		TICKS HEALTH RISK! There are over 850 species of ticks and over 100 can transmit diseases to humans. Especially by forest floors, fallen leaves.
	CUTWORMS Feed on grass and cut off the blades near the soil. Leave approx. 2" wide patches of brown grass.		SPITTLEBUG Form masses that look like spittle around soil surface. They suck the juice from grasses.
	MOLE CRICKETS Feed on grass at night during warm weather and after rain or watering. Can't be eliminated but only controlled.		JAPANESE BEETLES Highly destructive plant pest that eats foliage and fruits of many plants. Lays eggs in lawns that produce grubs and do root damage.
	WHITEFLIES Can transmit and spread viruses to crops. They injure plants by sucking the juices out and leaving them wilted or dead.		SOWBUGS Will feed on foliage, stems, and roots of vegetable plants, seedlings, and bedding plants.

There's still time to register for ...

Entomology Specialist Training in Sept 9-12, 2019 in Williams County.

Registration is due July 31 so don't let this opportunity get away. There will be experts speaking on insect identification, insect collecting and integrated pest management, pesticide safety, insects in the garden, etc. We would really like to have one of MG get this specialty information! Jo Rake can provide additional information reg the BCMG process for attending and having your registration paid by the association.

A Master Gardener's Passion.....This is a new series in our newsletter! We all have our favorite plant. We all love hearing about each others passions...

For the Love of Cacti and Succulents

By Carol Waters

In truth, I love most all plants, especially those that flower and attract pollinators. But among the plants I love, cacti and succulents deserve special mention because they are often seen as less desirable among gardeners than traditional perennials. One reason I like them is that most are perfectly suited to this area and another is some are just a little weird compared with other plant species. Not everyone is a fan of these often prickly members of the landscape. But they flourish



with little water, are very hardy, and offer offbeat and sometimes bizarre faces to the world. And, they present dramatic flowers during their short blooming season! To be clear, succulents are so called because of their ability to store water in their stems, leaves and spines. Cacti are succulents, but not all succulents are cacti. Cacti are identified by the presence of areoles, small mounds of flesh where spines, hair and flowers grow from the plant.

When we moved to Abilene five years ago, we xeriscaped a part of our front yard where nothing would grow well. Thanks to the generosity of some fellow Master Gardeners, we obtained plants that were predicted to overwinter safely so those went directly into the ground. Other succulents and cacti that can't survive freezing temperatures, including those we brought with us from South Texas, are kept in pots to be transported to our greenhouse in the winter.

I will always be grateful to Barbara Rivas for sharing knowledge about identification, care, and promulgation of many species. Her knowledge is amazing! Barbara gave us our first prickly pear pads which we stuck in the ground and allowed to do their cactus thing. Now we are having to cut them back so they don't venture into the driveway. And they are flowering this year! Ellen Presley gave us our first Century Plant (and we probably still have the scars to prove we dug it up from her yard ourselves!) My sister donated another one. And both of those plants have babies every year! Terry Coffman shared several yucca plants that have bloomed and propagated every year since. And some, notably the Lace Hedgehog Cactus, were purchased from Mankin's with a gift certificate from my daughter who lives in Michigan. With the succulents that we brought to Abilene with us and those we have acquired here, we are getting quite a collection.

Anyone interested in succulents might enjoy ***Success with Succulents: Choosing, Growing, and Caring for Cactuses and Other Succulents*** by John Bagnasco and Bob Reidmuller. Available on Amazon.

Thank You Carol!!.....Next month " For the love of Fall Veggies" by Juanita Campos

Master Gardeners Grand Tour

By Dorothy Kiser

We tried something new by offering an evening tour June 27. It was well attended--possibly our largest! We had a great group of Master Gardeners attend our first evening tour on June 27.

Thank you to Ellen Presley, Gene Shelhamer, Mary Sue Riskus and Christine Moore for allowing us to view their yards. You all are awesome Master Gardeners! And thank you to everyone that attended our tours this year!



Christine Moore's homemade greenhouse from repurposed materials



Ellen Presley's home



Ellen's Rose Garden in Nelson Park



Gene Showing off his flowerbed



Mary Sue Riskis' at her Home



Repurposed Wheelbarrow



Beautiful flowers



You Rock Award is an award given to the Association Member who has done something outstanding in the previous month.

The Busy Bee is the member who submitted the most hours the previous month. **Individuals can nominate themselves or other gardeners by completing a short form and submitting to the Awards Committee.**



For May, the Busy Bee award goes to Terry Shuffield

June, it goes to Steve Davis.



They reported the most hours. Neither was at the July meeting so there are no pictures of them.



The You Rock award went to Chris Hill for May for stepping up to work on the demo gardens at the Extension Office.

For June, the award went to Dorothy Kiser for organizing the garden tours. Thank you to those of you who made You Rock nominations!



Susan Trice has lettered the steppingstones for the You Rock awards each month and helps in the selection.

Remember YOU can nominate Master Gardeners for the You Rock award each month!

Chair of Award Committee-Dorothy Kiser



We all know that rainwater is best for our plants.

If you don't have rainwater, (or you ran out in July) the next best thing is to fill buckets with tap water and leave the buckets out for 24 hours before using the water.

This water is better for the plants because the chlorine has evaporated.



MASTER GARDENER SPOTLIGHT



Hello Master Gardeners. My name is Dianne Bennett.

I've been married 37 years to Rick Bennett. We have two grown sons, Brett and Alex Bennett. They each live in Lubbock. Alex is married to Haley and they have two girls, Lexie and Landri, from her previous marriage. They are adorable. We had instant grandkids and we love to spend time with them every chance we get. I also enjoy two rescue dogs named Bear and Chester. Rick is an Account Manager for Grainger. I am an entrepreneur and own my own business, under the name Divine Health God's Way. I am a network marketing professional with Young Living Essential Oils, as well as a Board Certified Raindrop Specialist and a Center for Aromatherapy Research and Education Instructor. I give Raindrops to people and I teach classes on Healing Oils of the Bible, VitaFlex and Raindrop Technique. We are Jesus lovers and are members at Beltway Church. We have been in Abilene since 1982. I was originally from Snyder, and Rick was from Littlefield. We went to college at West Texas State University in Canyon, TX where we met and were married. I later went back to college as a non-traditional student and got a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design at ACU, graduating in 2005.

I am a prophetic artist. If you don't know what that is I simply ask the LORD what he is wanting to say and I paint what I see in my mind's eye. He gives me a message to go along with it for an individual or for the body of Christ. Honestly we are all created in the image of God and he is CREATOR. In the beginning, about 6 years ago I took a prophetic art class at TSSM from Latimer Bowen. I shared that I had never painted before but liked to draw and so this would be new for me. I didn't think I COULD paint. How God proved me wrong. I'm still learning and growing. I've loved seeing what God was doing and how it blessed the people I did the art piece for. Sometimes I paint just for the joy of painting with him.

I attended the Master Gardener class that graduated in the Spring of 2019 and so I'm a "newbie". My friend Karen Wilkins who is a Master Gardener from way back invited me to come. We always had gardening in common and so she suggested I take the course. I've always loved gardening but recently it became a deeper passion. Several years ago we purchased 20 acres of land in Tuscola and I became interested in Permaculture. It is a wonderful method of farming that uses what you have and works with the earth and not against it. It restores the soil that has been contaminated by years of taking and not giving back, it is an organic practice and seeks to restore the land and grow things for food. A food forest. I've learned a lot about this from Greg Lawton, Bill Mollison and Sepp Holzer. But I have so much more to learn. The thing I come away with is that if we treat the earth right, the food nutritional value will increase and we will not have a food shortage ever. I learned that current farming practices are not working for the earth, but have created many problems for individuals and the earth. (Think of the dust bowl days.) But the greatest thing is that every family could have a garden in their backyard and grow their own food. I also love learning about Medicinal Herbs. I plan to cultivate herbs on the land along with organic gardens, and Trees for food as well as bushes for food. I have quite a few blackberry bushes and raspberry bushes out there now. The great thing I want to do on my land is build a house and out-buildings and capture rainwater so that I'm relying on God for my rain and not the city system. One day that will happen.

My project for the MG class was a Aromatherapy Prayer and Meditation garden on the land. A feast for the senses that provides a place to encounter God in the cool of the day.

MASTER GARDENER SPOTLIGHT... Dianne Bennet

That is what I dream of...to walk upon this land I've dedicated to God, to work the land and walk with him in the cool of the day, spending precious time with him and learning from him as well as through study and implementation. Last year I planted my first organic garden out there. Since we did not have water lines run to the garden, we went to the city and paid a quarter for 250 gallons several trips each water day to water the garden as well as about 12 fruit trees we had planted. That was kind of exhausting labor. And when you work out there you have to be committed because it's very hot and there is no place to escape to. I love being out in the country so much. Some day I'll live out there.

My favorite thing about gardening is the deep connection I feel to God. When I study his creation, I am awed by his majesty and the order of the universe. Totally has put me in tears of appreciation so often. I love planning a landscape in my head. I love the enjoyment I have just being outside enjoying what I've done, appreciating and dreaming. You want to know the least favorite thing about gardening. I would say that I can't take the heat sometimes. Years ago getting heat stroke or heat exhaustion has just made me a little sensitive to the heat. But that doesn't stop me. I plan my times in the sun better so that I begin in the cool of the day.

I've enjoyed helping with the plant sale in the Spring this year. I've also enjoyed seeing other's handiwork on the garden tours. I helped with the Swenson House Pollinator Event doing face painting, helped at the Swenson House on the work days. I attended the 2018 Fall Symposium previous to attending the MG class. During the course, I attended the Saturday event put on by the County Extension Office, which was interesting. I also had the joy of working in the Vineyard here in Abilene on Trails End.

I enjoy most, flowers, vegetables, trees, lawn, etc. Goodness the answer is YES. I love it all. But really my passion I would say is dreaming about and planning the landscape out on the land. I love Permaculture, I love organic gardening, I love growing and learning to preserve medicinal herbs for natural answers to what ails God's children. I love creating beauty in every venue I come to. Sort of like planting a gift for the person who will experience the fragrances released, the aromatherapy from the plantings, the joy of beholding the beauty. A thing of beauty is a joy forever. I love working with the earth and not against her. I love partnering with God creating his natural vignettes all around. A garden is for a purpose not just for the labor of creating it. It is for the food it produces and for the future generations that will benefit from it. It is for the glory of God. It is for the aromatherapy that heals the heart and that ministers to the body, soul and spirit. I love stewarding the earth as God commanded us to do. "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." Genesis 2:15

I am enjoying Master Gardeners because it has linked me in with some beautiful people who share the love of gardening. I love learning from you all. We are never finished in our quest for knowledge and a better way. I love seeing all the lifetime learners. You are each of precious value to God and you bring so much to this earth and all who dwell here. I believe we are all CALLED by GOD to be the vinedressers. What a joy and honor to give back to God a portion of the joy he has blessed us with. God bless you as you consider the magnitude of his blessings.



August

1 Donna Long-Wolfer

25 Elaine Lee

11 Sarah Adams

25 Ellen Presley

12 Pat Hart

26 Kathy Turner

24 Jean Dotson

29 Rhonda Blanton

