

April 2020

Big Country Master Gardener
Association Newsletter
Bcmgtx.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

There are no events scheduled in April because of CDC, State, County, and City guidelines. Please watch for email updates if there are changes that allow workdays or virtual meetings.

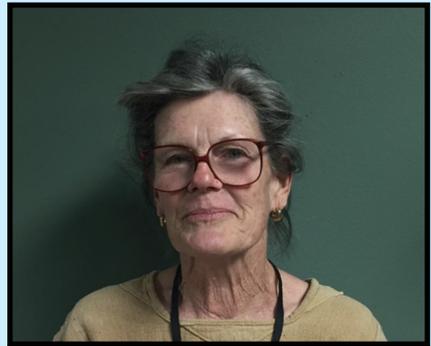


2020 Officers

- President – Sandy Shaw
- President Elect – Jackie Sledge
- Vice President – Sarah Adams
- Secretary – Terry Shuffield
- Treasurer – Richard O’Shields
- Past President – Gene Shelhamer

The Garden Thymes

A message from our president.....Sandy Shaw



A Positive Attitude...

So, in ‘normal’ times we would be counting down just about now to the opening of doors to our BCMGA 2020 Stupendous Plant Sale. Instead we are ‘isolating’ and following instructions that we hope will keep us well and safe from the virus. What a deal all of this is...actually I sort of like being around here- having the time to start a few new at home projects, and even to be able to finish one or two. The weather is cooperating - the yard is showing new blooms and neatness with this extra attention. The thing is, I miss the busyness of BCMGA, and I absolutely miss working and planning with friends, old and new. It is easy to let ourselves feel low about our situation and that is exactly when we can take comfort in the enjoyment of being a ‘practicing gardener’! The very act of digging in the sun warmed soil and spreading roots of new plantings makes me happy. The message is to stay well, best we know how, but also stay positive- plant something new, propagate something pretty and fun, try something new and before we know it we will be planning the 2020 Fall Plant Sale? Fall Symposium? Members Pre-Pay sale? Who knows what- we have time right now to dwell on all of that; lets’ make good use of it.

Thanks everyone, see ya’ soon, I hope!

2020 Advanced Training Offerings (All Subject to Rescheduling)



Texas Superstars® May 26-28
Hosted by Bexar County in San Antonio

Rainwater Harvesting– Sept. 24-26
Hosted by Tarrant County in Ft. Worth

Greenhouse Management Oct. 15-17
Oct 15-17



April Gardening Tip

Watch your plants and their soil, and they will give you clues to their water needs. Plants will show wilting and leaf rolling when they are stressed by lack of water. You can also check the soil moisture by sticking your finger into the ground or container. If the soil is dry an inch or more down, then it's probably time to water the plants.

WHAT'S COOKING IN THE KITCHEN

Fruit Salad

2 pkgs frozen strawberries or 1 large container fresh strawberries

1 can peach pie mix

5 bananas

1 large can pineapple chunks, drain juice

1 large can mandarin oranges, drain juice

½ cup sugar (optional)

Mix all ingredients together. Chill. Serve.



Sopapilla Cheesecake Bars

2 cans (8 oz each) refrigerated crescent rolls

1 tsp vanilla

2 packages (8 oz each) cream cheese, softened

1/2 cup butter melted

1 ½ cups sugar

1 TBS ground cinnamon

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Unroll 1 can dough. Place in bottom of ungreased 13x9 glass baking dish.

Stretch to cover bottom of dish, firmly pressing perforations to seal.

In medium bowl, beat cream cheese and 1 cup of the sugar with electric mixer on medium speed. Beat in vanilla. Spread over dough in baking dish.

Unroll second can of dough. Firmly press perforations to seal. Carefully place on top of cream cheese layer. Pinch seams together.

Pour melted butter evenly over top. Mix remaining ½ cup sugar with the cinnamon, and sprinkle evenly over butter.

Bake 30-35 minutes or until bars appear set when gently shaken. Cool slightly, about 30 minutes.

Refrigerate for easy cutting. Cut into 4 rows by 3 rows. Cover and refrigerate any remaining bars.

Tip: Can drizzle honey over the top before serving.



What To Do April



Plant vegetables, peppers, corn, beans, squash, cucumbers, melons, and eggplant early in the month.



Plant herbs. Attractive herbs such as sage, basil, parsley, rosemary, mint, and thyme can be planted in color beds and pots, and others can be planted in a vegetable garden.



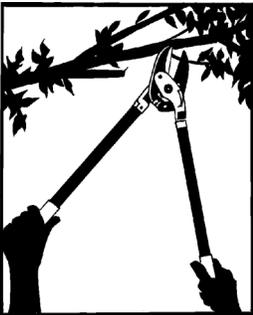
Plant summer annuals from 4-inch or gallon pots to add color. Sun plants include moss rose, hybrid purslane, trailing lantanas, Dahlberg daisies, pentas, firebush, angelonias, purple fountain grass, sun-tolerant coleus, copper plant. Shade plants include begonias, caladiums, and coleus.

Plant perennials. Be sure to consider mature sizes, colors, and blooming times.

Plant turfgrasses.

Mow lawn at recommended height.

Prune spring-flowering shrubs and vines after they finish blooming. Use hand shears to give natural form to the plants.



Prune trees to remove lower branches that cause excessive shade and struggling turfgrass. Do not prune oaks until mid-summer or mid-winter to lessen the chance of spreading oak wilt.

Prune fall perennials such as Mexican bush salvia, fall asters, and chrysanthemums to encourage branching.

Feed – turf, trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, vegetable and flower gardens, and container gardens.

Troubleshoot root rot, black spot, snails, slugs, pillbugs, thrips, caterpillars, etc. following AgriLife recommendations.

Remember to have food and water for butterflies and birds.

Information from Neil Sperry and Doug Welsh.



Project Committee Update!!

The Tanks are here!



Our beautiful rain catchment tanks, both of them, were delivered on Wednesday, March 11th.....several of us had been waiting for sight of the truck with tanks aboard... (sold to us by Texas Metal Tanks, loaded and traveling from Dripping Springs Texas). It seems many moons since the order was placed. Our work was delayed by a search for a concrete person who could install two pads - one for each of the tanks – we actually hadn't even thought of having to first put down a base...an example of each step being a true learning experience for all. We knew this wouldn't be easy, but we did naively assume that it would all (smoothly) fall into place. Finally, the tanks arrived and delivery was a little anticlimactic – we had envisioned a tractor to unload and / or more than one person to do the deed...but no...Brad, the driver and part owner of TMT was by himself and simply rolled each tank off of the trailer and into place on each pad, with a bit of help from a couple of waiting master gardeners!

(Creative Concrete guru, Roy, doing the 1000 gal tank pad)



Large Tank

Next step is the plumbing and hook-up. When we started this demo re-do...we thought we would have expert advice and know-how at every step of the way. Not so...life and 'things' intervened, and it was soon very clear we needed professional input, (we are now talking with Texas Rain Catchers, out of Clyde). What we do know, is that each step being completed, we are very pleased with the results!

Slow we know, slowly we go, but forward.



Small Tank

Color My World



Does this phrase sound familiar? We had been focusing on it for months in preparation for the Saturday Seminar in March and the Spring Plant Sale, but unfortunately, we had to cancel the Seminar and postpone the Plant Sale. I thought I would share some of the information since we may all be using some of our time at home to either dig in the dirt or plan changes for our landscapes.

Meditation Garden Pollinator Plants in full bloom!

Let's look at a couple of things to consider when planning our gardens for the year and then some things to do with what we grow.

What About Color?

The color range of flowers and foliage in perennials, annuals, and shrubs is enormous. Harmony, interest, and variety can be achieved in your landscape through use of color because it evokes emotion in the garden, providing calm or excitement.

There are **guidelines**, not rules, for using color in the landscape. Personal preferences and experimentation are the most important components in use of color.

There are two types of colors - warm and cool. Red, orange, and yellow are warm colors. Blue, green, and purple are cool colors.

“Warm colors advance.” That means they seem to come forward visually. Colors such as yellows, oranges, red, and hot pinks show up better, and they appear to be closer. Use them for color beds set back into the garden, beds that might otherwise go unnoticed. You can also use them as attention-getters because they provide a sense of festivity or excitement.

“Cool colors recede.” If you want small spaces to appear larger, put purples, lavenders, soft pastels, and even greens to work in our gardens. They are very useful in zero-lot-line landscaping, and they also can be wonderful in patio gardens. Many of us use cool colors because we like the calm, tranquility, and soothing effects they bring to our landscapes, especially when summer heat provides us all the warmth we want.

“White” is a third category to consider when planning your landscape. White gardens are clean and appreciated for settings enjoyed at twilight and in the evening. It's important to remember that white mixed in with other colors can leave visual holes in the landscape. If you're planting a mixture of colors in a particular garden, consider if white will contribute or detract from the impact you want to make.

Color My World cont....

We also need to remember the importance of foliage in the landscape. Bold-textured foliage has the same effect as warm colors, and fine-textured foliage has the same effect as cool colors. Use foliage texture the same way you do color in your garden.

Your color scheme can change through the seasons. Perhaps you'll start with cheery colors in spring, switch to cooling lavenders and soft pinks in the summer, and finish with rich shades of orange, yellow, and red in the fall. These seasonal changes can happen fairly quickly when you use annual color in your landscape.

What to Do With the Flowers?

We obviously enjoy seeing and smelling flowers both in our yards and in our houses, but there are ways we can actually use them in the kitchen to fancy up a dinner plate, in a salad, or in some recipes. Be aware that not all flowers are edible, and be careful about using flowers that you did not grow. Some growers or gardeners may have used herbicides or pesticides on the plants, and you may not want to take a chance by using them in your dishes. It is important to remove the pistils and stamens before cooking or eating the flowers because they can cause a reaction in some people with allergies.

Some examples of flowers that are not edible are Anemone, Azalea, Buttercup, Clematis, Daffodils, Delphinium, Foxglove, Hydrangea, Iris, Lily-of-the-Valley, Oleander, Sweet Pea, and Wisteria.

Remember: **Always** check to be sure a flower is edible before using it for cooking purposes.

Well, now you know some of the information we had gathered for our events.

What have I been doing? I've been digging in flower beds and planning what I wanted to buy at our Plant Sale to fill in the empty places. I've also been eating, letting the cat sleep on my lap, eating, napping, eating, watching Hallmark movies (they always have a happy ending and the pets never die), and eating some more. After helping my grandson with his Terrestrial Ecosystem school assignment and letting him use my yard as his example, I'm actually more inspired to get started implementing my plans. Wish I had known about his project before yesterday so my yard would have had a better design and also some edible flowers!

Cont on next page.....

Flowers You Can Eat:



Bee Balm – Minty flavor



Pansy – Wintergreen flavor



Dianthus – Sweet



Squash Blossom – Squash flavor



Daylily – Asparagus flavor



Hibiscus – Cranberry flavor



Clover – Sweet with a bit of licorice



Violet – Sweet tasting



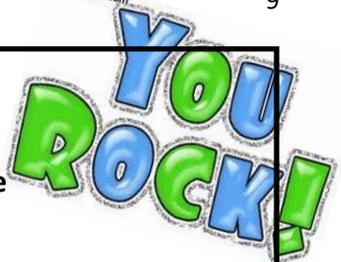
Hollyhock - Edible, but showier than tasty



Lavender – Sweet and spicy



Nasturtium – Sweet, floral, and spicy



Please remember to nominate an individual (even yourself) for the You Rock Award. The nomination should be for someone who has done something outstanding during the month.

Please send your nominations to Dorothy Kiser at dkiser44@gmail.com.



February Busy Bee is Dorothy Kiser

March You Rock goes to Sandy Shaw



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.

Spotlight on a Master Gardener



Hello, I am Dorothy Kiser, Class of 2014.

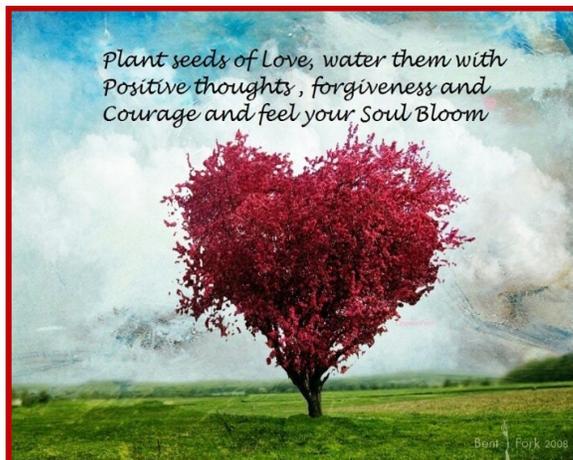
I am very proud of being named Intern of that year.

I have lived in Abilene since December 1974. My husband was stationed at Dyess AFB his last five years in the military. We raised our two sons here where they still live. One son is married and has our only grandchild. She was married June 15, 2019, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Our younger son lives with his Catahoula puppy! I am originally from Fort Sumner, New Mexico, but came to Hardin-Simmons University for my higher education and met my future husband. We were married nearly 48 years before he passed away

in 2013. I retired from Hardin-Simmons in 2010 as the Associate Vice President of Student Records and Registration (Registrar) after thirty years.

My dad farmed and had a huge vegetable garden. I've always enjoyed growing flowers of all kinds. When we moved to our current home, there was a large designated garden area that I've tried to grow many different vegetables and melons the last few years. My favorite thing about gardening is watching the plants grow and produce, whether it's vegetables or flowers, and trying new things. My two most unfavorable things about gardening are the bad insects and disease on the plants. I think my favorite plants are flowers in pots on my patio. I have more control over the soil and don't have to get on my knees to take care of them. I do not like taking care of lawn or trees!

Mary Sue Riskus got me involved in Master Gardeners after my husband died.





April 25 **Marianne Marugg**

April 25 **Susan Perry**

April 26 **Dorothy Kiser**

