

# The Latest Dirt

March 2011

McLennan County Master Gardener Association

## Our modest Mr. Bonner charms kids and adults

by Judy Tye

Grady Bonner is such a modest man that fellow Master Gardeners may be surprised to learn just how much expertise he has, and to what fine uses he has put all that knowledge.

To begin with, Grady is also a Master Naturalist, as well as a Master Gardener, and he is a Master Gardener Entomology Specialist. He graduated from Midwestern State University at Wichita Falls, and he's a graduate of TSTI's Ornamental Horticulture and Floraculture course.

Before he moved to Waco in 2003, Grady lived in Wichita Falls, where he worked with the local Boys & Girls Club from 1996-2003, served on the Wichita County Landscape and Garden Committee, and served as the president of that committee for three years. He was a founding member of the Rolling Plain chapter of Master Naturalists. He also worked with Mental Health/Mental Retardation in Wichita Falls. As a result, Grady earned the following awards:

- 1) The Program Excellence Award from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- 2) The "Lighting the Way" award from the Junior League of Wichita Falls
- 3) The governor's award for Most Outstanding Volunteer
- 4) The J. C. Penny "Golden Rule" award for Outstanding Adult Volunteer
- 5) Third runner-up as the Master Gardener of the Year at the Texas Master Gardener convention at Texas A&M in 2000.

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**Next MG Meeting: March 9, noon, CBA**  
**Program: Sandra Killough of Bonnie's Nursery will demonstrate growing herbs in containers CEU credit.**



*Entomologist - "bug man" - Grady Bonner shows an insect collection to Cedar Ridge students.*

While working with the Boys & Girls Clubs in Wichita Falls, Grady was able to acquire private foundation grants for his hardest working students. His children in the clubs won 16 ribbons at the Texas-Oklahoma Fair, and he won three national awards from Colgate-Palmolive for Outdoor Education. He also was a leader in establishing two community gardens at the Boys & Girls Clubs and four more in the community at large.

Since moving to Waco, Grady has worked on a wide variety of Master Gardener projects as well as Master Naturalist projects, two of which are working with students at J. H. Hines Elementary and with the Waco Boys & Girls Club on raising Gambusia, or Mosquitofish. He also finds time to give Storytime presentations on insects at the Waco Public Library, and his insect program has been a popular feature at the Children's Garden Fairs.

Although he works full time, he is usually one of the first to volunteer help when Master Gardeners are needed. His latest insect program was part of Cedar Ridge's "Day in the Garden" on February 24. Grady is living proof of the old adage that if you need something done, ask the busiest person you know!

Grady gives the Lord the credit for all these achievements: "They were made possible through God's amazing grace." As stated earlier, Grady is a modest man.

## Nearly 5500 hours donated in 2010

Julia Khoury's year-end report for volunteer support of community projects tells us we made an impressive contribution to McLennan County in 2010.

The increased support for our growing list of projects was possible due to the addition of 40 new interns who began their training in June.

### Total volunteer hours: 5,482

Education hours: 3,966

Contacts: 54,675

Media contacts: 2,700,464

Meetings: 565

Carleen Bright Arboretum: 823

(These are included in above total)

*Trailside Garden: 144*

*Docent tours: 14*

*Superstar Bed: 157*

*Children's Festival: 428*

*Planning Committee: 51*

*Cactus Garden: 21*

*Rose Garden: 8*

Miscellaneous hours on other projects:

Phone time at office: 533

MHMR: 113

Cedar Ridge Elementary: 325

Woodway Elementary: 124

McGregor Garden: 45

Gospel Cafe: 42

Habitat for Humanity: 35

Rapoport Academy: 34

Friends for Life: 19

Garlic Trials: 76

## January 2011 Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours 188 1/2

Education hours 33 1/2

Contacts 110

Media 310,000

Meetings 51

*(Hours below are included in Volunteer Hours)*

Arboretum 5 1/2

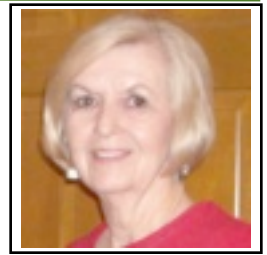
*Superstar Bed 5 1/2*

Clerical time - Ag office 27 1/2

Office Phone Line 18 3/4

Cedar Ridge Elementary 10 1/4

## Jan's Notes



After the snow and freezing temperatures, we should really be inspired for spring to be here. During the cold weather a friend sent me this article and it was so fitting I wanted to share it with you.

### How to Plant Your Garden

First, you

Come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses.

### For the Garden of Your Daily Living,

Plant three rows of Peas

Peace of mind

Peace of heart

Peace of soul

Plant four rows of Squash:

Squash gossip

Squash indifference

Squash grumbling

Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of Lettuce:

Lettuce us be faithful

Lettuce be kind

Lettuce us be patient

Lettuce love one another

No Garden is without Turnips:

Turnip for meetings

Turnip for service

Turnip to help one another

### To conclude our garden we must have Thyme:

Thyme for each other

Thyme for family

Thyme for friends

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. See what spring brings to your garden because you reap what you sow. Happy gardening and have a beautiful day.

Jan

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# Freezing February prompts Questions, Questions, Questions

by Mark Barnett

*Are my palms okay? What about my citrus tree? My asparagus fern has never been this brown. My Aztec grass looks awful. Is it dead; is it gone? What can I do? What did I do wrong?*

Gardeners always want something new, different, exotic or just something other than what everyone else has. Unfortunately that means we have to use plants that are not native to the areas we live in. Many introduced plants come from comparable zones or regions, but they generally are not as colorful, bold or exotic as we want.

If you drive around the area during the winter or summer and look at the native plants, you will not see much in the way of “bling” or “wow.” All the “bling” and “wow” comes in the form of annual or seasonal color that is here today and gone tomorrow. So we bring in shrubs, ornamental grass, palms, citrus, vines like bougainvillea that give all kinds of color all the time. This is where the trouble begins; plants that give show all the time come from regions that have a generally constant set of temperatures - the tropics.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zone Map, the Waco, McLennan County area is listed as zone **8a**, with an average low temperature of 10F to 15F. The key word in that sentence is “average.” We can be warmer or we can be colder.

Most if not all the plants that give the most exotic look, the biggest, boldest all-summer color are tropical. Meaning that they are classified as zone 9 to 10 and will not tolerate temperatures colder than 20F to 40F. The freeze this winter had temperatures in the teens with even colder chill factors of single digits for almost four days. If the low temperatures did not do the damage, the blowing wind would have pulled any warmth out of anything wrapped in blankets or any kind of insulating material.

It is way too early to declare all plants as dead and gone. There are many areas that have “micro” climates that can give a sensitive plant just enough of an advantage to survive what it normally would not.

When I say “micro” climate, that is any area that has something that protects the plant just a little bit more from the wind, gives off just a little bit of heat like the wall of a house or enough exposed rock or concrete that can soak up what little warmth the sun can give and hold it. Then there are those plants that may have a natural genetic boost that allows them to tolerate a bit more cold than their relatives.

Trim off what is obviously dead and clean the plants up and wait. Wait and see what happens as spring progresses. Some things will come out as normal others will take a while longer to re-grow and there will be some that will not come out. After the freeze last year some sago palms did not green up and begin growing until early summer.

At this time unless you really want to get rid of something or just cannot wait, I do not recommend removing anything, I am taking a wait and see stand. When you begin to choose new plants, study the Hardiness Zone numbers. You can either take your chances with the understanding that they can be killed or you may have to work a little harder finding plants that are more durable.

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## Garden Questions & Answers

from Mark Barnett

Q

When do I need to cut my perennial plants back to help them look better this spring?

A

Most perennials can be cut back to the ground any time before spring growth begins. But be warned I am not sure what you are calling perennial. Some plants that have been perennial for many years may have been damaged or killed by the extended cold we have had this winter. You may not know for certain until late spring or early summer with some varieties. So, be patient and do not give up real fast.

## Beasts N' Blooms & Earth Day, Too!

MCMGs will have a booth at Cameron Park Zoo, April 16, for *Beasts N' Blooms & Earth Day, Too*, from 9 am- 4 pm. We will combine MCMG information and a children's activity. Because our activities are usually crowded, we will be in the Tree Top Area instead of along the sidewalk area under the canopy. We plan to do the Paper Sombrero activity in the spirit of Earth Day and recycling.



### We need:

- 1) a list and/or handouts about upcoming activities: plant sale and seminars open to the public
- 2) a "brag sheet" listing our permanent ongoing activities/projects with photos if possible
- 3) I can bring a clean wire compost bin and put a few pots in it to show our recycling project
- 4) Other examples of recycling like making paper pots with a few samples and instructions (not to make but to hand out) and paper seed cards with instructions to hand out.

I sent a note to those who signed the "interest sheet" at the Dec. meeting. Now I finally have a revised membership list in my computer and can send it to everyone.

Let me know what you think, and if you want to join us. I will need to get arm bracelets for the volunteers. We will do as much or as little as we have volunteers available. It is a fun time! Hope you can join us!

Jeanette

[jkelly46@aol.com](mailto:jkelly46@aol.com)

776-2178 or 722-3355

(Please bring newspaper to the next meeting if you have any (double sheets only).)

### Thoughts for the Day:

I do a lot of neighborhood dog walking and observing. People are topping trees all over the place. The crepe myrtles are getting the worst of it. Neil Sperry has been campaigning about this for at least 25 years and it still happens.

Out my window where I sit finishing *The Latest Dirt* I see my neighbor's dead or dying new shrubs. Not from the cold February, but from being planted last July by a reputable nursery. They didn't have a chance. *SW*

See more snow photos on page 6 →

## So much talent . . .

Thanks to Barry Vokes I just found out about Melody Fitzgerald's ('06) web site for gardeners - <http://www.centraltexasgardening.com>

Her monthly guidelines for garden activities advise what needs to be done to prepare for spring.

The Plant Database has easy-to-read layout with large type, color indicators to let you know you've been there and asterisks for Central Texas favorites.

She also has a fun projects section including a millstone fountain.

Go there. She counts your visits!

## Volunteers needed:

Garden dates are popping up in the emails. Be sure to check them and let the various chairman know if you can help. Busy time is here.

### **Woodway Elementary**

March 15, 8:45 a.m. Clean Up Day  
March 18, 8:45 a.m. Plant With The Kids. Contact Andrea Moore  
[amoore1@hotmail.com](mailto:amoore1@hotmail.com)

### **Trailside Garden**

CBA, 9:00 a.m. Work Day. Contact Emily Davidson,  
[Moundsandburs@yahoo.com](mailto:Moundsandburs@yahoo.com)



## New garden “adopted” at Arboretum

by Janet Schaffer, Manager



Construction of a new gazebo has begun and the site has been partially cleared for the new Bluebonnet Health Services garden at the northwest corner of the front section.



The Carleen Bright Arboretum has enjoyed great working relationships with many groups in McLennan County. The Master Gardeners, Rose Society, Herb Society, Cactus & Succulent Society, Audubon Society, Central Texas Water Color Society, Gem and Mineral Society, just to name a few, are all an important part of the Carleen Bright Arboretum.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Bluebonnet Health Services and Easy Gardener to our Arboretum Family. Bluebonnet is our first to officially adopt-a-bed. Easy Gardener has been a long time supporter of the Arboretum and beginning in March they are going to sponsor our entrance oval and adjacent gardening beds by purchasing and planting some of the plants from the design drawn by Tres Fromme and Brian Halsell from Studio Outside (formally from MESA Design group.)

In previous years Bluebonnet held a holiday service for survivors, but the staff at Bluebonnet wanted to shift the focus to something more lasting for their families.

“There is nothing quite like sitting on a bench in a beautiful place with the breeze blowing in your face and watching the flowers emerge or die, and the lessons that has to say. It’s more lasting than what we can do, a permanent reminder. And a garden seemed to be that – a permanent reminder of life and death and rebirth,” said Judy Prather, coordinator of bereavement care for Bluebonnet’s hospice team.

The adopt-a-bed program is available to anyone who would like to commit a year to planting and maintaining a bed. It allows individuals or groups to take an active role in beautifying the community. For more information on adopting a bed, call Megan or Janet at 254-399-9204.



Cedar Ridge kids learn how to make butterfly bracelets at “Day in the Garden” on Feb. 24. They also planted peas and learned about the importance of insects.

### McLennan County Master Gardeners Association Officers 2011

President - Jan Serface • Vice President - Sandy Back • Secretary - Dick Belanger

Treasurer - Irene Dauphin

AgriLife Sponsor - Shane McLellan, County Agent

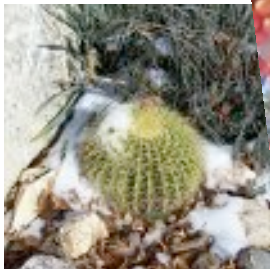
Newsletter - Sonia Warriner [jwarriner@hotmail.com](mailto:jwarriner@hotmail.com)

Our web site: [www.mclennanmastergardeners.org](http://www.mclennanmastergardeners.org)



Send volunteer hours to Julia Khoury, 8512 Bosque Blvd., Waco 76712 or [tkhoury@hotmail.com](mailto:tkhoury@hotmail.com)

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating



Photos by  
Cynthia Bach  
Mark Barnett  
Susan Crawford  
Jeanette Kelly  
Janet Schaffer

