

# The Latest Dirt

April 2011

McLennan County Master Gardener Association

## “We never know who’s dancing . . .”



### You are so important to us!

Spring is in full bloom and the gardens have truly been transformed! The Rose Society, Herb Society, Master Gardeners and the Cactus and Succulent Society all had work days ahead of our first annual “friends” workday, which was a huge success. We had a fantastic turnout from our “friends” and thanks to you it was easy to show them how a showcase garden should look. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

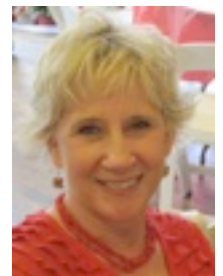
We have volunteers who prepare beds, pull weeds, lay rock, plant flowers, tie up vines, mulch beds and trails, adopt beds, put up fences, design butterfly gardens, build bridges, build arbors, give donations and clean up trash as they run through the trails. Without you the Arboretum would not be what is.

As a staff member I am so fortunate to see firsthand the results of your hard work, not through my own eyes, but through others. You have created a peaceful space for someone who has lost a loved one. You have created gardens that bring the look of amazement on a child’s face as he watches a butterfly land on the blue mist.

The nature trail leads us to looks of wonderment as people gaze into the sink hole and think “what if” and, of course I am able to witness the looks of adoration on couples’ faces as they whisper endearing words to each other.

*When we create the space,  
we never know  
who’s dancing.....*

*Photo and copy by  
Janet Schaffer, Manager*



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**Next Meeting: April 13, 6 p.m.**  
**Hosts: Eva & Jim FitzGerald**  
**See tour guide, pages 4 & 6**  
**Refreshments provided**

## March Meeting Attendance

### Members: 51

Cynthia Bach, Sandy Back, Bonnie Belanger, Dick Belanger, Linda Buckner, Sandy Burleson, Ila Jean Carothers, JoAnn Clafferty, Susan Crawford, Jean Cunningham, Sarah Downs, Emily Davidson, Irene Dauphin, Anita Dawson, Vic Dupart, Eva FitzGerald, Norma Folse, Kris Ford, Xan Foulks, Penny Gifford, Brenda Golubski, Cindy Geletzke, Gene Hering, Jeanette Kelly, Missy Kinder, Steven Lovecky, Sherry Matthews, Louie McDaniel, Barbara Mersinger, Elizabeth Milam, Gerry Minor, Andrea Moore, Sarah Ortiz, Anne Plasek, Art Reinking, Carol Reinking, Sharon Richardson, Sharon Romano, Jim Seale, Jan Serface, Della Setser, Kathy Turlington, Judy Tye, Barbara Vance, Barry Vokes, Melba Wal-drop, Sonia Warriner, Dorothy Whitehead, M.J. Whitehead, Susan Widaski, Carol Wood

### Interns: 6

Madge Beazley, Everett Harvard, Margaret Henson, Linda Moore, Valerie Schillaci, Sandra Scott

## Jan's Notes



You are all wonderful! Each day I'm grateful to be a member of McLennan County Master Gardeners. This is a special group.

### THANK YOU'S:

- Andrea for contacting the local nurseries so we can benefit from the discounts they provide. (Another reason for you interns to finish your hours.)
- Kathryn and Gale for taking on the task of decorating our office—can't wait to see the results.
- Barbara for leading the way for the upcoming "Evening in the Garden" at the Carleen Bright Arboretum.
- Anita, Sherry, Susan, and Pat for helping the children plant flowers at Walmart.
- To others whom I may have missed.

### HOUSEKEEPING:

- One serving piece from our December meeting
- Cards for your background checks
- Yearbooks are ready and will be at Eva's
- Order your new shirts
- Interns need to report your hours and check to see how many you lack. Contact Julia Khoury for your status.
- April and May meetings are both evening meetings. Significant others are invited to attend.

Look forward to seeing you at Eva's.

*Jan*

## February 2011 Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours	275 3/4
Education hours	44
Contacts	2773
Media	79,000
Meetings	No meeting
<i>(Hours below are included in Volunteer Hours)</i>	
Arboretum	32 3/4
<i>Superstar Bed</i>	2 1/2
<i>Rose Garden</i>	8
<i>Herb Garden</i>	3
McGregor Demo Garden	12
McGregor Garden Club	5
Clerical time - Ag office	55 1/2
Methodist Church Garden	4 1/2
Office Phone Line	16
Cedar Ridge Elementary	36 3/4
BIG Conference	30 1/2
Woodway Elementary	10 1/4
MHMR	26 1/4

*The Latest Dirt* will be looking forward to your reports and photos from the Texas Master Gardener State Conference in Glen Rose the end of April. Please send to Sonia

Warriner, at [jwarriner@hotmail.com](mailto:jwarriner@hotmail.com) when you return. Have fun!

## PLANT SALE COMING SOON:

May 21 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

4605 W. Waco Drive (vacant lot beside Mocek's TV)

This is our annual fundraiser and chance to educate the public with plants that will grow well here. Below are important points to remember:

- Bring plants by 8:30 a.m. We will also need folding tables. Once unloaded, park cars on the bowling alley parking lot across the creek.
- Have plants in clean pots, with correct name on label along with helpful information such as "sun, shade, perennial, herb, growth size, drought tolerant" etc.
- Have each pot pre-priced in even amounts of 50 cents or dollar increments. (Use labels, stickers, etc)
- Plants will need to be organized by sun, shade, herbs, cacti, natives, etc. prior to sale.
- Plants should have been potted before May 1 to have time to be well established in pots.

We have an excellent reputation of well-grown plants and shoppers come back year after year for our sale!

- What to bring? If you bought or were given a plant at one time, someone will probably want to buy one. Divide perennials, plantings that need thinned, excess plants that have spread where you don't want them.

We are not competing with local nurseries - rather sharing things from our yard to show what thrives in our area. Price plants less than nursery prices unless you want to take them back home.

Any plants purchased by MG members must be immediately put in their cars or taken home - no "holding" or marked "sold" and put back where they can be seen by public. They want first choice of our merchandise.

If you need pots, Ila Jean has a large supply stored in a building. They are for your use.

The seed packet sale at our March meeting amounted to \$25.30 (101 packets of seeds sold). Balance of seeds will be at the plant sale. (Copy by Ila Jean Carothers.)

### Amending or Mulching? READ THE LABELS!

*Barbara Vance sends this warning after researching and building the Trilside Beds.*

"All cotton burr composts are not created equal. The value of cotton burr compost in this area is its high nitrogen content, as our soils usually have too much phosphorus already. Most of the packaged cotton burr compost sold in local nurseries is labeled "top dressing and mulch." This is because it is packaged before being fully composted.

Therefore, if tilled into the soil it will tie up nitrogen, robbing new plants of it until compost is fully broken down. It is still a great product, as long as it is used "as the package directs." Locally produced Birome compost is fully composted and ready for using as a soil amendment. There may be other brands which are fully composted, but **READ THE LABEL!**"



### ALL SPRUCED UP AND READY FOR SPRING.

*"Ten thousand people a day sit at the traffic light at that corner (Rts. 84 & 317) in front of our garden." — Jene Hering, chairman, McGregor Demonstration Garden*

## A garden tour with Eva & Jim FitzGerald, 4/13



*"We moved here in April of 2006 and brought a 20 ft. covered trailer full of plants when we left Canyon Lake. Most of them were native plants and several of them cannot be found here at most of the local nurseries. There had been very little done to this place as far as anything that could be termed landscaping.*

*There were eight to ten crepe myrtles in the front and back yards and one red oak in the front yard and two in the back yard."*

So begins a description of what was and what we will see on April 13 when we visit Jim and Eva's China Spring property. Eva has prepared a helpful outline of the transformation of their 7.5 acres. (See rest of her guide on page 6)

While gathering news for *The Latest Dirt*, I have learned that Eva is very good with transformations.

As a master gardener with the Comal County Association, she was one of the guiding hands for a new garden design at the AgriLife Extension office in New Braunfels. Their goal was to incorporate as many native plants as possible. (See photo below.)

Eva wrote about the project for the March 2011 issue of their newsletter, *Comal Gardener*, at <http://mastergardener.comal.tx.us>

The article was titled "Lest We Forget" and covered the years 2004-2007. It lists the many steps involved and credits the major designer/planners which included Eva. Hauling, sorting and creating uses for rocks was a big piece of the project.

One of the planners envisioned "a garden similar to Eva's front yard, which was a garden that used plants, not grass. Anyone who had visited Eva's home was impressed by the beauty of what a front yard could look like without turf. This is the type of garden he proposed to the board." Of course, Eva became the chair.



April 2011

### Directions To The FitzGerald Residence 329 Fern Valley Road

*From the intersection of North 19th Street & Lakeshore Drive, continue out North 19th toward China Spring.*

At the next stoplight, which is Steinbeck Bend Road, the name of North 19th Street changes to China Spring Road/ Farm to Market Road 1637. Do **not** turn; just continue on China Spring Road through the next stoplight. At the 2nd stoplight, which is Wortham Bend Road/ Farm to Market 2490, you will turn right and \* go a little over 1 mile to Ziegler lane. It turns off only to the left and it is just past the 70 MPH speed limit sign on Wortham Bend Road. Continue to the top of the hill on Ziegler and turn right on Fern Valley Road. We are the 4th mailbox on the left and our house number is 329, which is on the mailbox and on the black pipe fence in the entranceway. The gate will be open and the entranceway will be "marked"

*\*An alternate route is on Highway 6 going across the twin bridges over Lake Waco. You will turn right at the first stoplight after you have crossed the bridge. This is North River Crossing/Farm to Market Road 185. After crossing over the North Bosque River Bridge, you will pass China Spring High School on the left and then T into China Spring Road. Turn right and go to the first stoplight, which is Wortham Bend Road/ Farm to Market 2490. Turn left and follow the directions from the \* above.*

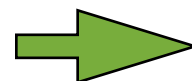
**In case you get lost, our number is 836-1966.** Call and we will "talk you in". If you can carpool please do so and bring your folding lawn chairs, (with your name on it so it can be returned in case you forget and leave it).

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The newsletter article tells the story of several construction phases including an herb garden and water feature. Especially impressive is the fact many of the plants came from master gardener's own gardens. SW

*Left: The Comal County MG's garden adjacent to the AgriLife Extension office in New Braunfels.*

*Eva and Jim's Garden  
Tour guide is continued  
on page 6.*



## Minutes: March 9, 2011

The Master Gardeners met at the Carleen Bright Arboretum for the March meeting. President Jan Serface called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. A dues question came up immediately. The cost is \$1.00 per month and a person joining this month would pay \$9.00. Member ID's were handed out and it was mentioned that most nurseries give a 10 % discount to members of the McLennan County Master Gardeners.

**Minutes:** There were no minutes for the month of February since the meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. The minutes for January were approved instead.

**Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer, Irene Dauphin, provided a report for the months of February and March which was approved.

**Old Business:** Eva FitzGerald handed out the new 2011 MCMG Directories. She asked that all of us read the booklet as there is plenty of information including the by-laws and guidelines on how to report hours.

**Volunteer Hours:** Julia Khoury was not present to talk about reporting volunteer hours, so Jan requested when sending that information to Julia, do not record the ¼ hours.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Jeanette Kelly presented information about *Beasts and Blooms*. The event will be April 16 from 9:00 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Cameron Park Zoo. The plan is to make paper sombreros, paper pots, paper seed cards, and furnish information about Master Gardeners. It will be located at the Tree Top Pavilion in the zoo. She handed out a list for sign up. Judy Schmeltekopf will assist. We need a count in advance in order to provide the correct number of arm bands.

Jeanette also talked about *Walk Across America*. She wants to form a team to participate. It's one of her pet projects. Spouses are welcome to participate. There was a sign up sheet.

Brenda Golubski talked about the *garlic garden*. The date is March 22. Jane Merman will coordinate.

Barbara Vance gave information about *Gardeners Gathering*. It is set for Sunday, April 10 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the arboretum. It is free to the public. There will be vendors the same as last year. Our group will have a booth for which we need volunteers. There will be a location for pot recycling. She mentioned that a mulching party is scheduled for March 23 at 9:00 a.m. at the *Trailside Garden*.

Jene Hering indicated that he needs help to plant trees in *McGregor at the garden*. The work day is scheduled for March 11. There are 10,000 people that pass by that project daily. He also thanked us for providing help for the BIG Conference this

last month. We made good money on the project. There was an explanation about the project for those who didn't know.

Andrea Moore said that *Woodway Elementary* is preparing the ground for planting. The date is March 15 for preparation and March 18 for planting. A sign up sheet was passed around.

Barbara Mersinger updated us on our *Master Gardener plant sale*. We will need plants and more importantly volunteers for the project. We should have clean pots and prices should be posted on the plant. We will need help with the tent.

**Office Coordinator:** Ila Jean Carothers said there are seeds in the back for \$.25. *MHMR planting beds* are being amended with a new planting medium. Some beds have been planted with radishes and spinach. New sprouts have begun to grow. The bed is located at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Jackson. We received two thank you letters from TSTC for the scholarships that were given. As office coordinator, she noted that volunteers will be needed for manning the telephone this next quarter. Should you need to cancel, try to swap with someone else. There is an instruction booklet showing how to work in the office.

There will be an article in the newspaper about plant pot recycling in the near future. There is information on the back table about Walk Across Texas. The state MG board is promoting the upcoming convention in April.

**New Business:** Jan talked about the interest in updating the MG office. There is an estimate of \$450.00 to refurbish the office. The executive committee recommends that we spend up to \$250.00. Donations are welcome for the project. Barbara Vance moved we spend \$250.00. Judy Schmeltekopf seconded the motion. *The motion carried.*

Jan said this year we will be offering tee shirts again. Bonnie Belanger will head the project. She's in the back taking orders for anyone who is interested.

Jan had cards handed out to certify us to work with children. Carol Wood is working on the picture directory. She needs MGs who haven't had their picture taken.

The meeting was turned over to Sandra Killough from Bonnie's Greenhouse to give a presentation on planting herbs in containers.

The next 2 meetings are at night. Eva FitzGerald will host the April 13 meeting.

With no other business the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Submitted by  
Dick Belanger, Secretary

### 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

**The FitzGerald Garden Tour** - *continued from pg. 4*

We have 7.5 acres with about a two-acre pond on the property plus chickens, two turkeys, ducks and two cats. The plants in the landscape consist of native and adapted plants, several roses and herbs, pecan and fruit trees. There are a few non-native plants and some annuals. If any plants are not hardy, they are replaced with a native or more adapted plant that does not require a lot of water or care.

I have built all of the raised beds and the dry stream bed except for the "bog area." I did have help with that part from the guy who helps out with yard work and he also built the rock walkway along the edge. The purpose of the stream bed was to enhance the landscape, as well as help with a drainage problem. When we have those Texas "gully washing" rains, the field next door drains onto our property at the head of the stream bed. Also, one of the gutter's downspouts drains into it.

Jim built the grape and rose arbors and cedar fence sections in the front bed. He used cedar cut from the back of our property. He also built the fenced vegetable garden and six 4' x 12' raised beds.

There are two rainwater systems for irrigating planting areas and potted plants. The ten tote containers behind our second garage hold 300 gal. each with a 55 gal. drum for a total of 3,055 gal. of rain water.

Our large system on the side of the house consists of an in-ground 2,075 gal. cement tank and a 3,000 gal. green plastic tank. Total storage: 8,130 gal.

This may seem like a lot of water, but when it is hot and dry in summer with no rainfall, the water does not last very long. Our latest project is a system to pump water from our pond for the vegetable garden. We completed that last month. —  
*Eva Fitzgerald*

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**A kettle full of oregano.**

Sandra Killough of Bonnie's Greenhouse "loves funky containers."



Steve Goldman and Jane Herndon set up and manned our table at the Walk Across America Kickoff March 17 at Cameron Park sponsored by our McLennan County AgriLife Extension Service. Their theme was "An Introduction to Vegetable Gardening." Seed packets were given away.

**MG Tee Shirts -**

Place your order at the April 13 meeting. Bonnie and Dick Belanger will have samples in all sizes and styles. Knit golf shirts are available in olive green, red and two shades of blue.

Denim button shirts are available in short and long sleeves.

Everyone needs a shirt for the Plant Sale in May.

(Note: For sale or trade - size small, light blue knit shirt, washed, but never worn. Need med. See Sonia, [jwarriner@hotmail.com](mailto:jwarriner@hotmail.com).)

**Don't forget . . .**



**Beasts N' Blooms  
& Earth Day**  
at the Zoo in Cameron Park  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m. April 16, 2011

**Gardeners' Gathering**  
at the Arboretum, 1 - 4 p.m.  
April 10, 2011  
by Woodway Beautiful folks

