

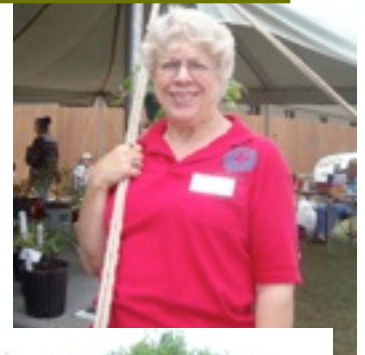
The Latest Dirt

May 2012

McLennan County Master Gardener Association

Share your plants - share the fun at our
annual Master Gardeners Plant Sale
Saturday, May 19, 9a.m. - 3p.m.
4605 West Waco Drive (rain or shine)

Barbara Mersinger has been chairman of the plant sale for at least five years. She isn't sure. A member of the MCMG 2004 class, she "loves doing it." This year Penny Gifford will co-chair the project with her. It's our biggest fund-raising project.



*May features:
Gardens by
Master Gardeners*



*See Elizabeth Milam's in
Woodway on page 3*

*See Eva FitzGerald's in
China Spring
on pages 4, 5*



Next MG Meeting
Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 6:30 p.m.
Bonnie's Greenhouse
Orchard
Program by Sandra Killough

What do Master Gardeners do?

Grow ... see beautiful gardens, pages 3,4,5
Educate ... see Cedar Ridge School, page 5
Lead ... see Sandy, page 2
Give ... see Volunteer Hours, page 2

from Sandy Back to you



Well, I don't know about you, but many days when I look in the mirror (and I try not to do that very often) I look tired and in need of a "perk!" No, this will not be information on a new skin cream or face lift. Over the past three weeks, I have done quite a few landscape plans for people who have "tired" looking yards. Now is a good time to do a face lift on your yard.

Several years ago, when we lived in another house, I began to realize that my front yard really needed a makeover. My son and I pulled out every plant and I started all over. After I reshaped the beds and completely brought in new plants, it gave the entire house a new and improved look. I don't think you would need to go to this extreme, but it is quite possible, that just making a few changes could make a huge difference.

Here are some things to consider when looking at your own landscape. Look at the shape of your shrub beds and see if they look pleasing and unique to the eye. Or do you have sharp corners and a boring design that is not appealing? Many times, just extending an area in a new shape can make a big difference.

Next, examine the plants you are using. Are they all just green with not much variety of color? Do the leaves have different textures with some that create movement in your yard? By using some native grasses and other plants that have a combination of various textures in the leaves, you can create visual interest that draws the eye to make people want to look closer. Likewise, creating different heights in plants brings about new dimension to your landscape.

The most obvious redo is to add color. We often just think color can be added by planting annuals, but many other things can bring about color as well. Many varieties of plants have different colors of leaves with soft flowers. We all know that perennials can give you the "best bang" for your buck by coming alive each spring to enhance your yard with color.

March 2012 Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours	320
Education hours	71
Contacts	2437
Media	101,000
Meetings	62
<i>(Hours below are included in Volunteer Hours)</i>	
Arboretum	48
Trailside Garden	21
Rose Garden	7
Herb Garden	6
Cactus Garden	3
SuperStar Garden	12
Downtown Farmers' Market	1
News prep./publishing	22
Speakers Bureau	13
Master Gardner clerical	69
McGregor Demo garden	15
Phone, misc. time - Ag office	45
Cedar Ridge Elementary	20
Woodway Elementary	33
Hewitt Elementary	2
MHMR	2
B.I.G. Conference	2
Hewitt Community garden	2
Urban Coalition	2
MG new class 2012	6
Plant Sale	17
Wal-Mart Gardening	18

Hours are now due by the 25th of each month in order for Julia Khoury to compile reports for Shane McLellan.

Don't forget to use hardscapes in your landscape to add interest. This can be overdone and should be done tastefully and in moderation, but a large boulder with moss growing on it can break up an empty area and add lots of interest.

I love to add a low growing color plant such as Bat Faced Cuphea or Lantana just by a boulder or a native grass just behind it. This softens the look of the rock and draws the eye to that area. Other items of interest can add whimsy and character to your garden as well.

In conclusion, your yard should reflect your personality and make you happy as you stroll around it each day.

Sandy

Almost Heaven - a name for a rose and the garden where it resides

It is oh so fitting that Elizabeth Milam lives on Hummingbird Lane. She lives there with her three dogs - Otto, a Great Pyrenees, Scrappy, a Maltese and Fern, a miniature poodle. Together they share the garden which is a wonder to behold.

In the past six years Elizabeth has transformed a lot and a half on the corner of Bosque into an enchanting English cottage garden. Roses of every hue and name greet you as you wander from bed to bed catching the scent of a *Chrysler Imperial* (yellow) or lingering over an arrangement of carefully planned perennials and annuals. They are positioned perfectly to compliment a very red David Austin or an antique *Archduke Charles*. She blends her designs for scents as well as color.

Her snapdragons are huge. Her Russian sage and lavender become the canvas for a *Rosarium Uetersen* or *Viva*, the offspring of *Carefree Beauty*. Fluffy gold iris compete for your attention. Driving up Bosque a crescent shaped bed of velvety *Valentines* surrounding *Climbing Pinkies* turns your head.

The back garden leads you through a gate to raised beds of roses, perennials and herbs. An arbor of *Cecile Brunner* frames whimsical bird houses. All of this didn't just happen, but proves it can be done, even on a rocky chunk of cedar-filled Woodway where many of us struggle to dig a planting hole.

Elizabeth credits her beautiful garden to her 2009 EarthKind Specialist Training and willingness to ditch the soil and rocks on her hill for expanded shale and



plant-based compost. She says, "We tilled at least ten inches down with the shale and compost and that is when things changed in my garden and everything began to grow. The effect was almost overnight."

Now she adds a top dressing of compost along with mulch each year.

She explains she couldn't even get a probe into the ground for a soil test prior to changing the earth. "I had hard packed clay with no drainage or aeration and few earthworms. So, I really want to emphasize how strongly I believe in the wisdom of the EarthKind land management principles. That is why my plants grow as they do."

This is not an amateur's garden. She seeks her prizes in catalogs and at near and far growers. Don't look for knockouts in her palette. She moves and adjusts to follow the sun or the lines of a tree. An *Old Blush* rambles up a live oak. Large viburnums absorb Bosque traffic noise. She says she breaks the rules of design, but she also follows them.

A gardener helps Elizabeth with all this plus he is handy with saws and lumber and loves to create arbors and climbing structures. She is adamant about growing without chemicals and sprays. Instead she uses beneficial nematodes and wasps to prevent damaging insects.

A native Texan, she was born in Meridian and grew up on a ranch in Bosque County. She has two daughters, one in Tennessee, the other in Austin. Her husband died several years ago. The family lived in McAllen for several years and she directed volunteers at the International Museum and was Christian education director at her church. After moving to Waco she continued her volunteer path at Baylor's Mayborn Museum and the Gov. Daniel Historic Village.

A member of the MG 2008 class, Elizabeth is also president of the Waco Rose Society. (SW)



Eva's garden teaches and delights

Eva FitzGerald and her husband Jim have one of the most attractive gardens around. Their China Spring area country home features a large pond filled with fish, ducks and highly vocal geese. The gardens are, simply stated, a delight. A visitor just wants to say “Ahhhh”. This is the product of about five years of hard work and creative thinking. These things take time, as we all know.

Eva was born in Santa Anna, Texas, and is a third generation Texan. She and Jim FitzGerald both enjoyed dancing and that's how they met. When Eva retired from M&M Mars in 1987, they built a retirement home at Canyon Lake in Comal County. Gardening has always been in Eva's blood, so she joined the first Master Gardener training class offered in Comal County. She received her TMG certificate in 1998 and her Master Naturalist certificate in 2001.

When Eva and Jim moved from Waco to Comal County, Eva took along some petrified wood and some other “special rocks” – as she describes them. Those rocks must indeed be special, for they have moved with Eva about four times over the years. While living in the Canyon Lake area, she developed an interest in native and adaptive plants. So when the couple moved back to McLennan County in 2006, they brought a 20 foot covered trailer full of plants.

Their Comal County home was in a small hillside subdivision overlooking a cove on Canyon Lake. New Braunfels, with its thriving art community, is the nearest town of any size. Eva had previously taken art classes in Waco and she received additional art training in New Braunfels. She joined Canyon Lake Art Guild, winning ribbons for her paintings and photography. She learned how to press flowers (you don't just slam a book shut on them) and use them to make bookmarks, note cards and framed pieces.

The FitzGerald's moved back to Waco in large part because of better access to health care facilities. As Eva explains it, they were fortunate to find their current 7-1/2 acre property with a 2 to 3 acre pond (depending on the water level). About three quarters of an acre surrounding



Under a bower of grapes that Jim made from cedar limbs, Eva stands on a path that leads to their dry creek and boggy bed that sustains a weeping willow.

the house is landscaped and the rest of the property is left in its natural state.

Their menagerie includes two “very spoiled” cats, chickens (nine hens and a rooster), eight mallards, 21 pigeons and a pair of loud, cantankerous African geese. Eva and Jim have the place landscaped pretty much the way they want it, so future plans for the property are mostly just maintenance.

According to Eva, gardening in McLennan County is very different from Canyon Lake. They formerly lived on a rocky hillside with not much soil. This required either raised beds or the technique known as “pop a rock, add soil and plant”. The soil there is

alkaline, as it is here, and it's a bit warmer in winter there, though there are some cold spells.

Water is a problem in the area around San Antonio. As you might expect, folks who rely on the Edwards Aquifer are highly focused on water conservation. In addition, they tend to be more interested in water wise gardening, native and adaptive plants and protecting the environment. As water becomes more of an issue here in Central Texas, we are likely to follow suit.

It was in Comal County that Eva learned about rain-water harvesting and became interested in native and adaptive plants. She explains that there are lots of great plant nurseries in that area and a wide variety of native plants are readily available.

She was asked to design the landscape plan for the Comal County Extension Office because of her knowledge of native plants and also because the FitzGerald's own landscape had been featured in the San Antonio newspaper. The Extension Office grounds were designed as a public demonstration of a



Continued on page 5

Eva's Garden . . .

water-conserving, attractive landscape. In a real sense, the Comal County Master Gardeners led the way and the rest of the state is starting to catch on – and catch up. When Eva was a member there, Comal County Master Gardeners were required to perform twelve hours of volunteer service each year, along with twelve CE hours, to maintain their certification.

A specialist in Earth Kind Environmental Landscape Management, she took all four of the landscape design courses offered in College Station. Her garden is a living demonstration of good design principles. For the benefit of visitors, little signs identify many of the plants. (BV)



Dragonflies mating on a prickly ash near the FitzGerald pond.



On a rainy day in April when you can't go out to play in the garden, just gather around Grady Bonner and everyone will be happy and learn something, too!



J. Kelly photos at Cedar Ridge

Minutes: April, 2012

President Sandy Back called the meeting to order at the Carleen Bright Arboretum, Whitehall Center, in Woodway, TX, at 11 a.m. President Back welcomed all attendees to the meeting. She announced the March 2012 minutes were published in *The Latest Dirt* and stated they would be stand approved as printed. One correction was noted by recording secretary Brenda Golubski so the minutes would read "Carol Wood media contacts reached a possible 97,987 people with the column in the Waco Tribune-Herald."

President Back turned the program over to Melba Waldrop, project coordinator, who introduced John Alexander, Habitat for Humanity director. He talked about the goals and progress of the organization. MCMG has been a volunteer group working with the organization since 1987. Mr. Alexander noted he has been involved in building about 100 houses and that the group has built 137 houses in 25 years. In addition to building houses, the organization has expanded its activities into rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes and neighborhood revival which includes critical home repairs. MCMG volunteers consult on landscaping and provide some gardening equipment for each home built.

The Treasurer's Report, the Bank Reconciliation for March, 2012 and the Blackland Income Growth Conference, Final Accounting were given as handouts previous to the meeting.

Upcoming projects were listed on the back of the agenda. Jennifer Rich reviewed the list with input from Sandy Back, Jeanette Kelly and Kim Dougherty.

Julia Khoury stressed the importance of listing your name on all hours reports submitted. It is impossible to credit hours correctly without the pertinent information.

Sherry Matthews and Robert Powers reviewed the mentor role for the upcoming MCMG intern class and requested volunteers to sign up to mentor an intern.

Carol Wood requested members to submit questions for good gardening practices for the newspaper column.

Barbara Mersinger reviewed the work needed to be completed for the plant sale on May 19 which starts at 7-7:30 a.m. for set up for the sale which begins at 9 a.m. at Mocek's Home Entertainment Center on 4601 W. Waco Drive. Barry Vokes, treasurer, emphasized the importance of a successful plant sale since its proceeds are our main fundraising activity for the year.

Ila Jean Carothers passed around the sign up list for the office work schedule.

Sandy Back announced members could claim education hours for today's programs. John Alexander's talk is equal to 1 hour of education hours and Steve Chamblee's talk is equal to 1.5 hours of education hours.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Golubski, recording secretary

April 11, 2012, Meeting Attendance Members: 59

Back, Sandy; Beazley, Madge; Belanger, Bonnie R.; Belanger, Dick; Buckner, Linda; Burchfield, Linda; Burleson, Sandy; Carothers, Ila Jean; Chapman, Merle; Clafferty, JoAnn; Crawford, Susan; Dauphin, Irene; Davidson, Emily; DeMuynck, Lynn; Dougherty, Kim; Elwell, Zach; Evans, Richard; FitzGerald, Eva; Fitzgerald, Melody; Folse, Norma; Ford, Kris; Foulks, Xan; Golubski, Brenda; Herndon, Jane; Irvine, Terry; Kelly, Jeanette; Khoury, Julia; Kinder, Missy; Lindsey, Donna; Lovecky, Steven; Mabry, Cindy; Matthews, Sherry; McDaniel, Louie; Mersinger, Barbara; Milam, Elizabeth; Milnor, Gerry; Moore, Andrea; Moore, Candace; Plasek, Anne; Powers, Robert; Rich, Jennifer; Richardson, Sharon; Roman, Sharon; Schaffer, Janet; Schillaci, Valerie; Schmeltekopf, Judy; Seale, James; Serface, Jan; Setser, Della; Smith, Edrena; Turlington, Kathy; Vokes, Barry; von Rosenberg, Jo; Waldrop, Melba; Warriner, Sonia; Whitehead, Dorothy; Whitehead, M.J.; Wilhite, Amber; and Wood, Carol.

McLennan County Master Gardeners Association Officers 2012

President - Sandy Back • Vice President - Jeanette Kelly • Secretary - Brenda Golubski
Treasurer - Barry Vokes



AgriLife Sponsor - Shane McLellan, County Agent

Newsletter - Sonia Warriner jwarriner@hotmail.com

Our web site: www.mclennanmastergardeners.org

Send volunteer hours to Julia Khoury, 8512 Bosque Blvd., Waco 76712 or 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



from the
cardinal's corner

*Janet Schaffer, Director
Arboretum, Tourism & Recreational Services*

Happy spring! What a glorious spring we have had. The rain has been bountiful nurturing the ground with a long awaited drink.

We have our master gardener meetings here at the arboretum, but how many of you have taken the time to tour the grounds and really know what we have to offer? The more I talk to people in the general public, the more I realize how few of them know what the arboretum is.

And, I am amazed at the number of people who live within 10 miles and have never been here.

I thought this month I would give you a brief history of the arboretum. Our story actually starts in 1865 when Burl Jones Kendrick left his Georgia home and moved to Texas. He bought 320 acres on the eastern side of Woodway and the site of Whitehall Park. He built his home, and donated land for a cemetery, school and Whitehall Church.

In 1996, the Woodway City Council members were contemplating what to do with a piece of

land that had become an eyesore at the corner of Bosque and Estates. Although not officially a dumping ground, that is exactly what the property was being used for. To complicate matters, the property had a main sewer line running right through the middle of it making it undesirable for developing.

The Carleen Bright Arboretum was the brain-child of this city council. Our Whitehall Center is an exact replica of the Whitehall Baptist



Church, built in 1877 around which the community of Whitehall – and, eventually Woodway – developed. The arboretum was named in honor of Carleen Bright, a long time city council member who focused on civic beautification.

The first phase was finished in 1997, which includes the gazebo and barn area. Whitehall Center opened in May of 1999. The arboretum property covers 16 acres with an initial development of four.

My challenge to you is to tell three people about the arboretum and to bring one person to see it. “Gardeners Gathering” is Sunday, April 29, from 1 to 4 p.m. What a perfect opportunity to invite a friend.



Our MG Trailside garden was built in 2009 and is directly behind Whitehall Center. Carefree Beauty EarthKind roses bloom in front of three arbors covered with Tangerine Beauty Crossvine. (Photo 3/2012, Barbara Vance.)



Good Partners

MCMG volunteers have been helping to landscape homes built by Habitat for Humanity for 12 years thanks to Melba Waldrop and the partnership with John Alexander, executive director.

Since the Humanity project began 25 years ago, they have built 137 houses averaging eight or nine each year. They focus on high quality, low maintenance, energy efficient dwellings of 1100 to 1450 square feet.

The agency also operates Restore on Franklin Ave. and receives a half million dollars in donated materials each year.

A new project is Neighborhood Revitalization which repairs older homes – many in terrible condition – and makes them suitable for occupancy plus the neighborhood gets a big boost.

Speaker s Bureau Report

March 18 - Barry Vokes presented his program on Square Foot Gardening to the Mary Milam Club at Austin Avenue Methodist Church. 13 present.

April 26 - Thirteen members of the Garden Patch Garden Club toured the Arboretum grounds with Sonia Warriner.

Plug Into These Volunteer "Opps"

Volunteer Opportunities May - June

Date	Activity	Contact
May 5	Waco Farmer's Market 8-8:30 a.m. set up; 1:00 p.m. depart	Penny Gifford
May 12	Bugfest at Waco Wetlands 9:00 a.m. - noon	Jeanette Kelly
May 19	McMG Plant Sale Plant delivery 7:30 a.m.	B. Mersinger/P. Gifford
May 23	Woodway Elem. k-1st Harvest Time TBA	Kim Dougherty
June 19	Cedar Ridge Garden Tidying 8:30 a.m.	Sandy Back