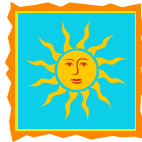




The Latest Dirt

August 2013

McLennan County Master



August 2013 Master Gardener Meeting

The August MG meeting will be held at noon at the Arboretum on August 14th. 1 hour education credit for class: Lawn Care and Diseases program by Mark Barnett after meeting, Aug 14 from 1-4. Open to the public for \$10.00.

Mark Barnett, Valuable, Educated Charter Member of MCMG



Mark Barnett was a member of the original 1996 MCMG charter class. He was born in Minneola (near Tyler) and grew up in Hawkins, Texas. He attended grade school in Minneola and high school in Hawkins, where he graduated with scholarships. With some grant money he enrolled at Texas State Technical Institute in Waco (now

Texas State Technical College). He signed up for a course of study leading to the degree, Associate of Applied Science in Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture Technology. As Mark explains, it was more about the commercial production of plants – how to grow them.

As part of his TSTI training, he was required to work in the field full time for at least three months. Mark found a job at a small garden center in Hewitt called “Li'l Greenhouse”. Following the three month training period, Mark continued to work there part time and the nursery hired him full time when he graduated in 1982. He worked there for 17 years.

Both sides of Mark's family were farmers, truck farmers or share croppers. His paternal grandmother always had lots of house plants, ferns, flowers, roses and a huge home vegetable garden. His grandfather grew vegetables to sell at farmers markets. Mark's mother worked in a Tyler rose packaging plant and was always bringing home damaged roses to grow along with her flowers. She had a large

vegetable garden. Her parents lived in Minnesota and were large scale grain farmers. Mark was around plants constantly. In high school an agriculture instructor introduced Mark to competitive plant identification via Future Farmers of America.

When Mark came to Waco and TSTI, he intended to study technology, but instead switched to horticulture since he was fascinated by plants. In his high school days Mark maintained a flower garden and wandered the back roads, bringing home interesting plants. He competed in FFA tree and shrub identification contests and in pasture weed identification. While at TSTI he had an apartment with big, wide windows and he grew African violets. When he moved, the violets died, so he learned how to cultivate low light plants. The next move brought a small patio and Mark gradually expanded his plant collection, while at the same time maintaining a large display garden at Li'l Greenhouse nursery.

New, strange and pretty plants fascinated Mark. The nursery provided lots of opportunities to answer questions from customers, and Mark learned right along with them.

Mark is a Certified Nursery Professional and a Certified Landscape Professional (Texas Nursery and Landscape Association). Over the years he has belonged to a number of clubs, but had to back away due to increasing work demands. These interests included Heart of Texas Bee Keepers, the Organic Gardening Club, Rose Society and the Native Plant Society of Texas. He has been on the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Horticulture Advisory Committee since the mid to late 1980s. He is an Earth Kind Soil Consultant.

Mark was instrumental in founding MCMG back in 1996. The Native Plant Society heard about the Texas Master Gardener program. Mark and others lobbied the County Agent for support, and the rest is history.

Asked what he sees as the biggest challenges facing Central Texas gardeners, Mark says water (cost and availability) followed by drought-impacted soils. Improving the soil lessens the impact of dry conditions. Other challenges include a greater insect population due in part to drought conditions.

Asked about the nursery business, Mark says: “[It] has become a tough [business] to break into. The competition [is] much more intense from the big box stores and larger grocers now selling plants and gardening supplies. You need the financial ability to survive on little or nothing as you grow your business. You must be knowledgeable, competent and able to meet people’s needs and wants.” For his employer, Maxwell Landscapes and Lawn Care Service, Mark does most of the landscape designing and drawing. He also does a lot of diagnosing/trouble shooting/problem solving for client landscapes.

On tree selection, Mark favors Burr Oak, Lacey Oak, Chinese Pistache, Cedar Elm and Big Tooth Maple. For well-drained soil he recommends Belinda’s Dream rose, Lindheimers Muhly grass, Pink Skull Cap, Salvia Greggii, Ox Blood Lilly, Pineapple Guava.

Other advice: Garden soil prep is increasingly important. Use a good mulch and maintain it. Keep weeds down. Use mixed height plantings to furnish some shade. Use water wisely, not excessively. Avoid water hogging plants. Accept that plants will be stressed at times – just keep them alive to enjoy again another day.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteer/training teams for the University High School Environmental Sciences curriculum are still forming. If you have not previously let Tom know of your interest, please do so right away. The teams need to be in place before 8/13, because that is the date of the initial 6 week orientation at the Extension Office at 10:00. Contact Tom Burr at information under “Training” below.

Education Opportunities

There will be a greenhouse training session at the UHS greenhouse presented by Steve Chaney, Tarrant County AgriLife Extension Agent – Horticulture, at 10:00, Tuesday,

8/6/13. This session is open to all, and a CEU should be awarded. If you plan to attend, please let Tom know so that we can make sure that we are not too crowded. Tom Burr, tomburr@grandecom.net, 741-9823

[Landscape Design School Course III, Series XXIII, September 23-24, 2013](#), Bryan-College station

[The 2013 Texas Master Gardener Conference](#) will be held in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties on October 17 - 19. Experience the Blooms, Birds and Butterflies of South Texas!

from Sandy Back



Seeds from Sandy

It is my sincere hope that everyone is staying cool and enjoying the recent green growth as a result of the rains in our area. What a blessing to have some needed moisture in the middle of the summer! I know we all fight the same gardening battles of insects, diseases, weeds and watering, but at the end of the day we also love to see those new blooms and gather fresh vegetables!

I recently had the unique privilege to visit and tour all over China. Of course, my eyes were looking here and there to see if they used any different types of plants or what their techniques of gardening would be. To my surprise, I recognized almost every landscape plant I saw. This was mostly attributed to the fact that their climate was just like ours.....hot and humid. Inside the



cities were many well landscaped and beautiful plants. However, the biggest thing that caught my eye was the fact that these



people do not have yards due to the exploding population and excessive costs of real estate. The majority of the people live in high rise

apartments. It seemed that a large portion of these people were growing their own vegetables on their very small balconies. I observed building after building that had clothes drying outside right alongside container gardens of vegetables.

The most amazing thing to me was the fact that these people, literally, use every useable space of land to grow anything they can to eat.

The predominant plants that were growing in row after row were corn, rice and tea. If there was a plot of land on a busy street corner, even 3'x4', you would find beans and corn growing. Due to lack of income, they have had to learn to become as self-sufficient as possible.

Our trip began in Beijing, which I found quite fascinating and we saw the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, the sites of the recent Olympics, a silk factory, lunch with a local family, ride in a rickshaw and the Summer Palace. The beauty and culture were amazing, but the smog there was so thick that it gave you a feeling of discontent. We left



there and went to Xi'an to tour the excavation site of the Terra Cotta Soldiers. The following day, we went to Chongqing and boarded a boat to spend three days going down the

Yangtze River. We saw fascinating natural bridges, gorges and spectacular water falls. All along the steep mountain slopes, the people were growing vegetables in difficult to garden slopes and soil. In the steepest of inclines, the major crop was tea and on the flatter areas, they were growing corn and rice. The next stop was Shanghai which offered a total different "taste of China". The architecture there was unbelievable and countless millions of people live in the city in abundant tall apartment towers. Once again, they utilized their balconies to grow needed plants. Our final stop was Hong Kong and it turned out to be our favorite due to the fact of its beauty and more westernized culture. We were sorry to not have more time to spend there and take in all its scenery. We were taken to a jade factory and downtown market. The downtown streets had beautiful flowers and landscaping.

My conclusion was that no matter where you live across this vast world that people value the ability to garden for not only beauty, but as a means to provide for their families. I returned to the USA with an appreciation for my home and a space to get out and enjoy. It is so important that we pass along our knowledge each and every opportunity we are given.

Go out and dig,
Sandy

Tips from Master Gardeners for Master Gardeners

Carry a thermos of frozen grapes into the garden during the hot months of the year. As you eat these, they will cool you down and make you feel more comfortable.

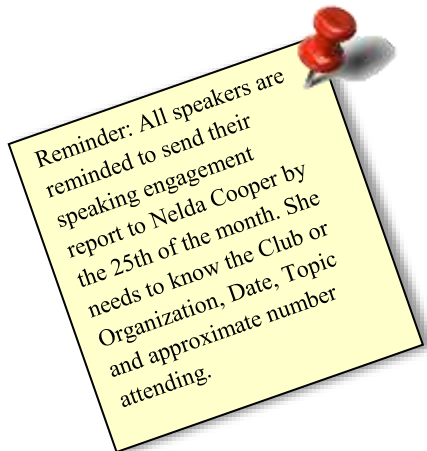
Get ready for fall now by ordering cool season vegetable seeds from the seed catalog companies. Many of them have specials this time of the year on leftover seeds from the spring, so you may be able to get them for a discount. Remember that most oriental vegetables are cool season crops, so try them along with the old standbys.

July 2013 Speaker's Report

June 20 - Ila Jean Carothers presented her program Some Like It HOT to the Waco Rose Society. Fourteen members were present.

June 20 - Eva FitzGerald spoke to the Master Naturalists about Earth-Kind Perennials. Eleven people attended.

Note: No reports for July were submitted, but the above speaking engagements were submitted after the newsletter went out for July.



September, and the average first freeze happens about mid-November. Many vegetables need to be well established by the end of September. Some plants (e.g., lettuce, spinach) do well in the winter garden; you can delay planting them until cool weather arrives. There are charts explaining when to plant each vegetable here in Central Texas. If you miss the planting date by a week or so, no problem.

First, remove the weeds. Pulling them by hand is best, but if you have grass in your garden beds, you can likely kill it with an application of glyphosate, but watch out for spray drift and follow the label directions. Glyphosate takes a couple of weeks to work, and that may set you back a bit. Once you deal with the weeds, work a generous amount of good, finished compost into the soil. Over time you'll wind up with thick, rich and fluffy gardening soil. Add compost at least once each year and twice is better.

Then, apply a thick layer of mulch. In Central Texas, mulching may be the single most important aspect of successful gardening. The ideal mulch will gradually break down and help feed the soil, so mulch should be re-applied generously as needed. Good mulch for vegetable gardens is shredded brown leaves. Run your lawnmower over them several times. Ensure that mulch does not touch the plant stems.

Compost and mulch will work together in harmony if you choose mulch that will break down relatively quickly to help feed your soil. If you apply coarse mulch that requires several years to decompose, you'll face the extra work of scraping it off once or twice annually to add more compost. If you don't mind that, fine.

Unless your spring tomato vines are clearly doing well, consider removing them and re-planting. Select early to mid-maturity varieties. Right before the first hard freeze, pick the remaining fruit green and let it ripen in your kitchen. Do not refrigerate tomatoes. Purchase your tomato sets now, put them in larger plastic pots (1 to 3 gallons, filled with potting soil) and let them grow – protected from the intense heat – until it's time to plant them. Add some timed release fertilizer to the pots (e.g., Osmocote). For healthy, vigorous plants, add water-soluble fertilizer to your watering can each time you water. More adventurous gardeners grow their tomato sets from seed. Smaller tomato varieties do better here than bigger ones.

Fertilize your fall garden sparingly and keep in mind that inexpensive ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) might be all you need (first, get a soil test). Try half a pound per 100² feet. That's about one cup of ammonium sulfate. If growth is slow and leaves are yellowish, repeat the application. Use a hand held broadcast spreader, lightly till it in and water.

Newest Member



Congratulations to our newest member, Ann Sefcik. Ann received her certification at the July meeting.

PREPARING FOR YOUR FALL GARDEN

In early August we still have six to eight weeks of intense heat to deal with in our gardens. It's time to make preparations for your fall garden. If you are not already doing so, you still have time if you start now.

We must remember that some tender vegetables need 60 to 90 or more days from planting to maturity. This is a problem, for the brutal heat usually does not let up until late

Transplants are necessary for certain vegetables (e.g., tomatoes, eggplant, peppers). Since it's hot here until October, your plants need protection from the heat. Rig up shade cloth until it cools off. If you don't, your transplants will likely wither. This is one of the biggest challenges of fall gardening in Central Texas.

Another method of preparing your garden soil is putting down multiple layers of old newspapers covered thickly with spoiled hay or lawn grass clippings. It will all decompose over time. To plant, carefully cut holes, exposing the soil.



In September, plant greens, spinach, radishes, carrots, chard, beets, peas, and broccoli (from sets). In October, plant leaf lettuce, kale, bok choy, onions and spinach. Follow planting directions on the seed packets. Plant garlic at the fall equinox, spacing the cloves four to six inches apart. Plant them three inches deep in loose, rich, well-drained soil. Add blood meal. The largest cloves grow the biggest bulbs. Mulch heavily.

Purchase some frost blankets for cold weather protection and anchor them tightly with rocks. The soil will release heat to help protect the plants. The frost blanket protects against cold wind and heat loss. A string of outdoor Christmas tree lights can provide that extra measure of warmth the plants need.

Volunteer Opportunities August 2013

August 10	Downtown Waco Farmers' Market 8-8:30 set up, 1pm depart	Penny Gifford
August 13	Univ. High Environmental Sciences training Extension Office (6 week orientation) 10am	Tom Burr
August 21	Woodway Elem. Workday, 7am	Marietta Diehl & Lisa Daily
August 25	Cedar Ridge Elem. Workday 8am	Sandy Back

McLennan County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting, July 10, 2013

[Followed by Debbie Boyd's program on "Creative Floral Design"] [1 hour education credit]

Carleen Bright Arboretum, Whitehall Center

Minutes of the Meeting:

Vice President Jeanette Kelly called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone. She called attention to the proposed changes to the by-laws that were attached to the Agendas. Everyone not at the meeting will receive the same thing in the mail. Along with the agenda and by-laws pages in the back of the room, Carol Wood brought copies of the pictorial directory she has spent a lot of time preparing. They will be a wonderful tool for everyone to help us get to know each other better.

Jeanette brought members up to date on several events among our group, first of which was the passing of one of our members, Richard Evans, who joined Master Gardeners with the 2010 class. From the sad to the joyous, we learned that our President, Sandy Back, has gotten married to her fiancé, Charlie, and they have just returned from their honeymoon in China. We also learned that Rianna Magee has given birth to a baby girl.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as read in the newsletter and so was the Treasurer's report as emailed. A more detailed report was available in the back of the room.

Ann Sefcik has completed her certification and was welcomed as the latest of the Interns to become an MCMG.

This coming year we will have the 2014 Intern Class begin their course, and Linda Burchfield was appointed by President Sandy Back to be the Chairman. She will soon form a committee and would like to have people from each of the different classes in the past to assist. If you hear of folks who want to be in the Intern class tell them to call the AgriLife office to sign up.

Cookbooks were available before and after the meeting; they are also for sale at the Extension office on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1:30pm – 4:30pm when Master Gardeners are answering the phone. The cost is \$12.50 and checks should be made out to MCMG. These cookbooks have been selling, and the supply is beginning to get low.

Carol Reinking sent around a sign-up sheet for people who are willing to give an afternoon to help answer phones and take gardening questions from the public for “Ask a Master Gardener”.

Peggy Holcomb asked members to look at the list of activities on the back of the Agendas and to try something they had not tried before as a way to branch out in Master Gardeners, learn new skills and work with different people. She also mentioned the 4-H project we are participating in to be held at the Extension office on July 31.

Penny Gifford would like more volunteers for the MCMG booth at the downtown Farmer’s Market. Call her for details. Ila Jean Carothers reported that The Balcony Buckets project held at the Farmer’s Market was a great success. The showed all the steps necessary to plant the buckets with 6 different types of plants such as herbs, vegetables, flowers and more, and they gave away lots of hand-outs.

Brenda Golubski spoke about the process of entering our volunteer and education hours using the online volunteer recording system, and she has offered to be available to anyone who would like her help at the Extension office on Tuesday, July 30 in the afternoon, 1:30 – 4:30pm. The website is <https://texas.volunteersystem.org/>.

Tom Burr provided information about a project with great potential at University High. It will use a JMG based curriculum designed around the senior class at the school who are taking Environmental Sciences. There is also a greenhouse at the school that will be part of the program. Some people will teach and others will assist in different ways. Call Tom if you want to know more.

The afternoon of Sunday, October 13th, is the date set for the Children’s Garden Fair so put this on your calendar and think about creative ways to engage children of various ages with different aspects of nature. Rock painting, leaf rubbings, worm composting, and more are

some of the many things people have done in the past, not to mention the hats fashioned out of newspapers. This year the Arboretum will have a professional work crew to handle all of the set-up and take-down details, so MG’s will not be involved in that part of the fair.

Under announcements:

Texas Master Gardener Directors Meeting – Sat., August 3 in Bryan-College Station.

Lawn Care and Diseases program by Mark Barnett after next meeting, Aug. 14 from 1 – 4pm, open to the public - \$10

Landscape Design School Course III, Series XXIII, Sept 22-24, 2013, Bryan-College Station

2013 Texas Master Gardener Conference – Cameron & Hildago Counties, Oct. 17-19, “Experience the Blooms, Birds & Butterflies of South Texas”; sign up on the website Delegates and Alternates: Sherry Matthews, Ila Jean Carothers, Linda and Billy Burchfield

Meeting is adjourned at 1:05 pm to be followed by Debby Boyd and her program, “Creative Floral Design” which is worth 1 hour of education credit.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Milam, Secretary

Downtown Waco Farmer's Market

Once a month we staff a booth at the downtown farmers market. It’s fun, usually the weather is decent and it’s always informative. Our booth is all about education and demonstration. We have had rose pruning, propagation, drip irrigation, square foot gardening, children’s activities, hanging pot holders design and more. Recently Ila Jean and her group had their own booth on Bucket Gardening. In July Jeanette presented After Dining Gardening, enlightening 164 folks to the fun of using seeds, cuttings and other “leftovers” from preparation of dinner to grow plants.

In August Barry Vokes will present fall gardening ideas. In his own words:

“McLennan County Master Gardener Association will answer questions about fall garden preparation at the Waco

Downtown Farmers Market on Saturday, August 10. The hours are 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. A Texas Master Gardener will be on hand to answer your questions.

“Among the topics covered will be soil preparation, compost, mulch and fertilizer, starting your seeds, what to plant in your vegetable garden and when to plant. We will also discuss in-ground vs. raised bed gardening and other related topics.

“For other gardening questions, you may “Ask a Master Gardener” between 1:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays by telephoning the McLennan County Extension Office at [254-757-5180](tel:254-757-5180). Please ask to speak to a Master Gardener.”

For the September and October booths we are planning on conducting Children’s activities to showcase the upcoming Children’s Fair in October. November will be dedicated to demonstrating how to use items from your own yard to decorate for the holidays.

This Farmers Market is coordinated by Bethel Erickson of Urban Gardening Coalition fame and we are grateful to her for letting us use the public service booth whenever available. It is wonderful that we are able as a group to inform and educate local residents in such a beautiful environment on the banks of the Brazos River.

Penny Gifford

Photos of the Arboretum in July



Please Note: Change of Address

Robert Creech
One Bear Place #85465
Baylor University
Waco, TX 78798

MCMG Attendance July 10, 2013

Members in attendance at the meeting:

Barnes, B.L.; Beazley, Madge; Belanger, Bonnie; Belanger, Dick; Bonner, Grady; Burchfield, Billy; Burchfield, Linda; Burr, Tom; Calhoon, Ralph; Carothers, Ila Jean; Chapman, Merle; Clafferty, JoAnn; Clark, Mark; Creech, Robert; Cunningham, Jean; Dillar, Archie; Dillard, Pat; Dossey, Jane; Dougherty, Kim; FitzGerald, Eva; Folse, Norma; Ford, Kris; Foulks, Xan; Geletzke, Cindy; Golubski, Brenda; Hahn, Judy; Hering, Jean; Herndon, Jane; Holcomb, Peggy; Kelly, Jeanette; Kinnison, Denise; Kruse, Linda Deal; Lindsey, Donna; Lovecky, Steven; March, Anita; Marks, Monika; Matthews, Sherry; McDaniel, Louie; McLatcher, Claudia; Mersinger, Barbara; Milam, Elizabeth; Milnor, Gerry; Moore, Candace; Peterson, Georgia; Pertru, Ernie; Plasek, Anne; Powers, Robert; Prause, James; Reinking, Art; Reinking, Carol; Richardson, Sharon; Schaffer, Janet; Schillaci, Valerie; Scott, Sandra; Seale, James Jr.; Sefcik, Ann, Self, Rita; Setser, Della; Smith, Edrena; Tawwater, Betty; Valentine, Catherine; Vokes, Barry; Waldrop, Melba; Whitehead, Dorothy; Whitehead, MJ; Wood, Carol.

Potential transfer: Traynor, Tina

Interns in attendance at the meeting:

Krzywonski, Cynthia

OTHER VOLUNTEER PROJECTS	92
Total volunteer hours for 2013	3857.40
Total continuing education hours for 2013	560.75

(Figures are as of 7/25/13.)

Reminder: Children's Garden Fair



We are running this reminder again. We don't want anyone to forget:

It seems early, but time is passing quickly, and it is time to be thinking ahead to the *Children's Garden Fair*. Sunday, Oct. 13, 2-5 p.m. (as listed in your directory).

Please be thinking of an area where you might to volunteer, and any new ideas along with the JMG, 4H curriculum, or appropriate educational Gardening/Nature Activities.

This year Janet Schaffer will have the Woodway Parks and Recreation Department setting up the tables and tents. This will make it so much easier and less stressful for all of us. (This will also cut down the volunteer hours' time, so keep that in mind as we get closer to the end of the year and everyone is finishing volunteer hours).

Hope to see you ALL there, enjoying a cool Fall day!

Thank you,

Committee Chairs....Jeanette, Judy and Janet



Reminder: The Texas Master Gardener Conference for 2013 is coming up

October 17, 2013 - October 19, 2013 at the McAllen Convention Center 700 Convention Center Blvd. in McAllen, Texas. To register, go to the website at <https://agriferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/productid/1297/> and hit the big green button.

HOURS FOR THE MCLENNAN CO. MASTER GARDENERS July 2013

Members reporting: 41

VOLUNTEER HOURS	271.25
EDUCATION HOURS	26
(The hours listed below are included in the above totals.)	
ARBORETUM	8
• Superstar Bed	8
SCHOOLS:	20.25
• Cedar Ridge Elementary	12
• Woodway Elementary	8.25
MCMG:	243
• MCMG Clerical	58
• Ask A Master Gardener Telephone Line	27.5
• News Publishing	5.5
SPEAKER'S BUREAU	1.5
DOWNTOWN FARMER'S MARKET	57.5
POT RECYCLING	1

Master Gardeners About Town

Farmer's Market July 13...After Dinner Gardening



University High School Greenhouse cleanup day July 23



Debby Boyd's program about creative floral arrangements using natural materials.



McLennan County Master Gardeners Association Officers 2013
President - Sandy Back • Vice President - Jeanette Kelly • Secretary - Elizabeth Milam
Treasurer - Sherry Matthews
AgriLife Sponsor - Shane McLellan, County Agent
Our web site: www.mclennanmastergardeners.org

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

