

Bexar County Master Gardener of the Fall 2022 Angela Kirby Buser



Angela Kirby Buser is an avid gardener and nature lover. In 2012, she moved to San Antonio from Michigan, where she taught at Michigan State University's graduate school, and was an assistant professor of capstone graduate research at Spring Arbor University. In addition, she had a farm and an equine business and was an avid gardener, making use of the well-seasoned compost from her stable. Her bountiful garden supplied her family with fruits and vegetables all year. When she moved to Texas she was frustrated with the poor soil and the extreme heat, so she brought back compost from her Michigan farm in large "second-hand" suitcases! She started with built-up beds but still didn't achieve her former gardening success. Her previous 4-H involvement brought her to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and she joined the Master Gardener program to learn how to cope! What a success story, as her vegetable and fruit production has flourished. She has been a BCMG for over 5 years and says, "I'm not done learning yet!" She is currently president of the Boerne Garden Club and sits on the advisory board for the local library.

Angela served on the BCMG Board of Directors for two years as Secretary, training with Jan Craven, who chaired the BCMG College Scholarship program. When Jan retired, Angela assumed the role of lead on the Scholarship Committee. As a former guidance counselor and college professor, she understood what needed to be done, handling the administrative tasks, and utilizing several Master Gardeners to score the application packets.

COVID has really had an impact since 2020, and sadly, one of the previous BCMG Scholarship winners dropped out of school. Angela was determined to move forward and worked hard this year to reach more students in our state's college and university horticulture programs with the opportunity to apply for the BCMG College Scholarship. She contacted financial aid programs and other offices that worked with scholarships or finance. Then she contacted individual college professors and developed a database of Horticultural Professors and Department Heads. She credits the college secretaries with sending out the information to the students in their programs. She worked to get on each college's electronic database so students could find and apply for the BCMG scholarship.

Initially, Angela did all the administrative work with the colleges and reviewed each of the nine applicants. Master Gardener Linda Milliken, the BCMG Office Manager, helped put together all the packets for the committee to score using specific criteria. This year Angela was able to have additional committee support because the Board reached out to encourage BCMGs to volunteer. Some of the committee members spread the word through flyers distributed to various garden centers in the area, while others scored the student applications with a high level of confidentiality.

When asked about her efforts with the BCMG Scholarship Committee, Angela commented, "It is very rewarding! I love getting a little window into the lives of the students who apply for these scholarships. You can tell a lot about them through their self-description. They get the opportunity to describe their motivations for work in horticulture."

Angela looks forward to serving on the scholarship committee again and wants to encourage other BCMGs to volunteer for this committee as well. She highly recommends having a committee co-chair, so if you are interested, please let her know.