



The Scion

Newsletter



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Published by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Bexar County Master Gardener Volunteers & Our Partners David Rodriguez, County Extension Agent – Bexar County Horticulture & Master Gardener Coordinator



President's Message



Dear Master Gardeners,

Counting the current on-going Master Gardener class of interns, the Bexar County Master Gardeners number some **330** certified Master Gardeners and interns. We have an additional eleven Junior Master Gardeners with their mission being dedicated to our Youth Program.

I'm sad to report that of the **330** members, only **45** members supported the recent [Birdies for Charity](#) fundraising effort. The Texas Valero Open Golf Tournament is our only fundraising effort and it provides us a chance to earn "bonus" money from the Texas Valero Open Golf Tournament – to, in effect, double the money you generously donate. Hopefully, next year we can all do better.

Our [Speaker's Bureau](#) fulfills the Master Gardener mission of educating our community about gardening and water conservation. Of the **70** gardening specialists who have received certification in such diverse topics as: Vegetables, Composting, Firewise, Earth-Kind, Plant Propagation, Greenhouse, Rainwater Harvesting, Irrigation Efficiency, and Entomology – less than **10** are active speakers going into the community to share their knowledge.

The newly revised SAWS contract – [our largest source of funds](#) – is now a "performance based" contract. That means SAWS will pay us only for our presentations to adult members of our community. In order to equal the amount of revenue that we have obtained in the past, we are in serious need of more speakers doing more presentations and returning sign-in sheets verifying the audience.

David is inviting our certified specialists to a special meeting in early May to discuss their participation in our Speaker's Bureau and the critical importance of that support. If you are a certified specialist in one of the areas mentioned above, please make a serious effort to attend the upcoming meeting.

I am encouraged by the wealth of knowledge and effort our Bexar County Master Gardeners contribute on an on-going basis to our organization, and it is my hope that in the few areas mentioned above we can pull together and utilize all of our talents to make our future fund raisers and projects a success.

Jack Downey, President
Bexar County Master Gardeners

VOTE!

VOTE!

VOTE!

Nominees for BCMG Board of Directors

The nominees for the BCMG Board of Directors for 2016-2017 are:
(* Denotes Incumbent)



President - Jack Downey*

Vice President - Ruben Lozano

Treasurer - Lori Bindseil*

Secretary - Sherry Cantrell*

Membership Director - Inez Ornelas*

Member-At-Large: Robbie Farmer

Member-At-Large: Ann Marie Pease

Jaime Daily will continue as Program Director

Election will be held at the June 2016 Monthly Meeting

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the June Meeting.

VOTE!

VOTE!

VOTE!



May Gardening Chores

Tom Harris, Ph. D., BCMG Class 13

"The Hill Country Gardener"

www.thehillcountrygardener.com



Birds and Wildlife

- Lower the purple martin house to clean it out.
- Change hummingbird-feeder sugar water every week.

Color

- Get begonias and impatiens in. Wait until mid-month to plant periwinkles. Do not water overhead.
- Mandevilla, bougainvillea and Chinese hibiscus are great patio plants.
- Deadhead spent flowers.
- Hot weather plants: firebush, lantana, poinciana, Esperanza, firespike, caladium, coleus, begonia, moss rose, hibiscus, bougainvillea, purslane, cannas and blue princess verbena.
- Fertilizing potted plants with water-soluble product brings rich color.
- Fertilize roses for continued blooming.
- Let wildflowers go to seed before mowing.
- Flower seeds to be sown directly in the soil include amaranthus, celosia, morning glory, sunflowers and zinnias.
- Plant hibiscus, bougainvillea or mandevilla vines in containers.

Fruits and Nuts

- Peaches, apples and plums are ready to harvest when the base color changes from green to yellow.
- This is the month for pecan case-

bearer damage. Apply Lorsban or Malathion.

- Keep suckers pruned off fruit trees.
- Keep fruit trees well watered.

Ornamentals

- Control army worms and web worms with Bt, Spinosad, or Malathion.
- Hold bluebonnet seeds in the fridge until September.
- Firebush for sun and firespike for shade. Hibiscus, cigar plant, dwarf Chinese trumpet creeper, lantana, and firebush on the patio.
- Caladium corms can be planted now. Wait until temperatures are above 70 F.

Shade Trees and Shrubs

- Do NOT prune oak trees.
- If red-tipped photinia leaves have black spots, remove leaves and throw them in the trash.
- Be careful with string-trimmers around young trees.
- Spray summer-weight oil to control scale bugs on euonymous.
- If red-tip photinias require constant pruning, replace with holly, nandina, xylosma, eleagnus, or pyracantha.

Turf Grass

- Don't bag lawn clippings.
- May is the month to fertilize buffalo grass but only every 2 years.

May Gardening Chores, Cont.

- If starting a new Bermuda grass lawn, use 2-3 lbs. of seed per 1,000 sq. ft. and water twice a day.
- St. Augustine grass will fill in drought-killed areas if watered regularly.
- There's still time to fertilize grass.
- Yellowing grass leaves with darker green veins signal symptoms of iron deficiency.

Vegetables

- Fruit set is sensitive to high temperatures; plant okra, Southern peas, peanuts, sweet corn, watermelons, cucumbers, squash, cantaloupes and eggplant the first part of May.
- Pick tomatoes when they change from green to green-white color.
- Keep the tomatoes well watered and mulched to avoid blossom-end rot. Avoid watering the leaves.
- Side dress vegetables with 1 cup slow release lawn fertilizer (2 cups of organic fertilizer) per 10 feet of row every 4-6 weeks.
- Harvest, harvest, harvest. If not, production will slow or stop.
- Onions are ready to harvest when the green tops fall over.



Spring plant sales

April 16 & May 7

10 am - 2 pm

Members early admission at 9 am



- * Great selection of Texas natives and watersavers!
- * Proceeds support Botanical Garden educational programs
- * Perennials, shrubs, vines, ground cover
- * Garden volunteers eager to help you

Free admission to sale with paid admission to the Botanical Garden.



SAN ANTONIO
BOTANICAL GARDEN

(210) 536 1400 | sabot.org
555 Funston Place | San Antonio, TX 78209



Master Gardener of the Month

By: Ann Marie Caldwell, JMG 1

Karen Glaser,
our **Master
Gardener for the
month of May,**
brought together

two very
important

aspects of her
background

when she
became a Master

Gardener. Karen
grew up on a farm

in the Midwest, so gardening for her is generational; it is in her blood, probably in her genetic make-up. Then, after marrying and moving to San Antonio, Karen elected to be a stay-at-home mom to four children. She refers to her career choice as that of a "Domestic Engineer." When she was ready to retire from the rigors of "domestic engineering," Karen naturally looked into becoming a Master Gardener, graduating as part of Class 45 in 2007. It was then that the two dominant tenets of her make-up came together because Karen found that she loved to teach children gardening techniques. She began volunteering in the Children's Garden and that was a perfect fit for her farming background and her vocation as a homemaker, teaching her own children to love working with the soil as she had as a child.

Karen would have probably been content to continue volunteering at the Children's Garden on the grounds of the San Antonio Botanical Gardens, but, when the call went out for volunteers to help start up the



Children's Garden at Hardberger Park, Karen answered that call. Now she works with children on Saturday mornings at the Botanical Gardens and on Tuesday mornings at Hardberger Park.

Karen explained that the Children's Gardens at Hardberger Park is patterned after the first Children's Gardens, but this program targets an entirely different audience. The children who participate in the Hardberger Park Program are all home schooled. Originally, the program was envisioned to serve only about 10 children, one for each of the raised beds that had been built. However, the response was so great that 20 children were initially accepted, with two children sharing one garden plot.

Karen is now in her element. She is able to spend two mornings per week teaching children how to plant, weed, fertilize, cultivate, and prune their plants. She is able to see in them the same delight in watching plants grow that she experienced as a child. She knows firsthand that the love of gardening is something that is passed on because her son now lives on a farm in Lubbock. This son also has four children, so Karen can also see in her own family how the seed sown in a child sprouts and grows from one generation to the next.





NEW!! Junior Master Gardener Page

Hello All! Welcome to the **NEW Junior Master Gardener Monthly Updates Page**. Here you will find what our special JMG trained volunteers and Bexar County Master Gardeners have done for the Youth Gardens Program and some new volunteer opportunities with kids.

Palo Alto Garden Build

Thank you **Jennifer Sierra** and **Linda Sierra** for helping out on April 1st at the Palo Alto Garden Build. We built three raised beds and filled them with soil so Palo Alto Elementary can have their very own JMG Learn Grow Eat and Go! Program next Fall!

NISD Environmental Fair

Thank you to **Jesse Valdez**, **Susan and Jo Noonan**, **Becky Mendez** and **Margaret Bass** for taking activities out to the NISD Environmental Fair. All together we saw over 750 kids over this awesome two day event.

Viva Botanica!

Thank you to **Jennifer** and **Gabriela Sierra**, **Pat Kempf**, **Owen Keiser**, **Greg Salyers**, **Sonjia Smith**, **Donna Armstrong**, and **Barbara Lutz** for helping out at Viva Bonatica! We talked to over 100 kids about pollinators, veggies, the plant life cycle, and garden advice!

Children's Vegetable Garden

A very special Thank you to Ms. **Lyn Komada** for her excellent work on the Bexar Youth Gardens Blog. She highlights the Children's Vegetable Garden agendas every week and fills the blog with many beautiful pictures. Be sure to subscribe to start receiving her special weekly posts.

<https://bexaryouthgardens.wordpress.com/>

Biblio Tech Earth Day Festival

Thank you to **Grace Emery** and **Betty Butler** for helping out this day. The kiddos got to hold some cool insects and pot a very special herb for Earth Day.

Learn Grow Eat and Go!

Volunteers are needed to support the Learn Grow Eat Go JMG curriculum in several schools in both Bexar County. Volunteers might assist with teaching, garden activities with students or preparing simple recipes for tastings from vegetables in the garden. Volunteers may work on a regular schedule or for specific occasional projects. For more information on projects and schools participating in youth education programs contact Ruby Zavala at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu

Junior Master Gardener Summer Training

Come join us for the 2016 Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Adult Leader Training designed for teachers, educators, and volunteers from throughout the State in support of Youth Gardening. Educators will learn about "hands-on" group and individual learning experiences that will provide an appreciation for the environment and cultivate the minds of children. For more information contact Ruby Zavala at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu





New Learn Grow Eat and Go! Program in Bexar County is Now Available for Fall 2016 with the Generous Grant from the Baptist Health Foundation

The Baptist Health Foundation has given the Bexar County Master Gardeners a very generous grant to build youth gardens at three different schools in Bexar County. We will be using the new interdisciplinary curriculum Learn Grow Eat and Go! to teach students about healthy foods and physical activity while working in a garden. The students will learn about horticulture and nutrition through hands on activities and cooking lessons which will ultimately lead to better and healthier lifestyle.

Bexar County is home to the second largest city in Texas, and will soon become the fifth largest in the nation. With that growth comes a decrease in agricultural awareness, apathy towards the environment, and a rising trend of overweight and obesity. Research has shown gardening is an effective way to help children gain a respect for nature and the environment, learn about nutrition and improved food choices, develop interpersonal skills, and enhance classroom learning with practical hands-on experience. All of which help them to become well-rounded, socially aware and productive members of their communities.

The Bexar County Master Gardeners and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will be taking the Learn Grow Eat and GO! Program and implement it in three schools located in the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged school districts. These students would be able to build a garden, care for it, and learn about the importance of eating fresh vegetables.

Thank you to the Baptist Health Foundation for supporting the Youth Gardens Program of Bexar County. With these new funds from the Baptist Health Foundation of San Antonio, the Bexar County Master Gardeners will be able to implement the Learn Grow Eat and Go! curriculum in Palo Alto Elementary of South San ISD, Wren Middle School of Edgewood ISD, and DeZavala Elementary of San Antonio ISD.

To volunteer and to participate in this amazing youth garden opportunity, please contact Ruby at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu

May 20th 3pm to 5pm at DeZavala Elementary, Garden Clean Up and Build
May 21st 9am to 12pm at Wren Middle School, Garden Clean Up and Build

Master Gardeners Out and About...

Interns from MG Class #60 tour Peterson Brothers Nursery on April 1, 2016. David Rodriguez led the tour and gave additional information to interns about production and distribution of the plants grown at the nursery. Photo Credit: Candy Roach



MG Out and About...Cont.



Below: Phase 2 - Drought Survivability Study (Photo Credit: Candy Roach)

According to Candy Roach (MG Class 59), Phase 2 is a follow-up to the study she and Brian (Roach) participated in last summer. "The purpose of Phase 2 was to conduct data collection for appearance ratings and soil monitoring during the 1st quarter of 2016 to determine how many plants in Phase 1 were able to recover on their own during the following spring...The overall purpose of the study was to determine how much water is really needed for the target group of plants to survive." For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=drought%20survivability%20study>.



Above left:

Brian Roach, Cappy Bird

Above right (L to R):

Brian & Candy Roach (MGC 59), Cappy Bird (MGC 59), Amy Truong (TAMU), Forrest Cobb (TAMU), Katie Behrends (Volunteer)



Belinda's Dream



Dutch Iris

Right:
Pink Abelia



MG Out and About, Cont.

Photo Credit: Barbara Lutz



Viva Botanica!



Pat Kempf & Jennifer Misierra



UTHSCSA Earth Day!



Mary Valdez & Barbara Lutz



Phil Hardberger Park Children's Vegetable Garden



Donna Armstrong & Judy Carmona



John Mayer



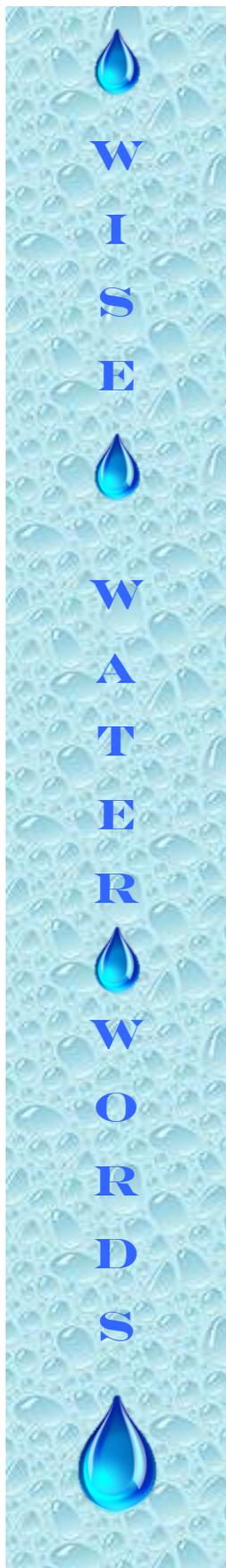
Nancy Rogers



Barbara Lutz, Greg Salyers & Owen Keiser



Carol White w/CVG Participants



Hello fellow Master Gardeners,

This month I would like to talk to you about our efforts to improve and expand our Water Conservation Education Programs. We recently renewed our contract with SAWS and they have adjusted the types of programs they want emphasized. While everything we do is important, we are looking to expand some programs while continuing to support our ongoing efforts.

These changes will mean more opportunities to support BCMG, as well as more events for people who want to take a more active role in coordinating our programs. The Speaker's Bureau will continue as usual and we are looking to increase our Rain Water Harvesting Workshops. We plan to create workshops for Drip Irrigation and Earth-Kind Water Conservation Principles.

In addition, we would like to establish two large reoccurring events. The first one we want to create is an Earth-Kind Educational Water Conservation Seminar for this fall. BCMG would host area organizations, including GVST, SABOT, and others who can give educational presentations to garden clubs, JMG teachers and anyone interested in learning more about conservation practices. We are still coordinating for a location and other details, but look to hear more in the coming months.

Secondly, for the spring of next year, we want to sponsor our own BCMG Home and Garden Show as an annual event. Obviously, this will take a lot of planning and coordination to find a location and time that does not conflict with Rodeo and the other major events already on the calendar for those months. One of our new MG's had the idea to include nutritionists and healthy food vendors, which ties in with Jack's ideas on supporting education on the east side and urban gardens.

Another idea is for a Digital Outreach Program. We would post online handouts linked with the QR codes and an email account where people can request digital copies of our handouts at our events. We will need master gardeners with the right IT skills to get this up and running. If you have these skills and are interested in helping, please contact me.

These are a few ideas as we look to expand our programs. We welcome any ideas that you might have and your help in making these programs a success in the next year.

As Master Gardeners, we make a huge difference in our community, and educating about water conservation. Thank you for all you do now and thanks in advance for your help in making these new programs successful.

Conservationally yours,

Anna Vogler - Water Conservation Coordinator



MASTER GARDNER GARDEN STARS

Awards and Achievements of Our Fellow Master Gardeners



Congratulations to the first Bexar County Master Gardeners who have completed the Master Gardener certification for 2016. They have earned the 2016 Red Jalapeno pin by submitting at least 30 volunteer hours and 6 CEU hours by April 8, 2016. The pins are available at the monthly meetings or at the BCMG office. Please contact Susan Noonan, susan.noonan@gmail.com with questions or other delivery options for the pin.



2016 BCMG Certification Pin

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Lisa Nixon | Carolyn Martin |
| John Sells | Marcia Rockne |
| Laura Rogers | Ron Csehil |
| Sir Oliver Smith | Karin Foote |
| Jamie Daily | Mike Lyle |
| Ted Ritchie | Leslie Butterworth |
| Lou Kellogg | Jack Hoover |
| Mary Quandt | Barbara Lutz |
| Mary Cross | Robin Maymar |
| | Brenda Laureano |

Bexar County Master Gardeners

May General Meeting



Earth-Kind
Landscaping



- WHEN:** Thursday, May 26, 6 - 8 pm
- SPEAKER:** David Rodriguez
- TOPIC:** Earth-Kind Landscaping
- WHERE:** Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office
3355 Cherry Ridge Dr., Suite 208, San Antonio, TX 78230

David Rodriguez, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent for horticulture in Bexar County since 2006 and Bexar County Master Gardener education coordinator since 2010, will be giving our members an informative presentation on **Earth-Kind** landscaping. In January 2016, he received a Superior Service Award for outstanding performance in Extension education. Prior to his service as an extension agent, he worked in the commercial nursery industry in the San Antonio area for over 10 years. He has since worked closely with the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association and the Coordinated Extension Marketing Assistance Program to bring the Texas Superstar plants to commercial nurseries. He has also been instrumental in the success of the Children's Vegetable Garden program, the Texas Experience exhibit for the San Antonio Rodeo, the training of over 332 Master Gardeners and 132 Master Gardener Specialists, and is host for his weekly garden talk show on WOAI. And this, by no means, lists EVERYTHING David has done! Come join us for a VERY informative presentation!





Master Gardener Specialist Corner

Lisa Nixon, BCMG Class 51



Firewise Landscape Specialist

By Lisa Nixon, Class 51

In June 2012 I attended the Firewise Landscape Specialist training that was held in Kerr County. **The Master Gardener Firewise Landscape Specialist** program was designed to train and certify Master Gardeners to become part of a state corps of Firewise Landscape experts and educators. Unfortunately in recent years it has not been offered; however, the resources available on the internet and through Fire Department/Texas Forestry training are vast. Check out firewise.org for online courses and materials that can be ordered.

The purpose of Firewise Landscaping is to reduce the wildfire risk while achieving other landscaping goals. Often times in Firewise training there will be references to the WUI (wildfire urban interface) which is the zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development. Communities that are within .5 miles of such zone are included. There is a significant amount of WUI in Bexar County. If we can stop the transition from a wildland fire to an urban fire the likelihood of a disaster is significantly reduced.

To understand that the concepts of Firewise Landscaping are something that you need to incorporate into both your home – and your community – look at the map which shows the risk of wild fire in Texas. It can be found at <https://www.texaswildfirerisk.com/>. You can be very precise by entering your address to see what your risk is. Did you know that 70% of all wildfires are individual caused and that 80% of wildfires occur within 2 miles of a community.

In being Firewise you want to consider both your actual home structure and the plants – both the types and the location.

The strategies that can be taken in regards to your home structure include:

- 1) Maintain a clean landscape
- 2) Prevent ember penetration – screen your vents and openings with metal mesh; screen under deck areas where possible
- 3) Keep flames from touching the house and the attachments – so have a “fuel free” area that goes out at least one yard from the home – i.e. no plants touching the home’s foundation or walls. In addition wood fences and mulch should not touch the house
- 4) Try to keep radiant heat sources away from the home – install doubled paned windows

For more suggestions on how to make your home safer from the risk of a fire check out the

firewise tips checklist for homeowners which can be downloaded from <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-toolkit.aspx>

For incorporating Firewise landscaping at your home site it is imperative to use the concept of zones for fuel reduction

- 1) Zone 1 ideally goes out 30' on all sides. It should be a well-irrigated area with plantings limited to carefully spaced low flammability species. Firewood and propane/butane tanks should not be in this area.
- 2) Zone 2 is 30ft to 100ft from the home. It should also have irrigation in the area and low flammability plant materials that are low to the ground. If you have trees in this area – have at least 20ft breaks between clusters of trees. Try to have fuel breaks in this area – such as driveways, gravel walkways and lawn.
- 3) Zone 3 is 100ft to 200ft from the home. In this area it is important to reduce the canopies of trees so that they are not touching. Low growing plants are still idea for this zone.
- 4) Beyond Zone 3 is a more natural area; however, it is important to remove all highly flammable vegetation. Also selectively prune and thin the trees.

The characteristics of Firewise plants are:

- 1) High moisture content
- 2) Broad and thick leaves
- 3) Low chemical content
- 4) Open and loose branching patterns
- 5) Deciduous

In choosing tree(s) for your property by utilizing the Texas A&M Forest Service trees of Texas interactive website at <http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/index.aspx> you can learn whether a tree is considered Firewise or not. The low flammability trees include: Red buckeye, Mexican buckeye, Hackberry, Ginkgo and Mexican sycamore. The medium flammability trees include: red maple, pecan, permsimmon, oak, sumac, cedar elm, anaqua and mesquite.

In wild grasses the buffalo grass is considered low flammability. The high flammability wild grasses would include broomsedge, Mexican feathergrass, and gulf coast muhly.

For vines (remember ideally there is no vine touching your house structure) the medium flammability ones are woolly dutchman's pipe, crossvine, trumpet creeper, Carolina jasmine, coral honeysuckle, purple or yellow passionflower. The high flammability vines are mustang grape, prairie rose, poison ivy and pipevine;

For shrubs the low flammability ones include: butterfly bush, hawthorn, lantana, texas honeysuckle, turk's cap, sumac, sage, prickley pear, yucca, chile pequin and crape myrtles.

Shrubs that are considered highly flammable include yaupon, wax myrtle and mountain laurels.

There is a very comprehensive list of Firewise plants for Texas located at <http://nwaca.org/awd/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Firewise-plant-list.pdf>

I would suggest that you download the “Firewise landscaping in Texas” pdf which can be found at <http://pbatexas.org/Files/Resources/FirewiseLandscapingInTexas.pdf>

Many homeowners have gone beyond being focused on just their home and property but their entire community. It is not that challenging for a community to become a recognized FireWise Community. The steps to doing so can be found at <http://firewise.org/usa-recognition-program.aspx> . Recently Los Reyes in Helotes achieved the designation of a FireWise Community.

Lisa Nixon was in Class 51. Since that time she has received specialist training in Firewise Landscaping, Earth-Kind, Tree Care and Rainwater Harvesting. She served on the board of BCMG for 3 years – one year as Vice President and two years as President. In addition she was on the state awards committee for two years. She is currently an administrator of the BCMG Facebook page.

Texas Master Gardener Specialists are a corps of Master Gardeners who support and expand the Bexar County educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Specialist training is designed to empower the Master Gardener with the knowledge and skills required to effectively support designated programs or projects, to include administration of projects, training of Master Gardeners, clientele presentations, and/or applied research and demonstrations.

Specialists have received a minimum of 16 hours of subject matter training: formal classroom training, field trips and tours, mentoring by experts, and/or self-directed study. Following completion of the training requirement, each individual has completed a minimum 20 hours of volunteer service in the designated program or project to obtain this title of Master Gardener Specialist.



AgriLife Advice



Long-term strategic planning can pay dividends for home gardeners and commercial growers

by Adam Russell

April 11, 2016

OVERTON – Growing fruits and vegetables can be a constant battle against pests, disease and weather.

Dr. Joe Masabni wants home gardeners and commercial growers to become strategists rather than tacticians because successfully growing fruits and vegetables can depend on preparedness and planning.

Masabni, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service horticulturist in Overton, receives phone calls every spring from beginning gardeners and farmers who are ill-prepared to deal with pests, diseases, weeds and many other problems that can stunt or decimate a crop, he said.

The tactical gardener reacts to problems, while a strategist plans to avoid problems when possible and address them quickly and effectively when they are unavoidable, he said.



Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service horticulturist, holds a Brandywine heirloom tomato grafted on Maxifort rootstock. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Adam Russell)

“Planning ahead can improve yields,” he said. “It can mean the difference between total

AgriLife, Cont.

loss and 100 percent success.”

The strategist has multiple sources for all their needs, from seed and tools to pesticides, fertilizers and materials, such as T-posts and chicken wire, he explained. They should have basic tools and materials on hand to address a problem as soon as it's found. Strategists plan ahead by considering crop rotations in advance and base decisions on soil health. They also take notes each season to improve their chances next year.

Soil is the most important component to a strategic gardener's plan, Masabni said. Testing a soil sample for a small garden or multiple samples for larger fields where soils can differ is an important first step to any plan. The gardener feeds the soil and the soil feeds the plant, he said.

Masabni suggests testing the soil each year, which will identify what additives, such as lime, fertilizer or nitrogen, will give the soil what it needs to grow specific crops.

“You have to know what you are working with,” he said. “It's important because soil health is 50 percent of the battle when you're talking about dealing with disease or weeds and helping a crop reach its potential.”

Having the right tools on hand to tend a garden or field helps reduce prolonged exposure to problems such as disease or pests, but a management plan can address possible problems before they occur, he said.

Masabni had a problem with stink bugs in his tomato plants one year and created a plan to control them the next year. That's how notes and recording the good, bad and ugly of each season can pay dividends, he said.

Knowledge is a powerful tool for a beginner gardener, Masabni said. But it's easier to educate yourself during dormancy periods by reading books and gardening periodicals or by discussing options and opportunities for next season with AgriLife Extension agents and specialists.

Right now is a good time to establish a plan to deal with pest season, he said. Growers should be educating themselves about various insect pests, from squash and stink bugs to corn earworms. Masabni said growers should know what types of insects individual plant types might attract, the pest's typical life cycle, the signs of infestations and how to address them in the egg stage.

In small gardens, addressing eggs could be as easy as squishing them, he said.

“A good strategist, or a well-prepared gardener, should have the pesticides on hand, the

AgriLife, Cont.

sprayer clean and calibrated, and should scout all the time,” he said. “A well-prepared gardener can start spraying in about 10 minutes and address the problem effectively.”

Masabni said a strategist gardener should be planning for the fall garden now that spring gardens are in the ground.

For example, gardeners should order seeds now, check pesticide inventories and plan crop rotations using a different crop family, not just a different crop name. Also, growers can solarize gardens in July to control nematodes, weeds and insect eggs before planting fall gardens.

Masabni is a vegetable specialist and author of “Easy Gardening in Texas.”

“Be a strategist, not a tactician,” he said. “All successful gardeners and commercial producers are strategists, whether they know it or not, because they plan ahead.”

Announcements

Remember, Master Gardeners, you need to get 3 of your CEUs for recertification from attending Master Gardener General Meetings!

All meetings are on a Thursday, alternating monthly between afternoon (1 - 3 pm) and evening meetings (6 - 8 pm).

****UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES****

THIS MONTH - DAVID RODRIGUEZ!

"Earth-Kind Gardening Practices" - Organic meets traditional gardening in this informative meeting on how to combine these two seemingly opposing methods of gardening! Join your fellow Master Gardeners on May 26th from 6 to 8 pm!

NEXT MONTH - ELECTIONS!!!

Be sure to attend on JUNE 16 to VOTE for the candidate of your choice for the BCMG Board of Directors. There will also be an educational seminar. The meeting will be held from 1 to 3 pm.

MG Specialist Courses in 2016

- **Composter** - June 22-24, BCMGs, SAT
- **Jr. MG - Youth Educator** - July 27-29, BCMGs, San Antonio
- **Earth-Kind** - Aug 3-5, Fort Bend MGs, Rosenberg
- **TX Superstar** - Sept. 20-22, BCMGs, San Antonio
- **Vegetable Specialist** - Nov. 9-11, BCMGs, San Antonio

Contact: [David Rodriguez](#) for more information!

ATTENTION ALL BCMG!

Please visit the new [Bexar County Master Gardeners website](#) to get DETAILS on all the latest, hottest news and upcoming VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES! While at the website, you can also check out the Master Calendar for your future planning.

NEED TO REPORT YOUR HOURS?

Go To: www.bexarmg.org
Click on "Members"
Scroll down and click on "Report Your Volunteer Hours"

*Join our
Master Gardener Group on
Facebook!*

[Click Here](#)



Lawn & Garden Show Podcast

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From Our Master Gardener Research and Development Team...



Our MG Research and Development Team, which was started over 30 years ago with Dr. Calvin Finch and Dr. Jerry Parsons, is now headed-up by Dr. Larry Stein and David Rodriguez (pictured below). According to MG Rob DeRocher, every new plant and future Superstar (over 30 of them) has come out of the work done by the Research and Development Team. In April, the R & D team was busy at the Food Bank planting watermelon seedlings. For such a large job, a lot of help and MG volunteers are needed! Thanks to all who helped, including some of the new MG interns. (Photos courtesy of Rob DeRocher)





ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

➤ Green Spaces' Community Gardens

Knowledgeable gardeners are wanted to occasionally help with garden projects, and regularly serve as garden mentors. We have two staff; everyone else is a volunteer loving the chance to garden a little. Contact Tia Moen at tia@greensatx.org or check out one of our volunteer pages at www.greensatx.org or www.meetup.com/San-Antonio-CG/.

➤ San Antonio Botanical Garden

Greenhouse, Terrarium Ecosystem Program: contact SABOT Volunteer Coordinator [Nadezhda Garza](mailto:Nadezhda.Garza@sanbot.org) at 210-207-3261

➤ Children's Vegetable Garden Program

Contact Mary Fernandez at fernandez.m1978@gmail.com or Anne Marie Simmons at am-simmons@hotmail.com.

➤ San Antonio Food Bank Gardens

Saturday from 9am - 12pm. [Click here](#) for more information.

➤ Wounded Warrior Gardens

Contact Joyce Dare at joyce_dare@satx.rr.com.

➤ Earth Kind Speakers Bureau

Contact Sandy Justice at sandy@sandyjustice.com to get on the speaker request notification list.

➤ Helping Hands

Help BCMG with mailings or other work at MG office. Contact: Holly Julian at khollyj@satx.rr.com

➤ Plant Hotline

Our Plant Hotline answers phone and email questions daily. Call 210-467-6575 or ask by [email](#).

➤ Plant Trials

Contact David Rodriguez at dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu to be contacted when help is needed for a project.

From Your Board of Directors...

The BCMG Board is here to serve the Master Gardeners of Bexar County and to assist Bexar County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in providing education opportunities to the community in which we live. Please feel free to contact the Board – or a particular member – with suggestions, ideas, comments, etc.



Minutes – BCMG Board of Directors Meeting April 14, 2016

Call to Order

- Meeting called to order by Jack Downey, April 14, 2016, 4:00 p.m.
- Board Members present: Jack Downey (President), Anne Marie Simmons (Vice President), Lori Bindseil (Treasurer), Sherry Cantrell (Secretary), Jaime Daily (Member at Large), Ted Ritchie (Member at Large).
- Absentee Board Member: Inez Ornelas (Membership)
- Other Attendees: David Rodriguez (CEA), Ruby Zavala (Youth Program Coordinator), Lou Kellogg (Director of Education), Barbara Lutz (Past President), Anna Vogler (Water Conservation)

Approval of Minutes for March BOD Meeting

- March meeting minutes were distributed via email March 29. Motion to approve the March minutes made by Anne Marie; 2nd by Jamie. Approved by unanimous acclamation.

CEA Report – David Rodriguez

- Tomatoes trial plantings were done at the Food Bank.
- State Watermelon trial plantings at the Food Bank went well on April 12. Will have over 5 acres of watermelons! Had a good volunteer turnout.
- Recent hail caused some damage at CVG to the begonias. Phil Hardberger Park was hit hard and suffered damage.
- Tomato plantings last Thursday at Verstuyft Farms went well.
- David is excited about having new presenters at the State MG Composting Training, June 22–24, .
- Brewing class went well with about 30 attendees. About 1/3 of RSVPs were no-shows, but spots were easily filled with walk-ins.
- Wine class is rescheduled for Thursday, June 9, at Old Town Helotes. Dr. Justin Scheiner and Dr. Larry Stine will both be present.

Youth Program Coordinator Report – Ruby Zavala

- Spring Break Youth Camp with Molly went very well. They had more requests than spots. She and Molly may consider if they could handle an additional camp next year.
- The Youth Speaker’s Bureau continues to be active with requests from teachers coming in all the time.
- The Learn, Grow, Eat & Go (LGEG) program is ongoing. They are in week 8 of 10 and are scheduled to finish the last week of April.
- Ruby and her volunteers continue to work in the schools reaching about 500 kids at 10 different schools. They make recipes and emphasize healthy eating and how to eat more veggies. The curriculum is very easy to follow. If any dollars are left from grant, she will consider using for a camp.
- The Baptist grant dollars, at Palo Alto Elementary, has provided for two gardens to be put in. Training will be in May. They are also doing the curriculum at a different school now and will do again in the Fall.
- JMG training will be July 27–29. She is getting requests now for registration. Registration form will be finalized at a meeting tomorrow.
- Presentations were made to children at Phil Hardberger Park. This activity reached about 2000 kids by holding five sessions, with 400 attending at each.
- Four summer camps are lined up, starting in June and ending in August.
- Ruby is asking the board to consider giving some BCMG funds to Margaret Bass who has remained very active in the school program and works well with both her and Molly. Because of her involvement, strong relationships with the children have been built and Ruby would like to keep her involved. Some of the money could be provided through the Rodeo Grant and some from fees. Molly has been using some of her money. Ruby will provide a proposal to the board for consideration.

Water Conservation Report – Anna Vogler

- Anna advised the new SAWS contract for June 7 through December 31 has new terms that will require changes on our part. We will have to begin submitting for pre-approval for anything we do. A timeline for this process has not yet been provided so will more details are needed before the contract can be signed.
- To take full advantage of the SAWS money will mean an increased number of presentations, along with proper completion of sign-in sheets. Some MGs are not ensuring the sign-in sheets are utilized, or they often fail to turn them in promptly. This will be critical under our new SAWS contract, as the sign-in sheet must be turned in to SAWS before they will issue reimbursement. The importance of the sign up sheets needs to be communicated to our speakers. Jack also brought up the fact, as discussed in a previous BOD meeting, that the same speakers are being taxed to give the presentations. He would like a rewards program to entice more involvement in this effort. He asked everyone to give some thought to what we can do (e.g., shirts, baubles on badge, etc..).

Education Report– Lou Kellogg

- Lou reported the intern class is doing well. They did not do intern introductions on the first day of class but did them later after class members were more comfortable with one another. This was more successful and meaningful; suggests this practice be continued in future classes.
- He commended the class helpers for doing an excellent job.
- Lou met Dan from Incarnate Word at a meeting of the Botanical Gardens Educational Committee; he reported things discussed were promising.
- Lou reported interns now have badges that say 'Intern'.

Membership Report– Inez Ornelas (not present)

- Jack reported that Inez says members are still having difficulty selecting project numbers (as reported in the last BOD meeting)..

Treasurer's Report – Lori Bindseil

- Lori sent out the Profit and Loss Statement. Operating budget is \$83K+.
- Some of the rodeo expenses may be reimbursed (e.g. ramps).
- Lori asked about giving money to Guadalupe MGs. Barbara advised that we have given them between 1000– 1500 in past years, in the form of Home Depot cards or supplies for their youth program. Motion to approve \$1000 for Gaudalupe made by Jamie; 2nd by Ted. Approved by unanimous acclamation. Jack will talk to them to find out best way to disperse funds.
- Birdies for Charity Report: We made the top 50, currently in 37th. Barbara advised donations are still being accepted.

President's Report – Jack Downey

- Jack reported a TV report on the Urban Farm excited some members. He advised his letter to all members regarding the report was well received with only one negative response and the rest all positive. Property has not even been purchased yet, as there is much coordination to be done before any work on the Urban Farm can begin. He estimates project is at least 5 years down the road.
- Schultz house project is going well. A major clean-up was done and Parks and Rec hauled off all the trash. More work is needed and invasive vines are causing some issues.
- Jack reported nominations received, to date, for the BOD include the following: Ruben Lozano, VP; Lori Bindseil, Treasurer; Robbie Farmer, Member-at-Large; Ann Marie Pease, Member-at-Large.

New Business

- Jamie reported Mary Irish is the upcoming speaker on ecological landscaping for next week's BCMG afternoon meeting.
- David suggested that the May meeting in the pm be EarthKind Gardening. Jamie will see if she can line up June and July to have butterflies covered at the afternoon June meeting and Cactus and Urban Landscaping in July.

- Jack brought up a question of whether transfers should receive their badge prior to completing their volunteer hours. Agreement was reached that transfers can pay to have a 'Transfer' labeled badge when they first come to BCMG but will later be issued a regular BCMG badge (paid for by BCMG) **after** they complete their volunteer hours.
- Anne Marie reported some confusion among JMGs regarding their status and that a few believed they were MGs. She said this confusion was addressed, and they now understand they should report all volunteer time to Ruby. Ruby followed up this discussion with a report that a few JMGs feel slighted and would like to be acknowledged in some manner. Jack confirmed they are invited to the Christmas Banquet since the invitation list is taken from the distribution of the newsletter. Sherry suggested that recognition be given to their work via the newsletter and that it appear in a designated box or area, labeled JMG News or JMG Corner, etc.. Ruby liked the idea, and Jack confirmed the newsletter people would welcome the info.
- Master Gardener of the Month was selected: Karen Glaser. Motion to approve Karen made by Jamie; 2nd by Ted. Approved by unanimous acclamation.
- David advised CVG Awards picnic is May 14. He suggested a new plaque for the Sunday House. He asked for suggestions to recognize Mary Fernandez for her work at CVG. Anne Marie suggested a Mexican Buckeye tree.
- Jack reported the sponsorship people and HEB are discussing changes for the rodeo tent and that we are not a part of that discussion.

Upcoming BOD Meeting

- Date and time for next BOD meeting is May 12, 2016, 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned by Jack Downey, April 14, 2016, 5:25 p.m

**In Cooperation with
Bexar County Commissioners
Court:**

Nelson W. Wolff,
County Judge

Sergio "Chico"
Rodriguez,
Commissioner
Precinct 1

Paul Elizondo,
Commissioner
Precinct 2

Kevin A. Wolff,
Commissioner
Precinct 3

Tommy Calvert,
Commissioner
Precinct 4

**BCMG Board of Directors
Meeting**

Thurs., May 12, 3:30 pm - 6 pm
3355 Cherry Ridge Dr., San Antonio

Meetings are held monthly. Members can request items to be added to the agenda by emailing the President, President@bexarmg.org at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

All members are welcome to observe the meetings, however in order to accommodate seating, please email the President that you will be attending.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Jack Downey
President@bexarmg.org

Vice President

Anne Marie Simmons
vp@bexarmg.org

Treasurer

Lori Bindseil
Treasurer@bexarmg.org

Secretary

Sherry Cantrell
Secretary@bexarmg.org

Membership

Inez Ornelas
Membership@bexarmg.org

Members-at-Large

Jamie Dailey
Member1@bexarmg.org

Ted Ritchie
Member2@bexarmg.org

Immediate Past President

Barbara Lutz
PastPresident@bexarmg.org

**To Send an E-mail to the entire
Board**

board@bexarcountymastergardeners.org



What is a Master Gardener?

Bexar County Master Gardeners are trained, certified volunteers who support the educational horticulture programs and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service in Bexar County. We work with County Extension Agent-Horticulture David Rodriguez to help create and maintain gardens that showcase plants for our area; help with trial gardens and field research; share planting, composting, and irrigation methods; present information at garden and trade events; answer horticultural inquiries over the telephone; organize and/or present educational programs to various groups; introduce children to gardens through programs in schools and the Children's Vegetable Garden; and increase awareness of integrated pest management, water conservation, and other environmental stewardship issues.

Master Gardener training sessions are held in spring. Classes are usually held on Wednesdays from 12 pm to 4 pm. After acceptance into the program, intern students are required to submit to a background check, attend the 13-week course, and complete 50 hours of volunteer service within a year before they are certified as a Master Gardener. Lectures by experts in their field, hands-on activities, and field trips make up the classroom experience. A large variety of volunteer activities offered throughout the year provide ample opportunity to complete the service requirement. After initial certification, Master Gardeners are required to complete 30 hours of service and 6 continuing education hours each year to re-certify.

Learning and teaching others is the Bexar County Master Gardener mission. We are "hands-on" gardeners who are interested in sharing all aspects of gardening with anyone who will listen.



BUDS & BARK
Earth-Kind® In The Park
**2016 Texas Master Gardener
 Conference**
May 17 – 19, 2016



Registration Information

For more information or to register, please visit:

<http://www.ccmgatx.org/txmg2016>

Registration Fees

Early Bird: Now through Dec. 31, 2015 -- **\$175**
Regular Registration: January 1 - April 15, 2016 -- **\$200**
Late Registration: April 16 - May 17, 2016 -- **\$225**

From The Editor...

"You cannot go through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." - Jane Goodall

"If at first you don't succeed...keep calm and garden on."

How many of us admire someone else's garden, wish we could do that with our own, then sigh and convince ourselves that we can't?

After a recent experience with a "migration" of my Aperture photos management program to (Apple) Photos, I am here to encourage you that you most certainly CAN have that beautiful garden just like your neighbor's.

I know, gardens and computers seem like very unrelated topics, but let me explain...

I made the change from Aperture to Photos kicking and screaming all the way. I am not, by any means, a "computer person." A lot of what I do when I sit down at my computer to do something (other than write) is a result of trial and error. I usually start by staring at the computer screen, try a combination of keystrokes mixed with talking to the computer screen, and, sometimes, end up spending time on the phone with a technical geek from Apple. In other words, I am tenacious when it comes to plowing through things I don't understand. Unfortunately, however, for most people who are my age (let's just say 50+), we start to feel as if we "can't" more than we "can" and end up not even trying more often than not. As we become older, we somehow resign ourselves to the belief that our brains have begun to malfunction due to age and we fail to even attempt to do certain things because we're just "too old." I say, "Hogwash."

The adage that you "can't teach an old dog new tricks" just doesn't fly with me unless there is some physical reason preventing you from doing whatever it is that you want to do. And even with that in mind, you could still probably do it with some help. In my particular case, I went about the "transition" from Aperture to Photos the way I do most things I don't know how to do - I just kept at it - most times not getting the result I wanted. I tried various combinations of keystrokes, read the directions in the "Help" section (which, by the way, I find very "unhelpful" most times when it comes to technical jargon), went on a variety of "forums" which were comprised of other equally frustrated people, and left my desk to go do something else for a while (similar to "rebooting" your computer when the infamous "spinning beach ball" on my computer wouldn't quit (Mac users will understand this!). Finally, I settled on asking for help and set up a conference call with the Apple guy, which, of course, was followed by five additional calls over the next week. I also followed Churchill's advice: "Never, never give up."

The result over the past several weeks has been a lot of frustration, but I finally had a break-through and "I got it." It was thrilling, and I was very proud of myself for sticking with it. Another bonus: I discovered once I understood what I was doing, the program was actually a lot easier to work with than my previous one - I just needed to figure it out to realize this. If I had given up, or resigned myself to the idea that I just couldn't learn how to do it, I'd be back where I started and

unable to progress forward on a project I had been working on that required me to make the switch.

So, what do all of my computer woes have to do with gardening? Well, as a new-ish Master Gardener (Class 58), I was pretty much convinced that the volume of information I was being exposed to in my MG classes was never going to sink in and that I was never going to “get it,” and the badge I was given was really a souvenir of my classroom time rather than a confirmation of the skills I was supposed to have acquired. However, with time things have changed for me. Although all of my gardening attempts haven’t been successful, by continuing to stick with it, I’m doing much better. I’m starting to get compliments from my neighbors while I’m working out in my yard about how nice it looks. People now seek gardening advice from me and I can actually answer their questions with confidence - and if I don’t know the answer, I can at least point them in the right direction to find it.



Now, don’t get me wrong, I by no means have the “Queen’s Garden.” I still have failures, like the recent one where I ordered seeds, failed to read the directions on the website I ordered them from and then subsequently failed to propagate them correctly and ended up with

very few seedlings. HOWEVER, I learned from that failure, and I now have another tool in my toolbox of gardening knowledge (yes, following the directions is important!).

In the end, new and old gardeners alike, here is my message for you: No matter what your age or “skill level” NEVER, NEVER give up! If you have something new that you want to try, try it. We can only succeed if we try. And, sometimes, we can only learn if we fail.

Your Editor,
Kimber Briggs