



Published by the Bexar County Master Gardeners, a nonprofit 501c(3) - Kimber Briggs, Class 58, Editor
David Rodriguez, County Extension Agent -Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First, I want to thank all the Master Gardeners who have worked so diligently this year to ensure the continuation and expansion of our programs benefiting our community. Your work has deepened and expanded our gardening reach to the benefit of the many people you have touched with your knowledge and work.

I recently wrote to each Master Gardener about our budget deficit with an explanation of the monetary changes voted on by your Board of Directors. One of those changes – annual dues – has been enthusiastically supported and we thank you for your support.

I am writing to you now to clarify a portion of my November 19th email announcing the deficit we are facing this year and the steps taken by the Board of Directors to restore a positive balance to our budget. A few people felt my statement "...a deficit that probably has been accumulated over a number of years...." was accusatory towards the good work of previous Board members.

Any inference in that regard was certainly not my intention or desire. In fact, a thorough scrubbing of our financials has shown that the problem has not accumulated over a number of years, but has been caused almost solely by the changes in the SAWS contract and the reimbursement we now receive from them. Our Fiscal Year starts July 1st and the following table shows the difference in the reimbursement we received the first five months of the Fiscal Years 2015 (last year) and 2016 (this year) with a resultant loss of income of \$13,882.

Month/Year	Reimbursement	Month/Year	Reimbursement
June 2015	\$4,746	June 2016	\$2,550
July 2015	4,225	July 2016	1,875
August 2015	3,878	August 2016	1,675
September 2015	6,099	September 2016	2,625
October 2015	6,934	October 2016	3,275
TOTAL	\$25,882	TOTAL	\$12,000

President's Letter, Cont.

Our expenses have not increased. Our major expenditures to date this year that we've paid are: our insurance, plants purchased for our plant sales, and an inventory of clothing items. Two of those items produce revenue for us, therefore we have spent very little money.

Thanks to the visionary long-range planning of previous Board members during the period when we had more revenue, money was set aside for the awarding of scholarships in anticipation of potential lean times in the future. We may have to use some of that money this year to fund our traditional two scholarships. That money, which is \$10,000, has been in our Money Market along with \$201,000 of restricted money set aside for a future BCMG building.

Our bottom line now reflects that our revenue has changed dramatically and adjustment is necessary. Thank you for the numerous supportive emails. I want to assure you that as we enter the New Year the Board will continue to be vigilant in husbanding our resources while looking for new sources of revenue.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season and I look forward to working with you in the garden in the coming New Year! Take care...

*Jack Downey, President
Bexar County Master Gardeners*



BCMG BOARD VACANCY!

The Board of Directors has a vacancy for a **Member-at-Large**. The Member-at-Large function is to act as a full-time board member and represent the membership. Attendance at monthly meetings is required. Please contact Jack Downey at bcmgjack@gmail.com if you are interested in being considered for the position.

Master Gardener of the Month

By: Ann Marie Caldwell, JMG 1



Ann Vargas, our **Master Gardener for the month of November**, is a truly rare candidate for Master Gardener of the Month since, by her own admission, she really does not do much gardening. A

serious bout with melanoma some thirty years ago precludes Ann from any kind of sun exposure, thus preventing her from doing outside activities, such as working in a garden or supervising the gardening endeavors of others. However, her nomination as Master Gardener of the Month does illustrate the fact that ours is an organization that needs people with different skills in order to continue our service to the residents of Bexar County. Ann fills a very valuable role as the online Master Calendar Manager since it is the hub by which Bexar County Master Gardeners find ways of serving as volunteers, of continuing their gardening education and of finding area events that they might be interested in attending.

Ann grew up in Owensboro, Kentucky as part of a family that did not put any emphasis on gardening. She attended nearby Murray State University, where she majored in English. Her college

roommate had a brother living in San Antonio, so she suggested that, after graduation, the two of them head for the Alamo City. Ann must be an adventurous person because, against her family's advice, she agreed. The match was perfect. Ann says that when she first drove through San Antonio, she said to herself: "I love this city!" The love affair has continued through the more than forty years that Ann has lived here.

Ann got a job teaching English for the San Antonio Independent School District, first at Rhodes Middle School and then at Sydney Lanier High School. In 1995, she became the librarian at Lanier, a position she held for six years until her retirement in 2001. The question then becomes: Why would an English teacher-librarian with no background in gardening decide to enroll in Master Gardener classes at the beginning of her retirement. Ann explains that she was encouraged to become a Master Gardener by a some of her colleagues from Lanier, who suggested that they all enroll in Master Gardener classes. Actually, it is natural that people involved in education during their professional lives should, upon retirement, decide to expand their knowledge in areas they have been prevented from pursuing because of educating others. But why gardening? Ann says that she has always been interested in the natural world. She

MG of the Month, Cont.

has always admired other peoples' gardens even though she cannot work in one of her own. However, Ann is fortunate to have a husband who has a very green thumb and a willingness to do the digging and planting. So, encouraged and accompanied by friends and armed with a back-up husband, Ann became part of Master Gardener Class 44.

Ann is also fortunate to have chosen to spend her retirement years serving an organization that needs and welcomes people of diverse talents. While still an intern, Ann began working on the Master Gardener Calendar. At that time, the Calendar was part of the paper copy of the *Scion* that was mailed out to all members. Very active in getting out the newsletter was another supporting group of Master Gardeners call Many Hands, the brain child of Holy Julian. Ann was also part of this group, which still works behind the scenes to put handouts together to support many of the presentations done by Master Gardeners and AgriLife Extension personnel.

Now that the Master Calendar is online, Ann has much more freedom in what she does. Here her background in Learning Resources comes into play. Instead of just inputting data about volunteer and continuing education opportunities sponsored by the Bexar County Master Gardeners or the Bexar County Extension Service, Ann researches other such opportunities sponsored by similar organizations in San Antonio and in

neighboring counties. She also researches events in the area that might be of interest to gardeners. She then continually updates the information in the Calendar with the results of her research.

Ann's advice to Master Gardeners is to become very familiar with this online resource. Along with the E-blasts, the Calendar is an important part of communication within our organization. She advises Master Gardeners to check it regularly in order to take full advantage of all the options available to them. As a member of the Master Gardener Communication Committee, Ann knows that communication is vital to the functioning of our organization. Ann herself is also a model for other potential Master Gardeners with a love of gardens but a physical impediment to actively engage in gardening practices. Her message to them is that they can still make valuable contributions to the on-going work of the Bexar County Master Gardeners.

Master Gardener of the Month

By: Ann Marie Caldwell, JMG 1



Judie Lopez, our **Master Gardener for the month of December**, is a good choice for a month when the theme is selfless giving, because Judie is very

generous in giving of her time and talents to help others with their gardening issues. She had just graduated as part of Class 39 when she began giving of her time and newly acquired knowledge by volunteering to man the Hotline on Friday mornings, fielding all sorts of questions from bugs to farming issues. Judy confesses to having been a little nervous about the many gardening questions for which she did not know the answers, but she was never ashamed to tell callers that she did not know how to solve their gardening problem, but would find out and get back with them.

Judie has also been generous in her support of the very large garden at Harris Middle School. She began helping out there in January about three years ago. The teacher she assisted at that time taught four science classes and one gardening class, a subject about which she was fairly knowledgeable. Unfortunately, she resigned after that semester and the new teacher hired did not know that much about gardening. In fact, she talked with Judie

and wanted to be assured of her continuing support before she accepted the position. In addition to helping the new teacher get better acquainted with the science of gardening and supervising students with their hands-on learning, Judie does a lot of the weeding, and pruning, especially during the summer months when school is not in session.

Judie has also volunteered to prune, plant and weed at the Botanical Garden and at the Japanese Tea Garden. All the time that she generously gives to help others quickly adds up. Judie says that she usually completes the required thirty hours of service by mid-January.

Judie credits her love of gardening to her grandmother, an Irish immigrant who lived just outside of Philadelphia. Judie lived with her grandmother from age three to age eleven while her mother, who worked for the State Department, was on assignment in India. At eleven she went to live with her mother on 23rd Street in New York, where there was no opportunity to engage in her cherished love of tending a garden. From that time on her only contact with gardens were the weekend trips to a farm her family owned in New Jersey.

Judie was teaching English and Spanish in Connecticut when the course of her life took a decided turn in a different

MG of the Month, Cont.

and unexpected direction. She found out that in order to be tenured in Connecticut, she had to have a Master's Degree. She had applied to and was accepted at Yale, when she happened to see an ad about getting a Master's Degree in Spain through New York University. She applied for that program, was accepted, and borrowed \$3000 to cover her expenses. Judie invested the money and made enough return on her investments to cover all of her expenses in Spain with money left over for a down payment on a house on Long Island after her return.

Judie's time in Spain was decisive because while she was there, she met her husband Pedro. They returned to Long Island where Judie taught high school Spanish for about ten years until her husband was transferred to Mexico City.

Judie has mixed emotions about the 23 years she spent teaching English at an American school to which American expatriots and wealthy Mexicans sent their children. Teaching intelligent and highly motivated children was a joy. She loved her job, but Mexico City is a very dangerous place to live. This fact was brought home to her in a very painful way when her 18-year-old son was shot and killed during an auto theft as he attempted to flee from the thieves. Judie also reports that five or six of her students were kidnapped and held for ransom during her tenure at the school. It was a relief when she was finally in a position to retire from her teaching job in

Mexico and move to San Antonio, where her older son lived with his family and also her mother now lived.

Judie had many connections in San Antonio, acquired during the many vacations she had spent there with her family. Some of these friends, particularly one she had made many years ago in Spain, suggested that Judie, with her interest in gardening, become a Master Gardener. Her initial reaction was to ask what a Master Gardener was, but it didn't take much to convince her that this was an organization to which she wanted to offer her time and talent during her retirement years.

Judie now is quite content with her tranquil life in San Antonio. Besides gardening, she feeds and tends to a group of feral cats, has a miniature dollhouse that occupies a lot of her time, and she spends time reading and cooking. All these interests, along with gardening, fill out her rather full life. Judie had no particular advice about gardening to give to the readership, but she did have some advice for God. She asks that He send colder weather this winter and some hard freezes. Other gardeners will want to join in with her plea because, with last year's warmer-than-usual temperatures, plants have become overgrown, and bugs and weeds have multiplied exponentially, making Judie's and everyone's gardening endeavors all the more difficult. We will have to wait to see if God accepts her advice!

Master Gardeners Out and About



Children's Vegetable Garden Awards Ceremony

Photos Contributed by Candy & Brian Roach, Class #59



MG Out & About, Cont.



MG Out & About, Cont.

Schultze House Volunteers

Photos Contributed by Jack Downey



Paul Foerster and Mary Newsom at the Schultze House Saturday Work Party.



Friday, Nov. 18th work team: Ginny Fredericks, John Maldonado, Henry Brune, Anna Vogler and Greg Salyers. (Paul Foerster & Mary Newsom not shown)

Homeschooled Children's Vegetable Garden Phil Hardberger Park



**Just
One
More...**



"Tagged" Monarch on the Riverwalk



December Gardening Chores

Tom Harris, Ph. D., BCMG Class 13

"The Hill Country Gardener"

www.thehillcountrygardener.com



December

Gardening doesn't stop in Texas in December, but it does slow down considerably. Use the time to catch up on your note-taking and get some "catalog" time in.

Mulch, mulch, mulch. Sometimes it's the only way to protect cold-tender plants.

Spider mites thrive in warmth. Be sure to check your indoor plants for mites and take appropriate action.

Birds and Wildlife

- Suet is available in easy-to-use blocks that attract the woodpeckers, chickadees and titmice.
- Use weight-sensitive metal feeders.

Color

- After they freeze back, you can cut lantana, mallow hibiscus, esperanza and other cold sensitive plants to the ground.
- Get those spring-flowering bulbs in the ground this month.
- Plastic cups sunk in the ground and ½ filled with beer attract and drown slugs and snails. They like Budweiser best.
- It is not too late to plant pansies.
- December is a good time to transplant roses

Fruits and Nuts

- This is a good month to plant bare root fruit and pecan trees
- Wait until January to do any major fruit tree pruning.
- Collect pecans as they fall to the ground.

Shade Trees and Shrubs

- Mulch the fallen leaves with your lawn mower.
- Eliminate the mistletoe (a parasite) from your trees after the leaves fall.
- It's OK to plant trees in December...even bare-root trees.
- Consider a living Christmas tree. Arizona cypress or Italian Stone pines do well.
- December is a good month to prune oak trees. Avoid topping.
- Plant fruit trees on 8' x 8' raised beds with drip irrigation.

Turf Grass

- St. Augustine that is dry is very susceptible to freeze damage.

Vegetables

- Side-dress your cole crops and onions with a cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer or ammonium sulphate per 10 feet of row.
- If tomatoes are full sized, but not showing any color, pick them and bring them into the house. They'll ripen on the counter.

Questions?

Write: gardener@gvvc.com; to get a complete list, go to: www.thehillcountrygardener.com. and click on "Publications."





Junior Master Gardener Page

Hello All! Welcome to the **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.

Learn Grow Eat and Go!

Our Learn Grow Eat and Go! Program! Is going strong! Thank you so much to **Barbara Burrell** and **Ted Ritchie** for helping out this month at our Learn Grow Eat Go schools, Palo Alto Elementary, Baskin Elementary, and Wrenn Middle School. They have been assisting with the lessons and garden activities with students. For more information on how you can help too on our LGEG projects and schools contact Ruby Zavala at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu

Northside ISD Environmental Fair

Thank you so much to **Jo and Susan Noonan**. Every year at the NISD Environmental Fair, all 5th graders from NISD get to go to the Texas Research Park and participate in various science related activities. Jo and Susan Noonan taught 218 students about Minerals and Fossils.

Kids Kows and More

Thank you to **Margaret Chavez, Donna Armstrong, Jan Potter, Suzanne Watson, Ted Ritchie, Eugenia Landes, Olivia Sosa, Joan Cleary, Cyndi Tourtellot, Peggy Love, Marybeth Parsons, Marcia Rockne, and Sharon Kilmer**. We saw about 1300 kids over this three day Ag literacy event.

Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST)

Thank you to **Marlene Hawkins, Peggy Love, and Brenda Burrell** for helping out at the 2016 CAST Conference. We talked to teachers from all over Texas and promoted the Junior Master gardener Program.

Children's Vegetable Garden

Thank you to all the Master Gardeners who helped make the Fall 2016 Picnic and Vegetable Contest so great at the Children's Vegetable Garden. We had 127 participants this day!!





From Our Members...



Photos Contributed by Candy & Brian Roach, Class #59

These beautiful photos were taken during a butterfly migration through the area where Candy and her husband Brian live.



Common Buckeye Butterfly



Butterfly Vine Flower & Seedpod



Gulf Fritillary Butterfly



Monarch Butterfly



Julia Heliconian & Skipper Butterflies

From Our Members, Cont.



*Laviana White Skipper
Butterfly*



Male Queen Butterfly



Milkweed Seeds



Monarch on milkweed



Monarchs & Queens on milkweed



*Queen & Monarch
butterflies on milkweed*



Queen on milkweed



Sulfur Butterfly on Raspberry Lantana

From Our Master Gardener Research and Development Team...

By: Rob DeRocher



Spinach Trials – November 10, 2016

What a project! I had helped with trials before, but never one of this magnitude, intricacy, tediousness, and importance. There were approximately 4,464 plants and 34 varieties. An additional reason for this trial was the upcoming International Spinach Conference that will be held here later this year. I almost chickened out when I saw the flats at Peterson's Brothers, however they are the best and the only local grower that could grow all these varieties and keep it straight.

Dr. Parsons and David Rodriguez started putting out volunteer calls to the R&D group and BCMG's. I tried to recruit Nadia Gaona to come assist, unfortunately she could not make it, but I found a good volunteer in Allen Hamilton who rode down with Dave. You will not find a group picture like we normally try to get, because as soon as people got to the field they started scattering to do their jobs. Andrew Waring and I got the flats staged out (about 7-8 flats per row) in the field for Dr. Stein and David. Dr. Stein and Allen worked on plant placement on a row while David and I did the same on another row. This process was repeated over and over. Devin Kerstetter flagged each variety block by their assigned number. Cliff Bingham, Kitty Hommer, Pat DeWinne, Anne Marie Simmons, Dr. Parsons and Tyler Knight did the hard part in covering.

I asked Dr. Stein to clarify what the purpose and parameters of this trial were, to which he responded:

"This is a screening trial of seed which has been in the USDA vault as well as spinach lines from the University of Arkansas. We received 50 seeds and germination is typically low; hence we elected to grow transplants in hopes of getting as many lines to germinate as possible. We are screening these lines for white rust resistance; if lines have white rust resistance, they typically have tolerance to downy mildew. Their plan is to do a DNA sequence on all these lines in an attempt to determine where the resistance originates and they will use these lines in future breeding programs. So in reality, we are looking long term as opposed to finding a great variety with this screening. However, I included the Coho seed which Dr. Jerry Parsons has been securing for several years, so maybe they will rediscover it!!"

The planting was done down near Batesville, TX on a plot prepared and reserved at Del Monte. There were fifteen long, long rows with the holes already prepared. We thought that was going to be enough until toward the end when we had about 20 flats left and nowhere to plant them. However, Dr. Stein grabbed a hoe and promptly set out making more holes in the last two rows available for planting. What a man!

Although there were not a large number of people, it was amazing what did get done in the amount of time we were out there. We started around 9 AM, took an hour lunch, returned to work a little after 1 PM, and finished a little after 3 PM. We probably would have been done by lunchtime if Liz had been there to take care of the first 2000 plants. The extension agent from Zavala County, Marcel Valdez, said there should be an award for the fastest transplanters in the county!!!

MG R&D Team, Cont.

A huge "Thank You" to the following Project Helpers:

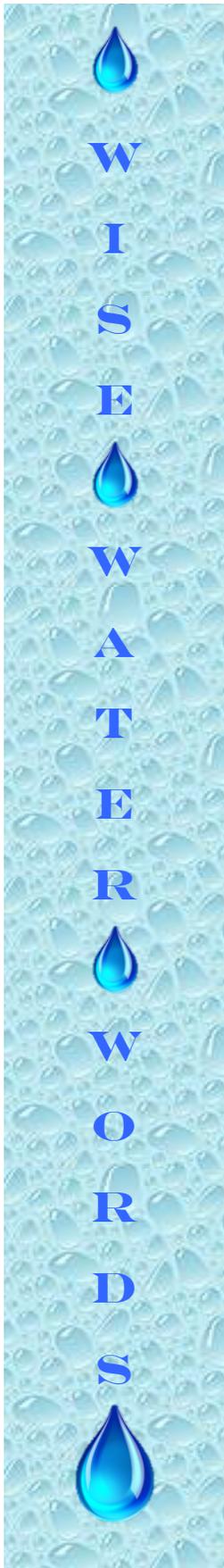
Dr. Jerry Parsons (Retired, or so he thinks, but not as long as Dr. Stein and David are around)
Andrew Waring (R&D, GVST, BCMG)
Kitty Hommer (R&D, GVST, BCMG)
Pat DeWinne (R&D, GVST)
Cliff Bingham (R&D, GVST)
Rob Moore (BCMG)
Anne Marie Simmons (BCMG)
Allen Hamilton (Volunteer)
Devin Kerstetter (Del Monte, Flagging, *Porta Potty*)
Tyler Knight (Del Monte, Field prep and covering)
Leo Conterras (Del Monte, Lunch)
Marcel Valdez (Extension Agent, Zavala County)

All in all, things went well with no snafus. Dr. Stein and I agreed after everybody left that he and I will be retired by the next time a project like this comes around again, and then it will be up to Dave and Andrew. After all, that's what we've been training them for!



MG R&D Team, Cont.





Hello fellow Master Gardeners,

I hope you all had a nice Thanksgiving and are ready for the coming holidays. Hopefully our weather will turn cool again before the New Year.

I am sure you have all heard about the recent SAWS rain barrel coupon program that was introduced on 1 November. It closed on 29 November, after a very strong public response. There were over 1,000 requests for these barrels in the first 48 hours the program was announced, so SAWS capped the program at 6,000 barrels. This limit was reached in less than 1 month.

For any of you who are not familiar with this program, here is a brief synopsis: SAWS had additional money that had been saved for use during drought conditions, but because we had so much rain earlier in the year, this money was not used for its original purpose. SAWS did some research and found that there was a lot of interest in rainwater harvesting in our city. They found a distributor, offered BCMG and all their partners the opportunity to help with this program, and moved forward with the rain barrel coupon. In the application process, there was a place to select which of the non-profit partners the SAWS customers wanted to help. Our organization will receive \$20 for each customer who selected 'BCMG.' In addition, we will also receive money for our help with the education during the rain barrel pick up event on Saturday, 14 January at the Alamo Stadium off Highway 281 and Hildebrand.

The exact requirements for BCMG support on 14 January are still being developed, but we may need as many as 20 or so volunteers in shifts over the course of the day to help train customers on the installation and use of the barrel, and distribution. We will have some training to standardize the information that we will give out to those who ordered rain barrels. Please watch the E-blasts for this training and consider volunteering to help out with the distribution.

It's great news that the residents of San Antonio have so much interest in rainwater harvesting. Hopefully, we will have enough interest to have several of our own rainwater harvesting workshops in late January and early February.

Conservationally yours,

Anna Vogler - Water Conservation Coordinator



AgriLife Advice



Recipe alterations, portion control key to healthful holiday eating

By: Paul Schattenberg, 210-467-6575, paschattenberg@ag.tamu.edu

Contact: Dr. Jenna Anding, 979-847-9228, j-anding@tamu.edu

COLLEGE STATION – Overeating is as much a holiday tradition as watching football, so a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert has some tips on how to alter holiday recipes and make better food choices for healthier eating.

“Many times, the sugar, fat or sodium content of holiday recipes can be reduced without a noticeable difference in taste,” said Dr. Jenna Anding, AgriLife Extension associate department head, nutrition and food sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station. “In addition, there are several traditional holiday foods you can prepare in ways that don’t have a lot of extra fat or calories.”

If a recipe calls for a cup of sugar, try using two-thirds of a cup instead, she said.

“And if reducing the fat content of a recipe is the goal, try using reduced-fat or nonfat cheese, milk, cream cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt or mayonnaise versus their higher-fat counterparts.”

She said another recipe alteration is to substitute evaporated milk for cream.

“For mashed potatoes, try using defatted broth instead of butter,” she said. “This can reduce both fat and calories. Just remember though, low-fat doesn’t always mean fewer calories, so be aware of this when you’re making holiday food choices.”

Anding said modifying recipes may not always produce the desired texture or taste, so it’s a good idea to try the recipe in advance before serving it to others.

“Remember processed foods typically have a higher sodium content, so people should be vigilant about checking food labels for sodium,” she said. “If there’s a choice between regular and reduced-sodium ingredients, choose the item with reduced sodium.”

Anding said many traditional holiday foods can be healthy and nutritious, so long as they are thoughtfully prepared and not embellished in ways that detract from their nutritional value.

“If you’re cooking a turkey, leave the skin on to contain the flavor, but then remove it afterward to reduce the fat content. Baste your turkey in its own juice or use a defatted broth. And when steaming or roasting, use just a small amount of oil or cooking spray for the healthiest way to cook your vegetables.”

She said adding herbs and spices to a recipe can add unique flavors without adding extra sodium, fat or calories.

“For example, sweet potatoes contain beneficial phytonutrients and antioxidant properties, as well as essential vitamins and minerals,” she said. “They’re a good source of fiber, are high in vitamins A and C and are a good source of manganese. They are also low in calories.”

Anding said a medium-size baked sweet potato only has about 100 calories, so a baked sweet potato with a little bit of brown sugar and cinnamon is a healthier option to one slathered in butter or cooked with a marshmallow topping.

“Cranberries are loaded with phytonutrients and are known for their anti-inflammatory properties,” she said, “Adding



Substituting ingredients lower in calories and sugar can help make healthier holiday meals. (Texas A&M AgriLife Communications photo by Rod Santa Ana)

AgriLife Advice, Cont.

them to salads and baked items such as muffins, cookies and pies can be a way to sneak in some added nutrition and flavor.”

Even with healthier preparation, Anding said, portion control is still key when it comes to holiday eating.

“The holidays provide more opportunities to eat at family and social gatherings,” she said. “If you’re trying to avoid holiday weight gain, the key is to plan accordingly so you can keep your calorie intake in check. And don’t forget to engage in a reasonable amount of physical activity to help burn off those extra calories and relieve the stress that often accompanies the holiday season.”

More food and nutrition information and resources from AgriLife Extension can be found at <http://fcs.tamu.edu>.



ANNOUNCEMENTS




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



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Master Gardener Group on
Facebook!*

[Click Here](#)



Lawn & Garden Show Podcast

[Click Here](#)



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"

... Upcoming Meetings ...



There is no General Meeting or Board Meeting scheduled for the month of December!

The next monthly member meeting will be held the evening of Thursday, Jan 19, 2017.



Please remember to pick-up your poinsettia order!



Pick-up at BCMG office: Friday, Dec. 2 11 am – 3 pm and
Saturday, Dec. 3 9 am – 12 pm

All orders **MUST BE PICKED UP** at the BCMG Office:
3355 Cherry Ridge

NO LATER THAN 12 NOON on Saturday, December 3.

We cannot be responsible for plants left after that time.



*Please join us for the
Bexar County Master Gardeners
Christmas and Member
Recognition Party*

Monday, December 5th 6 - 9 pm

At the

San Antonio Garden Center

3310 North New Braunfels 78209

Come one and all...guests are welcome!

No payment required – It's Free

We will recognize new active members and the top 2016 volunteers, distribute 5-10-15-20- 25 year service pins and have fun for all.

The party will be a **POT LUCK SUPPER**...BCMG will provide meat and drinks. You are asked to bring the following dishes according to your last name:

A to H - Hors d'oeuvres or Salad

J to P – Side Dishes

Q to Z – Desserts

Please RSVP by Nov 28 to event@bexarmg.org

Questions? Contact Jack at president@bexarmg.org.



BCMG 2017 CALENDAR

GENERAL MEETINGS & EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS*

January 19 - Thursday, 6 - 8:00 pm

February 16 - Thursday, 1 - 3:00 pm

March 23 - Thursday, 6 - 8:00 pm

April 20 - Thursday, 1 - 3:00 pm

May 18 - Thursday, 6 - 8:00 pm

June 15 - Thursday, 1 - 3:00 pm

July 20 - Thursday, 6 - 8:00 pm

August 17 - Thursday, 1 - 3:00 pm

September 21 - Thursday, 6 - 8:00 pm

October 19 - Thursday, 1 - 3:00 pm

November 16 - Thursday, 6 - 8:00 pm

December 21 - Thursday, 1 - 3:00 pm

BOARD MEETINGS

January 19, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

July 20, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

February 16, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

August 17, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

March 23, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

September 21, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

April 20, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

October 19, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

May 18, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

November 16, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

June 15, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

December 21, Thursday 3:30 - 6 pm

*** LOCATION FOR ALL MEETINGS: 3355 Cherry Ridge Dr., Ste. 208, San Antonio ***

* Meeting dates subject to change due to speaker availability



Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities

COMMUNITY GARDENS (Code 400)

Green Space Alliance (Code 401) Knowledgeable gardeners are wanted to regularly serve as garden mentors and occasionally help with special gardening projects.

Contact: Tia Moen, Community Outreach Manager at tia@greensatx.org

Location: Varies

Website:

<https://www.greensatx.org/upcoming-events/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities/>
or www.meetup.com/San-Antonio-CG/

Haven for Hope (H4H) (Code 402) BCMGs have been helping to maintain the H4H vegetable and butterfly gardens. Also looking for a few individuals to assist with garden chores and who are available on Tuesday mornings between 8-11am.

Additional times and dates are established as needed. There are two steps required to become a Haven for Hope volunteer as described at the website below. Please inform the staff you are a Master Gardener and are interested in helping in the garden.

MG Contact: Andrew Waring at bcmg58@gmail.com

Location: 1 Haven for Hope Way, San Antonio, TX 78207

Website:

<http://www.havenforhope.org/new/volunteers.aspx>

Herff Farm (Code 403) Volunteer to plant and maintain gardens used for inspiring the public to garden. Teach different ways to garden and how to do it organically. Workdays are Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings (email [Shanna Ciano](mailto:Shanna.Ciano) for exact times); Saturdays from 9am-1pm greet visitors and answer their gardening questions.

MG Contact: Shanna Ciano at shannac@beecreek.net

Location: 33 Herff Road, Boerne TX 78006

Website:

http://www.cibolo.org/difference/vol_section/

SA Food Bank Gardens (Code 404) Help plant, maintain and harvest the gardens at SA Food Bank. For more information, check out the [SA Food Bank Guide for Garden Volunteers](#) at the website below.

MG Contact: Ted Ritchie at tnritch@gmail.com or call: 210-744-4220

Location: 5200 W Old US Hwy 90, San Antonio, TX 78227

Website: <http://safoodbank.org/steps-to-volunteer/>

Schultze Cottage (Code 405) In past years, the Hemisfair Park Cottage was a centerpiece of Master Gardener demonstration gardening and a gardening gift shop. Consider rolling up your sleeves and

Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities, Cont.

working to renew and maintain our cottage as part of San Antonio's redeveloping Hemisfair Park.

MG Contact: Jack Downey at bcmgjack@gmail.com

Location: 514 Hemisfair Park, San Antonio, TX 78205

Wounded Warrior Gardens (Code 406) Join the folks who maintain very special gardens for our seriously injured warriors. These gardens are designed to offer therapy as well as beauty.

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

Location: Warrior & Family Support Center, Bldg. 3628 Rawley E. Chambers Rd., Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

YOUTH PROGRAMS (Code 980)

Children's Vegetable Garden @ SABOT (Code 980a) All interested and curious volunteers welcome for Fall and Spring programs at the San Antonio Botanical Garden CVG!

MG Contacts: Mary Fernandez at fernandez.m1978@gmail.com, or John Mayer at JMayerUDRetired@yahoo.com, or David Rodriguez at dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu

SABOT Contact: Volunteer Coordinator Nadezhda Garza at ngarza@sabot.org or call 210-207-3261 or 210-536-1415

Location: 555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX 78209

Websites: <http://www.bexarmg.org/what-we-do/childrens-vegetable-garden-program/> <https://www.facebook.com/BexarCountyYouthGardensProgram> <https://bexaryouthgardens.wordpress.com/>

Children's Vegetable Garden @ Hardberger Park (Code 980a) The Phil Hardberger Park

Children's Vegetable Garden is busy with new classes of children planting delicious seasonal vegetables. The garden could use more volunteers in a variety of jobs. The Hardberger Park CVG works with the children on Tuesday mornings, and always needs MGs for the Watering Team.

MG Contact: Mary Cross at mary.cross63@yahoo.com

Location: 1021 Voelcker Lane, San Antonio, TX 78248

Website:

<https://www.philhardbergerpark.org/events/kid-friendly-events/childrens-vegetable-garden/1376-cvg-season-2>

Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Activities (Code 980c)

MG Contact: Ruby Zavala at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu

Location: Varies

School Gardens (Adopt-a-School) (Code 980d)

MG Contact: Ruby Zavala at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu

Location: Varies

Terrarium Project (Code 980b) Work with children on an age-appropriate, TEKS-based lessons, building a terrarium to keep, and touring the Conservatory. Training is provided.

Contact: SABOT Volunteer Coordinator Nadezhda Garza at ngarza@sabot.org or call 210-207-3261 or 210-536-1415

Location: 555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX 78209

Youth Speakers Bureau (Code 980g) Take fun gardening activities (insects -- plants -- soils) to a youth garden class!

MG Contact: Ruby Zavala at Ruby.Zavala@ag.tamu.edu

Location: Varies

*Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities, Cont.***ADDITIONAL GARDENING OPPORTUNITIES...**

MG Helping Hands (Code 304) Help BCMG with mailings or other work at our office.

MG Contact: Holly Julian at khollyj@satx.rr.com

Location: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, 3355 Cherry Ridge Drive, Suite 208, 78230

MG Hotline (Code 503) The BCMG Plant Hotline answers phone and email questions daily. It is a very good way to learn about a variety of gardening topics. For those of us who don't tolerate heat well, it's great!

MG Contacts: Jim Strong, jrstrong44@gmail.com and Anne Goode, buagoode@outlook.com

Location: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, 3355 Cherry Ridge Drive, Suite 208, 78230

Website: <http://www.bexarmg.org/what-we-do/bexar-county-master-gardener-hotline/>

MG Speakers Bureau (Code 900) The Speakers' Bureau needs your help! Join the speaker request notification list to volunteer as a Speaker (**Codes: 902=preparation; 903=presentation; 904=tear down**), or as a Speakers Bureau assistant to accompany each speaker on their engagement to manage handouts and sign-in sheets, and to return completed sign-in sheets to the BCMG office (**Code 901**).

MG Contact: Karen Gardner at karen.gardner@bexarmg.org or call 210-571-3903

Location: Varies

Website: <http://www.bexarmg.org/what-we-do/educational-program/>

MG Training Class (Code 202) Tell Lou you would like to serve as a mentor for intern class participants!

MG Contact: Lou Kellogg, bexarmg1@gmail.com

Location: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, 3355 Cherry Ridge Drive, Suite 208, 78230

Websites:

<http://www.bexarmg.org/about/35-2/> and <http://www.bexarmg.org/get-involved/>

Plant Trials (Code 950d) Email David to be added to a list of MGs who will be contacted directly when help is needed for a project.

Contact: David Rodriguez at dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu

Locations: Food Bank, San Antonio Botanical Gardens and others as identified.

San Antonio Botanical Garden (Code 800) Master Gardeners can participate in Plant Propagation (**Code 801**) working in the SABOT greenhouse under the direction of Mary Irish, or in General Gardens Help (**Code 802**) which includes various seasonal gardening chores (watering plants, cleaning up plants, dead leaves, deadheading, pruning, etc.).

Contact: SABOT Volunteer Coordinator Nadezhda Garza at ngarza@sabot.org or call 210-207-3261 or 210-536-1415 for day and time information.

Location: 555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX 78209



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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.

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

"Magical Mystical Medicinal Mistletoe"

Last month I had the opportunity to "unplug" and enjoy some hiking in the mountains of New Mexico. The scenery is absolutely breathtaking. If you've never been to the Santa Fe area, I highly recommend you put it on your Bucket List!

In addition to the beautiful mountains, there are a variety of plants that accessorize the surrounding scenery. One of these caught my eye, just as it had in the past back home. Plus, Christmas was just around the corner and I thought it might be fun to explore a plant I didn't know much about that also was tied to a well known Christmas tradition: kissing under the mistletoe. To follow are some facts and history surrounding the magical, mystical and medicinal mistletoe!

Mistletoe, as it turns out, is a "special" type of parasite - a "hemiparasite." Although its parasitic nature gives it the ability to grow on the branches of select trees by sending its roots down into its host (through a haustorium) to obtain nutrients, it is also capable of generating its own nutrients (mostly carbohydrates) through photosynthesis, which gives it the bright green color we are all familiar with.

There are two types of mistletoe: *Viscum* and *Phoradendron*. *Viscum album* is the European mistletoe found in the following range area: from North Africa to southern England and southern Scandinavia across Central Europe to southwest and East Asia to Japan. The genus *Phoradendron* occurs in the warm temperate and tropical regions of the Americas. Both fall under the family *Santalaceae*. That's a lot of Latin, but the only reason I bring it up is because, like a lot of plant nomenclature, it can get quite confusing considering there are over 200 species of *Phoradendron*. Furthermore, with new DNA evidence, *Phoradendron* has been reclassified from the family *Viscaceae* to *Santalaceae*. Now, imagine trying to Google three different classifications and you end up with a big ball of mistletoe confusion! However, after some diligent research and comparison with photos I've taken of mistletoe in So. Llano River State Park (Junction, TX) and the Sierra Del Norte Trail in Santa Fe, NM, I'm fairly certain I've seen these two species of *Phoradendron*: *P. juniperinum* (New Mexico), also known as "Juniper Mistletoe," and *P. serotinum* ssp. *tomentosum* (Texas), commonly known as "Oak or American Mistletoe, and Christmas Mistletoe" - the type we are most familiar with.

Characteristics shared by these two species, as well as others in the mistletoe family, is that the foliage and berries of some species are toxic for humans and most animals. However, livestock and deer love mistletoe leaves and the berries are a favorite of several species of songbirds such as cedar waxwings, bluebirds, mockingbirds, silky-flycatchers and tanagers. Of course, the birds are responsible for seed

From the Editor, Cont.

dispersal too, which contributes to mistletoe's widespread distribution and success.

Unfortunately, like most opportunistic parasitic plants, the host suffers and although mistletoe doesn't technically kill a tree, it affects its growth adversely through stress. Intense infestations can cause the ends of branches to atrophy and die, as well as weaken the overall health of the tree. In Texas, mistletoe grows on many different trees including mesquite, hackberry, ash, cottonwood, bumelia, willow, juniper, elm, and oak, with some species (e.g., *P. juniperium*) being host specific.

Management of mistletoe is difficult due to the nature of the haustoria, which is basically the "umbilical cord" from which the mistletoe derives its nourishment and therefore makes it difficult to prune out the parasite - although pruning will cut back on seed production and dispersal.

So with all the "bad" mistletoe does, how did it get to be a commonly used Christmas decoration that encourages kissing? Going way back to the ceremonies of the Celtic Druids (1 A.D.) mistletoe was believed to be sacred because of the way it grew - not in the earth, but in the air with the added mystical ability to blossom even in winter. Due to its mysterious growth pattern, people believed it had magical properties that would ward off evil and disease and was capable of bestowing life and fertility, with the added medicinal benefit as a powerful aphrodisiac.

In Scandinavia mistletoe was considered a symbol of peace under which enemies could declare a truce or spouses could "kiss and make-up." Additionally, from Norse folklore comes the myth of Baldur, whose mother was the goddess Frigga, a seer who had a dream that her son Baldur would soon die. In an effort to protect him, she made every plant, animal and the elements of fire, earth, water and air promise not to harm him, but forgot about mistletoe. The evil god, Loki, took advantage of this oversight and made an arrowhead of mistletoe and then tricked the God of Darkness, Holder, to shoot the arrow, killing Baldur. Frigga, overcome with grief, and after much crying and effort to revive her son, was able to bring Baldur back to life. It is said her tears became the white berries on the mistletoe and because she was so joyful to have her son returned to her, kissed everyone who passed beneath the tree where it grew. Thus, the "kissing under the mistletoe" tradition was born. Or, at least that's one version of how it came into being!

Another version of how the tradition came about is the "kissing ball" from 18th century England that was developed as a tradition during Christmas time. It was said that a young lady standing under a "holy bough" should not refuse to be kissed. A kiss would promise deep romance, lasting friendship and goodwill. Of course if she refused, the opposite fate would occur.

Besides the traditions and mystical powers surrounding mistletoe, it also has a following by those who believe it has medicinal value as well:

Mistletoe has been used as an antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, digestive and diuretic, and, among the many ailments it has been used to treat, are epilepsy, ulcers, high blood

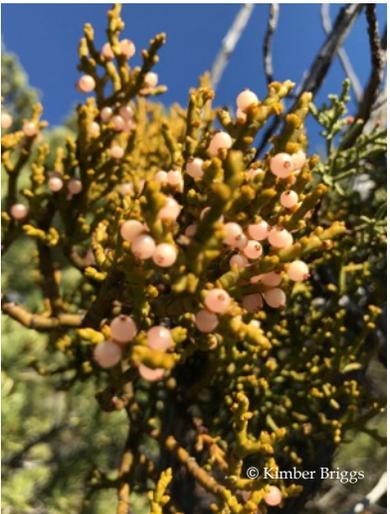
From the Editor, Cont.

pressure, rheumatism and certain types of cancer....the commercially available mistletoe extracts such as Iscador and Helixor are widely used as oncological drugs, particularly in Germany (<http://www.kew.org/science-conservation/plants-fungi/viscum-album-mistletoe>).

Mistletoe, at first glance, may be considered by some as a parasitic nuisance. However, like most things, with a more thorough examination one will find that it has some very unique, positive benefits: a source of food for wildlife, health and wellness, and a promise of love, happiness and peace for those who steal a kiss under it!



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Two species of
Phoradendron:

Left:

P. juniperinum in a juniper
tree (Santa Fe, NM)

Right:

P. serotinum ssp.
Tomentosum in a mesquite
tree (Junction, TX)



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Your Editor,
Kimber Briggs