



McLennan County Master Gardener Association
Volume XI Issue 3 March 2009

President's Column

“Spring has sprung!!!” Well maybe not officially, but as I hiked below the Lake Waco dam on the first day of March looking for *Escobaria missouriensis* (a cactus native to Central Texas) I was delighted to see the first bluebonnets of 2009 dancing among prickly pear as if they were trying to paint bits of blue sky unto the late winter landscape. Texas Winter grass grew among the scattered mesquite and juniper where the gravelly surface gave way to yellow clay. Pieces of concrete and limestone piled here and there raised questions of a bygone era in the life and landscape of Bosque Park. The natural order of things over time brought healing to the terrain, all but erasing the scars of humanity. The cacti and other plants I observed survived and are thriving, giving evidence to nature's ability to recover in spite of mankind.

Each of us as Master Gardeners has an inherent propensity to conserve our natural wonders. We look at every plant around us and see an opportunity for life and optimistically search for hidden treasures proposed by its existence. The appreciation for the wonders of life is what drives us to volunteer our time and talents as we work to educate our community. The Community Projects Lists, “The Latest Dirt” and the

McLennan County Master Gardener website outline volunteer opportunities you can invest in throughout Central Texas. The Master Gardener Plant Sale coming up on May 16, 2009 is a perfect situation for each of us to multiply our own successes by presenting our favorite contributions for others to purchase and grow in their own backyards. Wal-Mart has made available potting soil at no cost to us for use as we prepare plants for the coming sale. Louie McDaniel will have some of the potting soil available at our March 11, 2009 Master Gardener Meeting. You may give Louie a heads up by calling him at 254-405-4019 or 254-836-4937 and letting him know how much you need.

Whether we are ready or not plant life will spring up around us very soon. This is the season your green thumb should be covered with dirt or a good glove if you happen to be pulling weeds around an *Escobaria missouriensis*.

Oh yeah, just one more thing. Be sure you don't forget to mulch.

-Steven Lovecky

McLennan County Master Gardener Association Officers 2009

President- Steven Lovecky Vice President- Jan Serface Secretary- Nelda Cooper
Treasurer- Louie McDaniel Sponsor- Shane McLellan Newsletter- James Storrs
Send volunteer hours to Julia Khoury at 8512 Bosque, Waco 76712, or tkhoury@hotmail.com
www.mclennanmastergardeners.org

March Program Preview

March 11 (Wednesday) at 12:00 noon, Carleen Bright Arboretum

James Bays and his garden were featured in a segment on PBS recently. Ila Jean Carothers will show a video of the segment and make comments. She, Judy Tye and Barbara Vance make cameo appearances in the program!

Education Hours Opportunity for Master Gardeners

Master Composting Class

The first session is set up for Feb. 19th, 20th, 21st at the Wetlands. The next session will be March 19th, 20th, 21st, location to be determined. And the final session will be April 23rd, 24th, 25th, no location yet. Classes are 6 - 9pm and then all day on Saturday. Cost is \$20 & includes shepherd's bin, thermometer, book, worm bin, worms, and book.

KMCB received a grant from HOTCOG and Sherri received a grant from Keep Texas Beautiful & HEB to do the same thing, so they are combining forces and offering it 3 times.

Contact Sherri Street for more information or to register.

Sherri Street, Executive Director

KEEP WACO BEAUTIFUL *Keep Texas Beautiful & Keep America Beautiful affiliate*

P.O. Box 1493 Waco, TX 76703 254-750-5728 phone 254-750-5602 fax

sherri6491@aol.com

KeepWacoBeautiful.com

TEXAS GARDENER magazine subscriptions

We can subscribe and/or renew subscriptions to *Texas Gardener* magazine through our organization as a MG fundraiser. At the March and April meeting, we will collect member subscriptions and checks (made out to McLennan County Master Gardeners) and send them in at one time following the April meeting.

Rates are: 1 yr. - \$21.95

2 yr. - \$37.95

3 yr. - \$47.95

We get to keep 25% of these rates for our treasury. Be sure to show your name/address/city/zip and length of subscription desired, and indicate whether new or renewal.

Volunteer opportunities for March

March 2, 9:00..... TSTC Demonstration Rose Garden

March 5, 9:00.....Superstar Bed Workday Anne says to wear old clothes; volunteers will be painting benches and other items.

All Fridays 3:00-5:00...Community Garden

Events and volunteer opportunities for April

April 6.... TSTC Rose Garden 9:00

April 16...Work morning at Cedar Ridge 9:00 (preparing for *Day in the Garden*)

April 17.....*A Day in the Garden with the Children* at Cedar Ridge 8:30-3:00

April 18-19.....Beasts & Blooms and Earth Day, Too at CMP Zoo

April 26.....Gardener's Gathering at Carleen Bright Arboretum

-Jeanette Kelly

Plant Sale

The McLennan County Master Gardener annual plant sale will be held at 4605 West Waco Drive on May 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please start planning now if you haven't already so you will have items to contribute to this fundraiser.



February Meeting Minutes

The noon meeting was called to order by President Steven Lovecky at the Arboretum. There was one correction to the minutes for January; the Gardener's Gathering at the Arboretum will be Sun. April 26.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Louie reported the ending balance was \$15,133.47 as of January 31, 2009.

PROJECTS & COMMITTEES: Jeanette Kelly

The Arboretum Trail Garden construction will begin in late February.

A new docent program will begin in a few months for a class to be started this spring. Chairman is Brenda Golubski.

The chairman for the SuperStar Bed at the Arboretum is Anne Plasek. A workday has been set for March 5.

The Cedar Ridge Elementary "Day in the Garden" will be held April 17. Sandy Back is the Chairman.

Jene Hering reported that the workday for the McGregor Demonstration Garden was a huge success.

Beasts & Blooms will be held April 18 & 19 at the zoo. We will have a booth for children's activities.

A Compost Sale by the Midway ROTC will be March 7. Bags cost \$2.00.

Three Compost Classes will be held in Feb., March, & April at the Wetlands. The first class will be Feb. 19, 20. & 21. Thurs. & Fri class will be from 6-9 and all day Sat. Cost is \$20.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Master Gardeners will take a field trip to Texas A&M on Thurs., May 28. We will visit the horticulture and holistic gardens. We will go by bus and there will be a fee.

The MG Plant Sale will be May 16 on the lot by Mocek's on Waco Drive.

Members voted to increase the amount for the scholarships to the MCC Landscape Design students to \$1500.

The 2009 TMGA Annual Conference will be in Marshall, TX April 23-25. See www.texasmastergardeners.org for more details.

Those interested in renewing their subscription to the Texas Gardener should do so at the April meeting. We will receive a discount as a group.

We will discuss plans next month for ordering MG T-shirts to be worn at the plant sale and other functions.

The meeting was adjourned, followed by the program presented by Melody Fitzgerald on Spring Gardening.

-Nelda Cooper

Attendance at February Meeting

Jane Anderson, Sandy Back, Mark Barnett, James Bays, Bonnie Belanger, Dick Belanger, Grady Bonner, Ila Jean Carothers, Jo Ann Clafferty, Nelda Cooper, Susan Crawford, Sarah Downs, Victor DuPart, Eva Fitzgerald, Melody Fitzgerald, Brenda Golubski, Thad Hairston, Jene Hering, Jeanette Kelly, Julia Khoury, Steven Lovecky, Louie McDaniel, Barbara Mersinger, Andrea Moore, Georgia Peterson, Ernie Petru, Doug Quicksall, Art Reinking, Carol Reinking, Judy Schmeltekopf, Jan Serface, Della Setser, Judy Tye, Barbara Vance, Jo Von Rosenberg, Melba Waldrop, Dorothy Whitehead, MJ Whitehead, Genova Wilson, Carol Wood, Maureen Moulden.

INTERNS: Irene Dauphin, Cindy Geletzke, Missy Kinder, Donna Lindsey, Elizabeth Milam, Gerry Milnor, Anne Plasek, James Prause, Edrena Smith, James Storrs, Mary Lou Trice.

- Nelda Cooper

4th ANNUAL COMPOST SALE, March 7, Saturday- 8AM to 2 PM

It's that time of year again as spring is just around the corner! The [Midway Battalion of MCJROTC](#) is now taking [pre-orders](#) for compost. First delivery and compost sale for the year will be March 7th. [The Midway Battalion of MCJROTC](#) will receive 50% of the profits for upcoming trips in the near future.

MIDWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL (MAIN PARKING LOT ADJACENT TO THE FOOTBALL STADIUM)

MCJROTC is sending cadets to Washington DC and needs to raise additional funds. Due to overwhelming and positive response from last year's sale, we will offer the same compost at the same \$2.00 per one cubic-foot bag. Bulk loads can also be ordered that day. A bulk load is 15 cubic yards and will sell for \$350.00 delivered in the Waco area. The compost is produced by a local cotton gin from the composted cotton burrs of local farmers. The compost is great for flower beds, gardens and in yards. So, if you missed the last sale, or did not purchase enough, this is your chance to buy this great local compost and help local Marine Corps Cadets raise money. information or to place a pre-order call or email Colonel Fierro. Thank you in advance for your continued support of the JROTC program at Midway!

254-761-5650 ext. 25Col Ascension Fierro and MGySgt Manuel

<http://www.midwayisd.org/997209210955343/site/default.asp>

From Julia

Julia Khoury has asked for response to this suggestion in an article she read: "At least once a year, remove ivy and other vines and ground cover from the trunks and root flares of trees and create a zone that extends at least 12 inches from the base of the tree." She says she has never done that and wonders if anyone else does it.

I (JS) have seen and heard this question addressed, and the usual response is that ivy does no harm to a tree unless it's allowed to grow out onto the canopy. There it would block the light from the tree leaves and interfere with photosynthesis. If anyone would like to comment, please send your reply to jms@grandecom.net and I'll include it in the next newsletter.

New Membership Directory

We now have a membership directory for our members and they were distributed to everyone who attended our last meeting. I will have these available at the meeting in March for those of you who were not at the February meeting. Please see me so I can give you a copy.

I would like to thank Barbara Vance and Ila Jean Carothers for their help in putting together the information for our directory and their help with proof reading. Also, thanks to Sonia Warriner, and Maureen Moulden for helping to assemble the booklets.

Please note the following in your membership directory:

Sarah Downs - 2006, 3012 Wood Lake, Waco, TX 76710, 772-9183
Elizabeth Milam, add cell #855-4150
Maureen Moulden - 2004T
Georgia Peterson, add cell #717-7179
James Prause, delete 580-9059 and add 707-0433

If you have a change of address or phone number, please let us know so we can update our information.

Thank you,
Eva FitzGerald

(Thanks to Eva for all her work in putting together the great new directories. They will come in handy over and over again.)

Time for Pre-emergent Herbicide

If you use a pre-emergent herbicide, such as Balan or Betasan, to control weeds, an application should be made between now and March 15 and then again in 90 days.

PROPOSED BYLAWS REVISIONS

A Bylaws committee met in February and has recommended the following changes to the January, 2007 McLennan County Master Gardeners Bylaws. Revisions are noted below and will be voted upon at the April meeting. The new membership designations will begin in January 2010; others are effective immediately.

BYLAWS REVISIONS:

"The Texas Cooperative Extension" was revised to reflect the name change in Texas Extension to *"Texas AgriLife Extension Service"* throughout the entire bylaws.

Use of the term *"interns"* was made consistent throughout the bylaws. *"Associate members"* had also been used in the older copy.

Under Article III. Membership. Delete Section 3 through Section 6 and replace with the following three sections:

Section 3. Members must be re-certified each year to retain membership in the association. Re-certification will include a minimum of six additional hours of educational training, twelve additional hours of Extension Service volunteer work, and attendance of at least three regular meetings.

Section 4. Failure to meet any of the above membership requirements may result in loss of membership in the organization. If a member or intern is unable to fulfill requirements due to illness, family illness, or another personal situation, a "Leave of Absence" may be requested. A written request must be made to the executive committee, and may be granted for a period of one year, during which the member may not vote or hold office. The executive committee shall have final authority as to membership status.

Section 5. Reinstatement: Upon written request by a former member, the executive committee may reinstate such former member to membership upon such terms as the executive committee shall deem appropriate.

Under Article VIII. Committees:

E. Membership:

2. Added *"and current Master Gardeners"*

These revisions can be compared to the bylaws printed in the new yearbook given to members at the February meeting. Bylaws committee: Jan Serface, Barbara Vance, Eva FitzGerald, Ila Jean Carothers

Websites of Interest

www.mclennanmastergardeners.org Our very own website.

davesgarden.com DG has 425,769 members and is probably the largest website devoted exclusively to gardening in the world.

neilsperry.com You can sign up for the free monthly e-newsletter. Sperry's radio program is on KRLD 1080 from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. It is streamed live at the KRLD website also.

texasgardener.com Sign up for your free subscription to SEEDS, the on-line gardening newsletter.

<http://groups.yahoo.com> Join Texas Master Gardener Yahoo! Group (Texas MG).

www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/downloads/invasives.pdf Jeanette Kelly suggested including this link. It's a comprehensive guide to invasive plants of Central Texas.

www.ktsa.com Gardening with Bob Webster can be heard streaming live on Saturdays 5:30 to 8:30 a.m. and Sundays 8 to 11 a.m. He is not dogmatic, but leans toward the organic approach.

<http://www.garden.org/subscriptions/> Go here to subscribe to "Lower South" - a biweekly e-mail by Skip Richter of Austin. Enter name and zip code.



Mail-Order Coleus



If you grow coleus, you may have found that selections are limited when you shop locally. There are two sources with websites that give good service with reasonable prices, and both are taking orders now for shipping when the weather is warm enough. rosydawngardens.com; gebhartgreenhouse.com Browsing the selections is fun even if you don't order anything. If you do decide to order, you might go in with someone else to share shipping costs.

Pay particular attention to the light requirements, and remember that full sun in Texas is altogether different from full sun in Michigan. (Pictured is 'Peter Wonder,' a favorite among collectors- and a mealybug magnet!)

Alternatives to Red Tip Photinia (*Photinia x fraseri*)

Do you remember when red tip photinias first came on the market? I was living in the Houston area, and couldn't have cared less about plants at the time, but I do remember how spectacular the new growth looked in the spring. Soon it seemed that they were everywhere—sort of the Arizona ashes of the shrub family. They were hailed as a replacement for tired, boring, overused boxwoods, wax ligustrums and privet. Eventually, the very serious fungal disease *Entomosporium maculatum* realized that it had cause to celebrate, because this member of the rose family proved to be particularly susceptible, while others in the rose family, such as Indian hawthorn, might be affected but were not usually killed. Although red tips are still being sold, particularly in the big box stores, most horticulturists recommend using alternative plants.



One choice is in the same family—Chinese photinia—*Photinia Serrulata*. However, it is very hardy and the only disease problem seems to be powdery mildew on occasion if it's in too much shade. This is an old-fashioned shrub/tree. As the name suggests, the margins of the leaves are saw-toothed. It needs lots of room because it gets tall and wide. The new growth is more maroon than red, and the leaves are a richer green than those of the red tip. This is a beautiful plant when covered with white blooms in the early spring, although the scent of the flowers is unpleasant.

Nellie R. Stephens holly is another dependable shrub that makes an excellent screen. It can grow up to 20 feet tall, so like the Chinese photinia, it needs room. It tolerates alkaline soil *better than some other hollies*. *If you've ever wondered how it got its name, here's a link:* http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/plantoftheweek/articles/Nellie_Stephens_Holly.htm

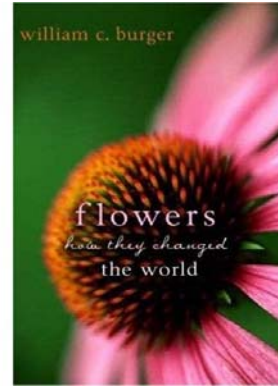
Elaeagnus pungens—as the other two plants mentioned above—can approach 20 feet in height and 15 feet in width. The leaves are a couple of inches long, and they have a coarse, sandpaper-like texture. Once established, this is medians along the interstate. If that from time to time a plant runners that need trimming. It's mature plant will be.



Other shrubs worth looking at are needlepoint (willowleaf) holly, Italian jasmine and the various viburnums. If you have red tips that are going downhill (and they can linger for years), you might want to go ahead and replace them. Life's too short to wait for sick plants to finally

Book Review

Have you read a good plant book lately? I'm reading **Flowers: How They Changed the World** by William C. Burger (Prometheus Books, 2006), which I checked out from the public library. Here's what *Midwest Book Review* had to say about it: Flowers are one of the most attractive aspects of the outdoors; but they didn't evolve just for humans to appreciate. Botanist and science writer William Burger examines the role of flowers in the natural world, from how their bright colors and shapes attract and induce animals to help with pollination to how they serve as an energy resource. Chapters survey flowers, their pollinators, and how flowers have enabled ecosystems to survive in his lively blend of botanical research and wide-ranging natural history insights. A top pick for readers who like science and gardening books. The author, a biologist and senior botanist at Missouri Botanical Garden, points out that flowers are special because they are a part of green plants, and by using the sun's energy to grow and reproduce, green plants (along with algae and bacteria) by the process of photosynthesis provide food for 99% of the living things on earth. This isn't an "airport" book, but I'm glad to have happened upon it and am learning a great deal from it.



Artscape at Dallas Arboretum March 21 and 22

Dallas, TX - The Dallas Arboretum bustles with art on March 21st and 22nd from 9am-5pm when over 90 artists from around the country gather for ArtScape at the botanical garden, 8525 Garland Road. Back by popular demand for the fourth consecutive year, ArtScape is a juried art show set amid the largest outdoor floral display in the Southwest, Dallas Blooms. Not only is all art in the show made of or about nature and captured in various mediums including painting, photography, mixed media, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics and more, but it will be displayed among over 450,000 spring-blooming bulbs and thousands of spring annuals and perennials at the site of this outdoor floral festival.

Over the course of this weekend guests will not only have the opportunity to view and purchase works of art, but also witness the creative process and learn about various mediums as professional artists will be holding demonstrations throughout the garden. ArtScape will also feature the Garden Gallery Exhibition in the DeGolyer House which will be on display from March 7th through April 12th. The work included in this exhibit is comprised of various mediums, selected by a jury and inspired by the vibrant color and natural splendor of the Dallas Arboretum, as it was all created in the garden.

In conjunction with ArtScape, guests can enjoy the various weekend activities that will take place during the 25th Anniversary of Dallas Blooms such as live music at the Dann Talley Kincheloe Courtyard from 11am-2pm or the jazz standards of Arthur Riddles on the Martin Rutchik Concert Stage. "With so many things to see at the garden and the display of these accomplished artists as a focus, this should be one of the most exciting weekends of the Dallas Arboretum's year," said Mary Brinegar, President of the Arboretum.

For further information on ArtScape or Dallas Blooms please call (214) 515-6500 or visit www.dallasarboretum.org.