



The Guadalupe Gardener



AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

April 2010

A monthly publication of the Guadalupe County Master Gardeners in cooperation with the Texas AgriLIFE Extension, Guadalupe County

NOTES FROM THE GARDEN - of Linda Bruno, President



During the Grow Local Festival on Feb 27th, Mark Maldonado mentioned that many of our Master Gardeners who bought plants from him were surprised when he told them they get a Master Gardener discount from Maldonado's Nursery. I told him we put that information in our newsletter a couple of months ago. And he said "Well, maybe they aren't reading the newsletter."

So this month's column is going to be a little different. I'm asking you to respond to some questions by sending me an email with your comments. I've picked four names at random from the latest membership list – just opened the pages and pointed – and the first two people who respond in that group of four names will get one of the full size Thrive products that were donated for door prizes for our Festival. The names are evenly mixed – two male & two female. Here are the questions:

1. Do you read the Guadalupe Gardener newsletter?
How often? If not, why not?
2. Do you visit the GCMG website? How often? If not, why not?
3. Do you read the email reminders sent by Dale to remind you about meetings, speakers & that the newsletter is posted?
4. Do you read the email announcements about upcoming Master Gardener events, volunteer needs and educational opportunities? Do you use the information provided to volunteer or to attend events and classes?
5. Regarding the frequency of emails on education opportunities, do you want to receive more information or less? Or do we have it about right?

Email me at jlbruno@gvec.net your response. If you have any other comments related to our organization that you would like to share, I am happy to listen. Thanks for taking a few minutes of your time to respond.

April Meeting

April 15, 2010

Fruit Trees for Home Landscapes by Mark Fanick

Mark Fanick of Fanick's Garden Center will talk about the challenges gardeners face in selecting what fruit trees will be best for their home landscape, choosing the best varieties of those types, and planting and caring for their fruit trees.

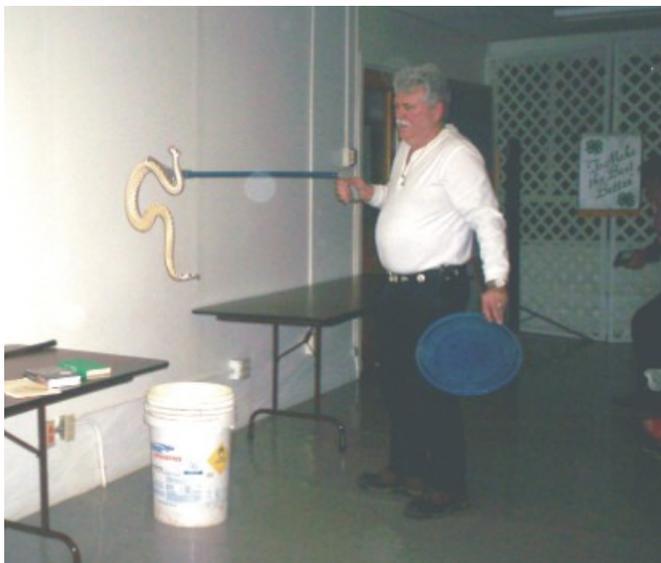
Bob Grafe, Kathy Carroll and Jeri Doyle will furnish refreshments.

In This Issue

- Page 2 - March Meeting Program
- Page 3 - New MGs; Future Programs
- Page 4 - Grow Local Festival
- Page 5 - Community Garden; Wilson County Days
- Page 6 - Ag Building Wildflowers etc.
- Page 7 - Stock Show & Rodeo; Tees & Caps
- Page 8 - MGs at Work
- Page 9 - Education - Classes - Seminars
- Page 10 - Volunteer Opportunities
- Page 12 - Stem Cutting Preparation Basics
- Page 13 - Gardening Events
- Page 14 - In My Backyard
- Page 15 - April Calendar

Association News

March Meeting Program



Schertz Police Chief Steve Starr presented a program about poisonous and nonpoisonous snakes at the March membership meeting. He has been a member of the Lone Star Snake Handlers Association for about thirty-five years. He presents lectures on snakes for safety reasons.

He talked about various nonpoisonous snakes which are beneficial in that they consume such things as insects, rodents, and other snakes. Nonpoisonous snakes include the hog-nosed snake (known to puff up and hiss and then when that fails, rolls over and plays dead), blind burrowing snakes, garter snakes, king snakes, indigo snakes (large up to fourteen feet in length and placed on the endangered species due to proximity to water and being mistaken for the much smaller cotton mouth water moccasin), rat or chicken snakes (aggressive in pursuit of birds, eggs, and lizards and often will surprise someone gathering hen eggs), bull snakes (full of "bull" in that they tend to imitate a rattlesnake by vibrating the end of their tail), water-snakes (fish eaters who may annoy a fisherman's stringer and are often observed similar to turtles with their heads sticking out of the water), and the coach-whip (fast moving snake which whips through the grass).

There are four categories of poisonous snakes found in Texas including the coral snake, the copperhead, the cotton mouth water moccasin, and the rattlesnake. The coral snake which has a "neurotoxic" venom similar to a cobra, bites by slinging

its body at its prey. The coral snake must bite and chew to inject its venom. The old saying of "red-on-yellow will kill a fellow" is a good adage in identifying a coral snake since some nonpoisonous snakes are similar in coloration but not the same pattern. There are "antivenins" which can be administered to a bite victim as soon as possible, thus saving their life.

The copperhead, cotton mouth water moccasin, and rattlesnake strike with fangs and administer a 'haemolytic' venom. They tend to have a triangular shaped head larger than their neck and an elliptical shaped pupil.

The copperhead is the least venomous and generally occupies areas with sandy soil and oak leaves. Their copper coloration blends in well with brown leaves.

The cotton mouth water moccasin has a white interior mouth which it will demonstrate. This is a warning sign. They generally will try to flee when confronted. They can bite under water if so inclined. They are most dangerous when nesting.

The rattlesnake is the most dangerous of the poisonous snakes found in Texas. There are about ten different species found in Texas, the most common being the western diamondback, the black-tailed, timber and prairie rattlesnakes.

Like most snakes they use their tongues to size up their prey. They have a reservoir of fangs, if one is broken they simply replace it. They can strike up to about two-thirds of their length. They may or may not rattle before striking. The number of rattles on their tail is not indicative of their age since they may shed their skin several times a year gaining a button each time or may have one or more broken off.

When in close proximity of a rattlesnake, do not move your legs. The upper portions of your body can be moved. You can shout and call for help, other wise remain still and hope the snake decides to leave. The snake does not see very well but will strike at vibrations or movement.

If bitten, it is best not to slice and provide suction. Wash the wound with soap and water and apply an antibiotic. Stay calm and immediately seek medical help.

Police Chief Starr brought a rattlesnake for demonstration purposes. He pulled the snake out of a five gallon container and let the snake strike at his boot. Wearing heavy boots in snake infested areas is a pretty good idea. A rattlesnake generally will not strike more than twelve inches high unless he is exceptionally large.

NEWLY CERTIFIED MASTER GARDENERS



Above is **Debbie Krause** accepting her certificate and name tag from George Ammermann. To left is **Dave Love** accepting his certificate and name tag from George Ammermann.

In addition, **Millie Von Stultz**, who has done such an admirable job on the Grow Local website, although unable to attend the meeting, has earned her certification.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

- May 20 -- Cheryl Hamilton, Alamo Area Master Naturalist - Invasive Plants
- Jun 17 -- Summer Social
- Jul 15 -- Greg Collum - Wildlife Management of Property
- Aug 19 -- Liz Palfini, Texas Parks and Wildlife - Plants and Human Affairs
- Sep 16 -- JoNelle Zager - Irises
- Oct 21 -- Flo Oxley - Seeds of Success

CORRECTION - My Father's Farm

Pedro Schambon reports that he is a native of Colombia, South America rather than Guatamala, but he says, "I do help orphans in Guatemala and Colombia, and I became born again Christian in Guatemala so in a way I am native Guatemalan."

March meeting refreshments were provided by Clara Fischer, Betty Hughes, Hughlene Micheli, and Ryla Cottingham. Suzanne Brown won the \$5 raffle. Gail Johnson won the \$10 Greengate Nursery gift certificate.

SCHERTZ GROW LOCAL FESTIVAL

To all of our wonderful volunteers – Thank you so much for the most amazing turn out on Friday and Saturday. I've added the names of those who didn't see the sign-in sheet in all the hustle and came up with a total count of 48 volunteers. You guys (yes I know that is horrible English) but you MASTER GARDENER GUYS made the event a success. And thanks also to the 19 people who were at the Extension office on Thursday to put together the bags and help load up all the stuff it takes to set up a full information booth.

I didn't include Travis in the count but I'm sure most of you saw him there during the day. He was smiling most of the time and we let him deal with the various dignitaries who stopped in.

Our total adult entry count was approximately 300. We estimated about 75 children, not counting the ones who were running the Kids Corner or the 4-H group. There was a net profit of \$1850 of which \$1100 came from rain barrel sales. \$1450 of the net profit will be designated to the Schertz Community Garden. And thanks to our inspired and talented artists Janelle Hannemann and Dee Dee Ashworth, who painted the two beautiful rain barrels for the silent auction. They brought in \$231. A special thanks to Elaine McIntyre for all of the exterior signs and our posters for our sponsors & vendor's list. And to Susan Casto for all of the lovely interior signs, including the menu list for Subway.

And a special mention for Millie Von Stultz who did such a fantastic job on the Grow Local website.

At the end of the day I talked with every vendor there and the feedback was great. They appreciated the extra help you all gave them in setting up and tearing down their booths and of course buying their plants.

One other interesting comment came from one of those unnamed sources but I want to pass it on – and will mention it again at our next membership meeting. It seems that someone was very impressed with how great the turnout was of our Guadalupe County Master Gardeners and also how happy and enthusiastic we were in what we were doing.

Again, a big thanks to all of you for supporting this event and going the extra mile. I am so proud to be President of such a committed and dedicated group of people.

Linda Bruno

Janelle Hannemann



Dee Dee Ashworth



Children's World



GCMG Booth

SCHERTZ COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

Spring is here and we are back in the Community Garden. March 31st at 9:00 a.m. we will build the first bed as a demonstration. Saturday, April 17th will be a community workday. We plan to build an additional three beds, mulch the pathways and continue our work on the compost bins. If you would like to participate, please email me at jlbruno@gvec.net

We are looking for donations of cinder blocks or other materials that can be used to build beds. We are also looking for bricks or pavers to use for the entryway. If you or your neighbors have bricks sitting in a pile growing grass or weeds, put them to good use and donate them to the Garden.

Wilson County Gardening Day - March 6th



Saturday seemed to be a great success for GCMG in Floresville. We had a lot of fun. Setting up the canopy and taking it down went well with the help of one of our gentleman neighbors. There was a big interest in composting, gardening information, free seeds, and in our next class. Donations and sales brought in \$98.

Jennifer Wilson and Penny Glawe manned the booth by themselves while Betty Hughes, Pat Schultze, Iris Seale and I participated in the Plant ID Contest. I have to say the contest was the hardest thing I have ever done as a Master Gardener. All the studying prior to Saturday was a good learning experience. Not sure I want to put myself

through that stress again though. If memory serves me correctly there were 9 garden clubs that covered 6 counties. I am sorry to say we did not place. The 1st place winners were Mitchell Lake Audobon Society, 2nd place Comal County Master Gardeners and 3rd place went to Devine Garden Club.

By the way, Penny had the great fortune to be interviewed on the radio by Jerry Parsons and Calvin Finch. Parsons was his usual onery self but she held her own and talked up GCMG. Go girl!

Peggy Jones

Wanted Educational Articles for the Guadalupe Gardener

If you have expertise you'd be willing to share, please send your educational article to:
Newsletter Editor, Elaine McIntyre - e-mail elaine@tindomorgans.com or snail mail to 614 Lower Valley Lane, Cibolo, Tx 78108

Wildflower Patch



The bright gold in the center is African Daisy, and the delicate little pink spikes that look a little like snapdragons are Texas Toadflax.



The blue beauty in the foreground is Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*).

I think we can all agree that our wildflower plots are a stunning success! This was another “labor of love” by some very dedicated Master Gardeners. Soil was prepared and seeds planted on October 24th. The seeds were purchased from Wildseed Farms: the “Texas/Oklahoma Wildflower Mix” includes 26 different varieties, some native and some well adapted non-natives. The first to bloom was Toadflax (*Linaria texenses*), but I have also seen California Poppy, African Daisy, Gaillardia and Larkspur. There are lots more that will be blooming as the weather warms, so try to stop by each week to see what’s new. If you see something that you can identify, please let me know, because a few of them have me stumped.

Let’s hope that this will encourage all of Seguin to use wildflower seed mixes in their landscape. We spent a few hours preparing and planting. We had to water twice before the lovely rains started. For just a few hours of work we have (to quote Hughlene Micheli) “the best looking wildflower patch in Seguin”!

Liz Romero, Master Gardener



Jerusalem sage that is blooming at the extension garden.

Thanks to Ron & Clara Mae Marcotte for this photo and the ones of the wildflowers above.

MASTER GARDENERS AT WORK

March was a busy month for Clara Mae Marcotte - four!!! speaking engagements to 49 people.

On March 10 at 1:30 p.m., she gave a 45 minute PowerPoint lecture on the AgriLife Building landscape to the Elm Creek extension ladies who met at the extension building. They were very interested in hearing about the plants that they walk by when they come to the building. Many questions were asked. 10 ladies were present.

On March 11 at 7 p.m., she presented a 45 minute Wildflower PowerPoint lecture to the Marion extension ladies, who meet at the Marion library. All ten ladies were excited and asked questions about when, where, and how to plant wildflowers.

On March 13 at 10 a.m. she gave an hour PowerPoint lecture on Vegetables at Schulz Nursery in Marion. There was a good deal of give and take with the audience of 22 people.

On March 24 she gave the AgriLife Bldg. Landscape talk again to the Clear Springs extension ladies.

On March 11th Deedy Wright gave a wildflower PowerPoint talk to the Friedens Church ladies in Geronimo.

On March 9th, George Ammermann spoke to the Seguin Guadalupe Retired Teacher Association. Topic "Why Herbicides Do Not Work". There were 43 members present

On Saturday morning March 20th the KWED Radio Gardening program was held live at Maldonado Nursery in Seguin. That was followed by the Propagation Presentation by Kathy Carroll and Sandy Foss. There were nine intrepid attendees that came out in spite of the rain, wind and storm. Kathy began with a presentation on propagating from seeds. Sandy followed with propagating from cuttings. They both brought many different samples and presented different methods in each of their areas. Mark Maldonado had samples of his propagation techniques at the nursery and willingly answered questions that came up. Maldonado Nursery also had a great lunch following the propagation seminar. This seminar was well worth braving the wind, rain and storm. Kathy & Sandy will be giving another propagation seminar on April 13 at 7 p.m. at the Native Plant Society Meeting at the Antique Rose Emporium. If you didn't make the first presentation, don't miss the second one!



EDUCATION - CLASSES - SEMINARS

Guadalupe County Master Gardener Class 22

Class 22 will be held at the Guadalupe County AgriLife Extension Building in Seguin starting August 11, 2010. The Wednesday evening classes (6:00 to 9:00 PM) will run through December 1st and include three Saturday classes. Bob Teweles will be coordinating Class 22 and he is looking for 30 students who are enthusiastic about becoming Guadalupe County Master Gardeners. Please be on the lookout for potential class participants and help them contact either Bob at 210-289-9997 or the AgriLife Extension Service at 830-303-3889 for an application and more information.

Container Gardening Seminars

April 10 - (11 a.m. & 2 p.m.)

Antique Rose Emporium, 7561 E. Evans Road , San Antonio , TX 78266

Bring your containers (or buy one here) and plant them up all day today. Special planting area (with soil) will be set-up for our customers. FREE - Open to the public. For more information about events contact us at 210-651-4565.

Master Gardener Specialist Training Update

Entomology Specialist Training – Sep 27 – Oct 1 in San Antonio

Current updates to the aggie horticulture website

Easy Gardening Fact Sheets - There are 16 Easy Gardening fact sheets with plans to add 12 more this year.
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/lawn_garden/veg.html

Tomato and Cucurbit Problem Solvers - <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/cucurbitproblemsolver/>

A great resource for identifying pest and disease problems in tomatoes - <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/tomatoproblemsolver/>

Tomato Growing 101 <http://www-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/> The best garden is a well planned garden, so while you wait for spring, get ready for the best tomato harvest by taking the new online course Tomato 101. This course teaches all aspects of growing tomatoes in a home garden, at your own pace and in your own home. The course covers: Garden and soil preparation, plant selection and training, fertilization, irrigation, weed, disease and insect control and general care. A short quiz at the end of each section lets you review what you learned before moving on, and at the completion of the course generates a certificate for you and you get one education hour.

**Guadalupe County (Schertz/Seguin) Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas**

For a real change of pace, the next meeting of the Guadalupe County (Schertz/Seguin) Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will be held at the Antique Rose Emporium at 7561 E. Evans Road, San Antonio. Sandy Foss and Kathy Carroll will discuss plant propagation and give demonstrations on semi hard wood and root cuttings.

We will meet on the second Tuesday, April 13, 2010 for socializing at 6.30 p.m. before the program starts at 7 p.m., followed by a short business meeting. (Of course, you can always arrive early to take advantage of the Antique Rose Emporium's beautiful stock). Visitors are most welcome.

For more information or an application to join NPSOT contact: www.npsot.org/GuadalupeCounty/

Rose Show & Seminar - Saturday, April 17, 2010

CHANGE OF VENUE Lion's Field Adult Center, 2809 Broadway

Spring is here – that means it is time for our Annual Spring Rose Show. The San Antonio Rose Society invites everyone to see the most beautiful roses in all of Texas at their Annual Spring Rose Show on Saturday, April 17, 2010, at the Lion's Field Adult Center.

Show hours are 1 – 4:30 p.m., following judging that morning. Admission is FREE and there will be an **educational seminar starting at 2:00 p.m. on "How To Grow Roses"**. It's a great opportunity to talk with Master Rosarians one-on-one about growing roses in your garden. Cut roses and bouquets will be available for sale.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Gutierrez Xeriscape Garden

What a beautiful day. I stopped by the park today since our last scheduled clean up day did not work out due to thunderstorms. I did some much needed trimming and weeding and will return this afternoon around 4 p.m. to finish cleaning up if anyone on short notice wants to meet me there. I have one volunteer, Patty Violet.

On Saturday, April 17th at 9:00 a.m. we will try to meet again for clean up. I will have approx 5 yards of mulch delivered to put in the beds, and around the trees if there's extra. Please bring your garden tools, shovels, weeders, gloves, pruners, trimmers or what ever you like to use. We also have to replace a few hoses. Plants look pretty good

Please let everyone know that I would love some help. If the weather does not cooperate, people that signed up can call me 210 945-8635 to verify. I do not work in rain or thunder storms. Thank you. Tammee Trawick

NAG, NAG, NAG!!!!!!

REPORT YOUR HOURS

Only 13 of our members and interns have reported their hours so far this year? BUT!!!, they reported 707 hours. **Please report your hours** as you do them to Dale Odvody (odvodyd@swbell.net). His is a gigantic job, but you can help ease his woes by **promptly** reporting your hours.

MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of volunteer opportunities available for Master Gardeners. First of all, there are several projects where a coordinator is needed. This, of course, does not mean you do all the work. It means you find volunteers or set workdays.

Gutierrez Xeriscape Park in Schertz (**new volunteer Tamme Trawick!**)

Seguin Administration Building on Court St (**new volunteers Marilyn Anderson, Nancy Virden & Carol MyCue!**)

Silver Center beds on Court Street

Christmas social

June Social

Cibolo Ag Days in November

Pecan Festival in October

Education Committee

Guadalupe County Fair in October

Saturday, April 24th, Earth Day in Seguin – still need someone to coordinate the Master Gardener booth setup & tours of the Extension office landscape.

Thursday, May 6th, 1st Annual Ag Festival at the “Big Red Barn” from 6 to 9 p.m. Need someone to coordinate the Master Gardener booth.

Saturday, May 8th MayFest Event, from 11 to 3, Sebastopol House, Seguin.

Contact Clara Mae Marcotte at rcm.marcotte@gmail.com or call 830-379-3485.

My Father’s Farm is a 501c(3) organization. – You will now earn MG credit for volunteer hours worked at My Father’s Farm. Contact Pedro Schambon 830-822-0200.

Come Plant the Springs Hill Garden Saturday May 1st

Mark your calendars for prepping, planting and irrigating the new Springs Hill Demonstration Garden at 5510 S. 123 Bypass in Seguin. The planning committee, Nancy Masterson, Clara Mae Marcotte and Liz Romero met with the non-profit water company and set the schedule of activities for this demonstration garden of recommended plants for low water use in home landscaping. The Springs Hill staff is wonderful to work with and will provide an 800 gal. cistern and all the materials needed for the garden and its rainwater irrigation system. So sign up to help by e-mailing nmasterson@earthlink.net.

Thursday, April 22, 8 a.m. - Noon: Work day to lay out the beds, measure for steel edging, trimming existing plants, and do finishing grading. Bring rakes, loppers, shovels.

Saturday, May 1, 8 a.m. until we're done: Planting day for more than 130 plants! Bring shovels, rakes, and trowels.

Thursday, May 6, 8 a.m. - Noon: Work day to install the drip irrigation. Learn from a pro!

In addition, if you would like to be one of the "plant shoppers" to find and tag the needed plants in local nurseries, please email Nancy Masterson at nmasterson@earthlink.net or call her at 830-303-0332. Happy gardening!

Stem Cutting Preparation Basics by Sandy Foss

While putting together a workshop with some information on stem cuttings, I began to notice how many different opinions there are on how to do stem cutting. I am not sure there is a right or a wrong way, it is more what works for you, but it has been fun talking with a variety of propagators and gathering their ideas.

Since it is one of the oldest ways to propagate, everyone probably has a method for stem cutting. My Mom and Grandmother both had a glass in the kitchen window that always had a cutting (purloined from some neighbor or church yard) waiting for roots to develop, sitting - usually in simple tap water. Most times roots did grow and eventually they had a new plant.

For propagating stems one of the first steps for success is putting together your supplies. A pot with drainage is the starting point (along with the cutting). For me, making sure the pot is clean, either using a new pot or cleaning the old pot with a very weak bleach solution is important, but I did talk to a nursery owner who does not bother with this step. My original mentor cleaned everything including the stem with the bleach solution. Everyone does their own thing. Using tap water will work as it did for my Mom, but for a healthier plant, distilled water, filtered water or rainwater is a better choice.

There are all kinds of soil mixes available. One could do a whole article on soils, but generally most use a regular potting soil, and probably put in a mix of perlite to help maintain some moisture in the soil if it is not already in the mix. You want to know if the soil has any fertilizer in it. Be cautious about feeding your plant initially if the soil is already fertilized. Don't use the soil left in the pot from the last plant - again you are worrying about contamination.

A rooting hormone is beneficial in getting your plant started, sort of a jump start. Some plants are so easy to propagate you would not need to do this. But it is a quick step and will help your stem get going. There are many kinds: a liquid mix that you would let your stem sit in several hours before planting (read your directions). Usually this makes up a large batch and so much is wasted, many gardeners have gone to a powder or a gel. The one rule is: put a small amount of the gel or powder in a small container - do not dip the stem into the original container, as you will contaminate the hormone, and possibly transfer a virus or fungus into your medium. Do not return the hormone to the container.

Have a dibble (a pencil, chopstick, or my neighbor uses a screwdriver) to dig a hole into the soil, don't shove the stem in, if it bends it will not survive. You will need clippers, a knife or scissors for cutting your stem. Be sure to keep them sharp and clean using a simple bleach solution, an alcohol swab or soap and water, and dry well after cutting. Labels really are a gardener's life-saver. Use a pencil, it will stay on better and you can erase and reuse the label. If you do not do this, you would be surprised how frequently the plant grows, you look at it, and can't remember what it is. Putting a date on the label will be useful too.

One last tip for you stem snitchers: keep a clean plastic baggie in your car. If you see a plant you want a stem from, you can use the baggie to keep it safe with a little soil or wet paper until you can get it safely home. Now all you need to do is go cut your stems and - have fun!

GARDENING EVENTS

SIXTH ROCKPORT HERB FESTIVAL

Saturday, April 3, 2010 from 8:30 until 3:30 with programs starting at 9:00

Paws & Taws Fulton Convention Center , 402 N. Fulton Beach Road, Rockport-Fulton, TX

<http://www.pawsandtaws.com>

Come and learn everything you ever wanted to know about herbs. A good array of speakers and vendors are lined up with lots of live plants. There will also be a couple of cooking demonstrations. Did you know that there are over 2,000 herbs and that roses are herbs too? And did you know that many of our Texas Native Plants are also herbs? Herbs have been used for centuries for not only culinary purposes, but also for medicinal uses, in cosmetics, cleaning solutions, clothing (one of which is Gossypium cotton), building supplies and art and craft purposes.

The Rockport Herb & Rose Study Group, founded in March 2003, is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to increasing public knowledge and awareness about herbs.

San Antonio Botanical Gardens Plant Sale - April 17-18

Mark your calendar for the Central Texas Master Gardener Conference

Central Texas MG Conference will be held at the Schertz Civic Center. **Please note change of location.**

The conference will be held on Oct 9, 2010 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The registration fee is the same as in the past - \$45.00 which includes a pork loin, green beans, mashed potatoes and salad lunch, topped off with bread pudding for dessert. (A vegetarian lunch will be provided if requested). Each registrant will also receive a book "Teaming with Microbes". This event will give 6 continuing education hours. More information will come later.

32nd Annual San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society Show

April 22nd – 24th

San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels, San Antonio

San Antonio Daylily Society Show and Sale

Saturday, May 15, 2010 from 1:00-4:00

San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels, San Antonio, Texas

210-824-9981

2010 TMGA Conference in Dallas - April 8-10, 2010

Registration is now open!

Visit the website www.2010tmgaconference.org

If you are planning to attend the Annual Texas Master Gardeners Conference, there may still be some rooms at the Omni. The hotel released another block of rooms earlier this month.

IN MY BACKYARD

By Marcia Richardson
Master Gardener, Class 13

THE DROUGHT IS **OVER!!** Two long years of dust and dryness are behind us; however, we live in Texas and they can and most certainly will return again. As I look over my sad and forlorn backyard, it's enough to cause me to throw up my hands, throw in the towel and swear off gardening forever, (perhaps I should take up pottery). What the drought did not kill, the hard freezes did.



Brown leaves now totally cover my beautiful Bottlebrush plant. The blue Plumbagos all look like the Twin Towers after 911, just blackened sticks. Our brisk winds have blown leaves into every *nook* and *cranny* of my yard, and the frequent rains have lifted up all the past year's accumulation of dead grass from the lawn and they have floated to the top. The work load just absolutely staggers my mind!!!!

However, all is not lost, the most important element remains, the earth itself! The foundation is still beneath my feet. As a Master Gardener I have always worked to ensure that I have healthy soil, for 80% of our growing success is in the soil. In our heavy Texas clay the challenge to grow good soil never ends!! With me, it's a constant ongoing battle, but I never ever give up!

My heart is encouraged as I see that the green leaves on my beautiful and faithful daylilies are reaching for the sky, celebrating life! Another survivor has been my Iris plants. What a pleasant surprise, in the past I have almost ignored them, they are such an old plant I took them for granted, like a pair of well worn house shoes. I guarantee that from now on, these two plants will be in my *Plant Hall of Fame*. Along with Belinda's Dream Rose these plants are brave survivors!

Recently someone at church told me, "Marcia, you are entering *Phase Two* of your life." I meditated on that thought and concluded, "That's right!" After I lost my beloved husband and best friend in Dec. 2008, my life was a reflection of how my backyard looks now, totally hopeless and dead! But just as the life producing earth remains solid in my backyard, my unwavering faith in a good and merciful God has been my support and my firm foundation, and like my hardy plants, I too have survived.

With a solid foundation you can always build and move forward. With that thought in mind, I will be putting up a new back fence and so I will have to rethink/plan a new landscape that will back up to the fence. It's a **good thing for me** to begin to think and plan creatively. I will take from the past what worked best and build on that knowledge and experience. (I am thinking of planting more natives, and totally filling the yard with tons of colorful annuals. I want my backyard to absolutely **glow** with color.)

And so with my life, my foundation is rock solid. My past will always be a part of who I am. I will take the best and most beautiful of that past life and to that I will add new and exciting life experiences, more friendships and hopefully, more love. Like my backyard, I want my life to **glow** with color and beauty.

From the bottom of my heart, **I thank all of you** who have hung in there with me this past year; friends are the greatest blessings in this world. **I am okay** and so - - -

I'll see you in the garden!!!

April 2010



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 APRIL FOOLS DAY 	2	3 KWED Radio 1580 AM Lawn & Garden Show 9:05 A.M.
4 EASTER 	5 Master Gardener Office/Library Open 8:30-NOON	6	7	8	9	10 KWED Radio 1580 AM Lawn & Garden Show 9:05 A.M.
11	12 Master Gardener Office/Library Open 8:30-NOON GCMG Board Meeting - 2 PM	13	14 ● New Moon	15 GCMG Meeting 7 PM	16	17 KWED Radio 1580 AM Lawn & Garden Show 9:05 A.M.
18	19 Master Gardener Office/Library Open 8:30-NOON	20	21	22  EARTH DAY	23	24 KWED Radio 1580 AM Lawn & Garden Show 9:05 A.M.
25	26 Master Gardener Office/Library Open 8:30-NOON Newsletter Deadline	27	28 ○ Full Moon	29	30 Arbor Day 	



Guadalupe County Master Gardeners, Inc.
210 East Live Oak St.
Seguin, TX 78155

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April Meeting
Thursday, April 15, 2010
Meeting Time – 7 PM
AgriLife Extension Building
210 E. Live Oak, Seguin, Tx

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