



**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
June 9, 2009**

**Attendees –**

***Board Members Present:*** Nat Gruesen (by phone), James Buckley, Glenn Dresner, Jodie Douglass, Robert Goehring, Ginny Grant, Peg Turrentine, Marilyn Almon and Susan Peacock.

***Board Members Absent:*** Brenda Dresner, Cindy Fairbanks, Jane Gray, Barbara Brannon and Mary Beth McCaughey

***AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:***

**Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell**

***AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:***

**CEA - Horticulture – Shari Koch**

***Quorum Present? Yes***

**Call to Order – Nat Gruesen called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:48 p.m.**

**Approval of the Minutes – After a motion by Robert Goehring and a second by James Buckley, the minutes of the May 12, 2009 Board meeting were approved by all.**

**Officer and Committee Reports:**

**President – Nat Gruesen**

- Nat thanked the Board for accommodating his call-in to the meeting.
- Nat also thanked Glenn for conducting the May meeting in his absence.

**Vice President – Glenn Dresner**

- No report.

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**Secretary – Susan Peacock**

- Susan stated that she plans to submit minutes by email two weeks before the next meeting so that members can review for any corrections before the meeting.

**Treasurer – Peg Turrentine**

- Peg's report is attached to the minutes.

**Past President – Mary Beth McCaughey**

- Mary Beth was not present.

**Awards – Jodie Douglass**

- A copy of an article giving more details of the State Awards winnings was submitted by Jodie via email (6/4/09) to the Board members and is attached to the minutes.
- Jodie asked about the status of the *Grapevine* newsletter and when it will be published. Nat will call Mary Beth to inquire about this.

**Communications – Robert Goehring**

- Robert's report is attached to the minutes.
- Glenn asked Robert for more information about the new blog.
- Robert explained that the blog has been turned on and is linked to the FBMG website and will serve as a new method for communicating and teaching accurate postings about Fort Bend and horticulture to MGs and the public.
- Rules for the blog and user roles published on the Communications Report were discussed by the Board.
- Robert encouraged Board members to consider being a Contributor or a Subscriber.

**Community Relations – Brenda Dresner**

- Brenda was not present.

**Fundraising – Barbara Brannon**

- Barbara was not present.

**Greenhouse – James Buckley and Glenn Dresner, co-chairs**

- Glenn's report is attached to the minutes.
- The greenhouse has been thoroughly cleaned and rearranged and the new shade cloth installed.
- The inspection for maintenance of the Nursery Grower license will be conducted at random.

**Landscape –Cindy Fairbanks and Jane Gray, co-chairs**

- Cindy and Jane were not present.
- Glenn reported that Justin and another staff member of Pond Pros of Houston have given estimates for the pond cleaning. They gave two bids: one for the initial draining and cleaning and a second one for a recommended yearly cleaning. This information will be communicated to Terry Williams as the acting chair of the pond.
- Glenn also reported that the pump that stopped working two weeks ago was still under warranty and a replacement obtained by Cindy was installed today,

- Glenn also talked to Cindy about the water feature for the Japanese Garden. An estimate will be requested for a new feature in cooler weather when the company is not as busy and when prices may be better.

#### Member Relations – Marilyn Almon

- Marilyn's report is attached to the minutes.

#### Youth Activities – Ginny Grant

- Ginny's report is attached to the minutes.
- Ginny reported that 29 children are currently registered for the EarthKind® Kids Kamp.

#### Standing Committee Reports:

##### Governance Committee

- No report.

#### Extension Service Advisor Reports:

##### CEA – Horticulture – Shari Koch

- Shari discussed the Vegetable Specialist course (7/31/09 – 8/1/09) being hosted by FBCMG. A maximum of 50 participants will be accepted and course registration closes 7/15/09. Total expenses for the course are budgeted at \$9800.00 and it is suggested that these funds be managed through FBMG. A \$12,500 income is projected with 50 participants. FBMG will receive \$25/person for each participant with a maximum of \$1250.00. All additional income will be given to Joe Masabni, State Vegetable Specialist. A motion to agree to manage the funds for this event through FBMG was made by Marilyn, seconded by Nat and approved by all.
- Shari also stated that the State wants more plant trials conducted and Margo suggested creating a budget line item for monies allotted for trial expenses. It was discussed that the profit from the upcoming Vegetable Specialist training event be earmarked for this purpose. A dual motion for Shari to create the line item Educational Research and to initially fund this item with FBMG profit from the Vegetable Specialist class was made by Robert, seconded by Jody and approved by all.
- Shari introduced the topic of liability insurance needed for the FBMG Association. It is important that the Board identify and discuss potential liability risks, e.g. legal defenses, and make a decision regarding insurance coverage. Shari will send out a FAQ sheet on liability issues this week. Ginny will research insurance quotes; Nat will assist. This item will be placed on the agenda for discussion next month.

**Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell**

- Margo announced that 16 people have signed up for the fall Master Gardener class.

**Old Business:**

**Unfinished Business from Prior Year**

- Jody asked Ginny about shelving. Cliff will work with Ginny after the Kids Kamp to measure for shelving.
- Marilyn reported that item #18 (Posting of updated Operations Manual on website) from the Unfinished Business list has been completed.

**New Business:**

**Monthly Programs**

- Brenda was not present.

**JMG Educational Grant**

- Ginny brought up to the Board a consideration for additional funds for JMG. \$1500.00 was sent to JMG at the beginning of the year. She has discussed with Nat and Margo the need for additional funds. It was noted in the discussion that a total amount of \$3000.00 had already been allotted and approved in the budget so an additional \$1500.00 is currently available.

**Term Limits**

- Ginny introduced a discussion on the possibility of an extension of term limits of Board members if the Nominating Committee is unable to find new candidates during the selection process. Because term limits of Board officers are set by the by-laws (Article VII), this would require an amendment of the by-laws. The by-law amendment process is described in Article XV and requires a vote by the membership. The need for this change will be discussed at next month's meeting and the Governance Committee will create verbiage change options for consideration by the Board. Other changes to the by-laws can be considered at this time. Ginny will send a copy of the Williamson County MG Association by-laws as an example of extending term limits.

**Other**

- Glenn discussed the distributed list of *Suggestions for Fort Bend Master Gardeners to Prepare FBC residents for Conversion to Surface Water*. He expressed the need for FBCMG to take an active role in educating the county on this important issue. A priority should be placed on educating MGs about water conversation as part of EarthKind® and how to communicate this to the public.
- Nat stated that there is a need to start making changes to the irrigation system. Jim has worked on fixing the pumps and wants to hire a helper

for this. He has someone already lined up that can help him. There is an Irrigation line item in the budget; \$300.00 of the originally allotted \$500.00 has been used. Nat will discuss this with Cindy and Jane.

- Shari mentioned that there is an EarthKind® Specialist class coming up in the fall in Fort Worth.
- Shari asked that Board members respond to her request to send in their roles/responsibilities/opportunities for improvement by the end of June. She will be giving a tour to some elected county officials on 6/30/09 to showcase FBCMG accomplishments.

Nat adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 14th, at 6:30 p.m. in the TTVN Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Peacock  
Secretary, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.  
7/1/09

**Article submitted by Jodie Douglass:**

## **TEXAS MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE**

Harrison County, Marshall, TX, April 22<sup>nd</sup> thru 25<sup>th</sup> , 2009

I have always been proud to be a Fort Bend Master Gardener, however, when I accepted the position of Awards Chairman I had no idea of what pride I would be feeling until attending this year's conference. Of the nine categories available, we submitted seven applications for awards. Of those seven categories, we received five awards – one 3<sup>rd</sup> place, two 2<sup>nd</sup> place and two 1<sup>st</sup> place. Absolutely outstanding!

Each county's Master Gardener organization is placed into categories dependent on their membership number – small, medium, medium-large, and large. Fort Bend is in the medium-large category. Each county has the option to submit an application for an award if they believe their program warrants one. The Master Gardener program is education-based, consequently, the more residents (adults & children) we reach during that one year, the more apt we are to winning an award. The content and context of these programs are critical, in particular considering the age group to which they are directed.

Three or four individuals are acquired from neighboring states to judge the applications submitted. These judges are individuals who are held very high within the Master Gardeners community – horticulturists, professors, directors of horticultural departments, etc. These individuals are selected by the State Awards Committee and their identity is never revealed to anyone. These individuals are mailed the applications (usually e-mailed) in mass and each makes their individual selections unknown to the other judging individuals. Consequently, the content and context of these applications are critical. Making it more difficult is the fact that there is a word limitation. This proved most difficult when our Ft. Bend people were compiling our thoughts on paper for our presentations. Our enthusiasm was displayed in our presentations significantly.

This year there were more ties than ever before – two-way and three-way ties. Victoria County was our largest competitor in our medium/large category. They won six awards to our five.

**Publication Award:** 1<sup>st</sup> place went to Smith County for “Northeast Texas Gardening Guide”. 2<sup>nd</sup> place we won for our Entomology Groups Publication “Garden Insect Field Guide”, and there was a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> place between Victoria and Ellis counties.

**Graphic Award:** 1<sup>st</sup> place we won with our Green Thumb Seminar “Attracting Birds & Butterflies to Your Garden” by Pam Tatge. 2<sup>nd</sup> place was awarded to EctorMidland (a combination of 2 counties joining together). There was no 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner.

**Media Award:** We have never competed in this category, however, we intend to in the future. It appears that most of these winners have consisted of those submitting weekly and monthly articles in local newspapers with “Tip of the Week”, “The Gardeners Dirt”, “Living Magazine Articles” and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner from Collin County w/ their website.

**Education Award:** We submitted an application, but were not allowed to send in our CD to accompany our application. I believe we had a great 1<sup>st</sup> place winner, but without the CD the total description on paper wasn't sufficient.

**Project Award:** We submitted our Gazebo building process as our application for the Project Award. I personally feel this was a great project, however, since the basis of the Master Gardener objectives is education we probably needed to place more emphasis on the programs this Outdoor Classroom venue has provided.

**Newsletter Award:** We have submitted and received awards in the past for our “Grapevine” publication. However, the competition has gotten stronger. The publication must include educational articles for our membership, articles describing educational seminars given to our membership and open to the public, as well as current activities within our organization. This year we won 1<sup>st</sup> place with 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Smith County and 3<sup>rd</sup> place to Travis County.

**Association Award:** Is awarded to the county most active in providing educational programs for the public. Numbers of those touched by our members is what counts. Our Ag-tivity Barn, Green Thumb Seminars, Hot Line, 1<sup>st</sup> of the month Gardening with the Gardeners, Katy Home Show booths, and many more is what helped us achieve our 2<sup>nd</sup> place award. The 1<sup>st</sup> place award went to Denton County and we tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> with Victoria County.

**Individual Award:** I have no idea what the specific criteria is for this award, but I’m sure it’s not for just volunteer hours. 1<sup>st</sup> place went to Denton County, 2<sup>nd</sup> place was a tie between Nueces and Travis Counties, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place was a tie between Smith and Victoria and Ft. Bend Counties.

Our past accomplishments have been recognized with awards, but not to this year’s extent. Also, more Master Gardener Associations are applying their efforts towards state recognition. Consequently, it’s becoming more difficult to win an award. There were 297 counties applying for multiple awards this year. One county had one major project and won six awards from this one project. However, that’s water under the bridge and we have next year to blow them away again – and I have no doubt that we will.

Your hard work has been recognized. Be proud of yourselves and all your accomplishments. Thank you for allowing me to show this pride to the State!

**Jodie Douglass, Awards Chairman  
Fort Bend Master Gardeners**

**Communications Director Report  
June 9, 2009**

- 1. I have spoken with the Hotline Director and with Hotline volunteers concerning the FAQ for the website. The general consensus seems to be that this would be a duplication of effort and not necessary. While, in some cases, the information in the FAQ could be obtained in flyers, pamphlets, other websites, or by calling the Hotline, having the information in our FAQ should be a good first stop for finding answers. However, I will continue to try to influence opinions about the FAQ being a needed part of our website.**
  
- 2. Our extension agent, Shari, asked about a blog for the FBMG website. Since this was a simple task, I added a blog to our domain. See the next page for details. Please help make this addition successful.**
  
- 3. A number of MGs have recently asked about putting photos on the website. This is normally no problem but I have researched another avenue. Our current hosting service allows us to add a new application called Gallery. This application is specifically designed to add photos that can be viewed by the public or by members only. If there is sufficient interest by the Board, I will pursue this line of investigation.**

**Submitted by Robert Goehring**

## BLOG.FBMG.COM

1. As of June 3, 2009, we have one blog entry and one comment. We also had 45 visitors to the blog in that two-day period.
2. We have two administrators – Barbara Buckley and I. Our responsibilities include Adding, deleting, or modifying users' roles. The roles are:
  - a. Administrator – all access.
  - b. Editor – Create new blog entries; modify all blog entries, etc.
  - c. Author – Create new blog entries, modify their own blog entries.
  - d. Contributor – Create blog entry but cannot post. New entry must be approved by Administrator before being publicly available.
  - e. Subscriber – Can add comments. Each comment must be reviewed by Administrator prior to posting. This eliminates spam and/or malicious comments
3. Shari, Margo, and Dahlia currently have the Editor role.
4. As Administrator, I receive an email whenever a comment is made and needs to be moderated. Additionally, I receive an email whenever a new Subscriber is added.

I encourage each of you to decide if you would like to be a Contributor. Note that entries must be relevant to Fort Bend and gardening in general. Also, I encourage each of you to become a Subscriber at least. That will allow you to post comments.

The weblog (blog) can be used to post a number of items that could be useful to MG's in general. A nice write-up about the upcoming Kids Kamp would be an example of a very useful blog entry. Also, a monthly write-up about the previous Monthly Program would be a useful, on-going blog. Even a re-cap of the Green Thumb seminars may attract interest in those events also.

### Rules:

1. Entries about horticultural items must be approved by an AgriLife person. That means either the *County Extension Director* or the *County Extension Agent - Horticulture*. No approval – no post.
2. Entries about upcoming events will normally be posted without AgriLife approval but should have either an *Executive Member of the Board* or the *Volunteer Coordinator's* approval.
3. Entries that are written about past events will normally be posted.

4. **Subscriber comments will be posted after an Administrator ensures that it contains no spam or malicious comments.**
5. **Effectively, our *Volunteer Coordinator* and *County Extension Agent – Horticulture* can add posts at any time.**

## Green house Report

Please find the report on the Greenhouse for May-June 2009:

\* With the help of a large number of volunteer Master Gardeners on Wednesday, June 3 the Greenhouse was cleaned of all plants and other items and given a thorough cleaning of the walls and tables with a 10% solution of bleach. This was done to ensure there are no disease and insects that is necessary for us to maintain our Nursery Grower !! license which we were required to have in order to raise and sell plants to the public.

\* On Saturday workday, June 6 all the items were returned to the greenhouse.

\* On the Saturday workday, the new 30% shade cloth was installed with the help Cliff Bergman, Burt Reckles, and Becky Leugemors.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to ask.

Glenn

## **Member Relations Report June 8, 2009**

### **Membership**

Currently, there are 180 certified FBCMG members. Twenty-eight members of the Fall 2008 class graduated on May 28th and 11 graduates have paid dues and completed membership forms. Reminders will be sent on June 10th to those who haven't submitted forms and paid dues as of that date.

### **Field Trip to Nature's Way Resources and Mercer Arboretum – Saturday, May 16, 2009**

About 22 master gardeners and guests attended a most interesting tour of John Ferguson's facilities in Conroe, receiving a primer in soil science. A leisurely lunch at the White Flamingo Restaurant in Spring replenished the energy stores before proceeding to Mercer Botanical Gardens. Catherine Pennington arranged for her friend Judy Herman, a Mercer volunteer, to conduct a special tour of the gardens for the group. The Bromeliad Society of Houston was hosting a sale and show at the same time and several members made plant purchases. Our own members Gene Powers and Johnny Williams were working at the show and sale.

### **Field Trip to Brookwood Community – June 2, 2009**

Jolene Maurer arranged a wonderful tour of the Brookwood Community for 19 master gardeners and guests. After visiting the various buildings and gardens on the campus, a greenhouse, and a statuary shop where citizens were working on Christmas items for the gift shop, everyone enjoyed lunch in the Cafe and shopping in the gift shop.

### **Master Gardener Picnic at Lillian Tigard's Garden – June 7, 2009**

Lillian welcomed FBCMG members into her beautiful shade garden for a leisurely Sunday afternoon picnic. Everyone enjoyed the company of friends, food, and a great garden – not to mention the fabulous cool breeze emanating from Oyster Creek.

### **Future Field Trips – TBA**

Several prospects are being planned for the fall and more info will be forthcoming when it is available.

Submitted by Marilyn Almon  
June 8, 2009

**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.  
Youth Activities  
June 7, 2009  
Ginny Grant**

**Children's Garden - Briarchase Baptist Church, Houston – May 15, 2009  
Church members built 12 frames for garden beds. Children and several parents planted vegetables and herbs.**

**JMG SuperStars Gardening Club – Smith Elem, Richmond  
Gardening Club members completed activities and earned a JMG Chapter medal. Members received their JMG Certificates at school's award program.**

**PIC Committee Meeting – June 5, 2009  
Discuss August training session for Lamar CISD Science Teachers, Grades 4-7.**

**JMG Meeting – Briargate Elementary, Houston - June 12, 2009  
Meeting with Principal to discuss JMG Program**

**Earth-Kind® Kids Kamp – June 15-19, 2009  
Registration will close June 9<sup>th</sup>. Activity practice scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**4-H Day Camp – July 15, 2009  
Activity to be determined**

**Plants in the Classroom - Lamar CISD Teacher In-service – August 6, 2009  
Training will focus on vermiculture and composting**