



# THE GRAPEVINE



Volume XVI, Issue 3

*Fort Bend County  
Master Gardeners, Inc.*

May-June 2006

## From the Garden

By Mary Beth McCaughey, President, FBMG S2000

As May begins I'm happy to report that I am making slow, but steady, progress on gardening chores at my house. Just about all of the plants I purchased last fall, or at plant sales earlier this year are FINALLY in the ground. Some of the poor things had been sitting in their pots on my deck for more than six months but once planted they are growing well and many of them are already blooming—what a testament to their hardiness!

The White Butterfly Ginger (*Hedychium coronarium*) surprised me with a bloom stalk last week. I'd wanted this plant because so many people talked about what a wonderful cut flower it made. I can now report that I agree completely, the fragrance is light and tropical—I can't wait until the plant really gets going. I've also been cutting beautiful specimens from my Mr. Lincoln rose. This is the only hybrid tea rose I grow—it was planted in memory of a gardening friend who moved to Texas and insisted on growing this rose that reminded her of her Connecticut garden. Jan also came to love old garden roses before she passed away but Mr. Lincoln was her favorite. I don't spray or give this rose any special care and yet it thrives in the back yard until the full heat of summer slows the growth. I've also harvested a

few blueberries from the plants I purchased at the Fruit Tree sale in February. I'd purchased the Brightwell and Austin varieties. They're growing in a pot on the deck and I'm hoping that by positioning the pot not far from the back door that the birds will tend to leave them alone. This is my year to experiment with blueberries, if they do well I'll make a spot for more of them in one of the beds next year.

The Texas Master Gardener convention held in College Station last week was a great chance to learn and share experiences with several hundred other gardeners. The first thing this native lowan had to learn was the traditional Aggie greeting and the fact that the Aggies were all going to start their presentations with "howdy" and an expectant look at the audience, waiting for the return chorus of "howdy." I wasn't the only non-native in the group but we all caught on pretty quickly. It was great to see Wayne Rhoden (FBMG S1996) our Life Member who now lives in Georgetown. The Hill Country Master Gardeners will host the convention next year in Kerrville on April 12-14. The theme is "Our Boots are Made for Gardenin."

The keynote speaker at the convention was Ms. Peggy Cornett, the director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. Among the many plants she discussed, Ms. Cornett noted *Pentapetes phoenecia* as a plant that Thomas Jefferson had grown but that the Center had only just recently re-discovered. I was delighted to recognize this plant as one I had purchased several years ago at a Cockrell Butterfly Center greenhouse plant sale under the common name "Hummingbird Hibiscus." It's not a showy plant- the red, mallow-like 1" blossoms bloom directly on the main stem, opening at noon and closing the next day at dawn. This reseeding annual grows to about 4' tall and has a narrow, upright growth habit with long, serrated edge leaves. I like it because it is unusual and it makes a good accent plant that the hummingbirds and butterflies enjoy. Now I know that Thomas Jefferson had this plant, which he called "Scarlet Mallow," in his Roundabout flower border in 1811 and that he likely received seed from Philadelphia nursery man Bernard McMahon, who noted it in his *American Gardener's Calendar* in 1806. One of the things I enjoy most about gardening is learning, and it's fascinating to know the history of a plant. I'll be happy to share seed from this plant, just let me know if you're interested.

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Happy gardening—and as always, thanks for all that you do for FBMG! Onward.

*Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioner's Courts of Texas Cooperating*



**MAY  
MONTHLY  
PROGRAM:**

**“EASY SNAKE IDENTIFICATION”  
MIKE HOWLETT, NATURALIST AND  
HERPETOLOGIST WITH JESSE H. JONES PARK  
AND NATURE CENTER**

**THURSDAY, MAY 25  
SOCIAL TIME—6:45 PM PROGRAM—7:15 PM  
MEMBER MEETING FOLLOWS THE  
PROGRAM**

**BUD O’SHEILES COMMUNITY CENTER  
1402 BAND ROAD, ROSENBERG  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

By Becky McKay, Community Relations Director

**Upcoming Monthly Programs**

**Thursday, June 22** – “Raising Butterflies” by Tricia Thomas, Butterfly Hobbyist.

**Thursday, July 27**– “Garden Railroads” by John Howell, owner of Countryside Water Gardens, and Robert Triche, President of Garden Railroad Club South Texas.

**Upcoming Green Thumb Seminars**

University of Houston at Cinco Ranch  
7—9 PM

**June 8, 2006** – “Landscape Planning and Renovation” by Jodie Douglass, FBMG S2003.

**July 13, 2006** – “Pests” by Vince Mannino, Fort Bend County Extension Director

**Hotline Notes**

Terry Douglass, Hotline Chairperson, FBMG S2003

This is the time of the year to start getting the lawn into shape. Most of our Hotline calls are about lawn problems. People seem to have forgotten the shape their lawn was in at the end of last year because they think the dead grass they have now is because of the winter. Most of it is chinch bug damage from August or September of last year.

There are also a lot of calls about grass funguses this spring. I think it is because of our lack of rain and people watering their yards at the wrong time of the day. I know all of you know this, but start your watering after 5:30 AM and before 8:30 AM. This will let the grass tops dry off before the heat of the day. If you water in the evening the grass stays damp all night and fungus can become a problem. Cool nights and wet grass can start fungus growth very quickly.

Web worms are starting to appear and all of our new neighbors freshly moved in from back east and the midwest want to know how to get rid of them. They are all afraid the worms will kill their trees. Most of the callers want to cut off the limbs that have worms. There is a great publication on the [www.tcebookstore.org](http://tcebookstore.org/tmppdfs/11457608-1114.pdf) (http://tcebookstore.org/tmppdfs/11457608-1114.pdf) Publication No. E223 by Bill Ree & Marty Jungman called “Fall Webworms). This will give you several options on eradicating this pest from your trees!

Don’t forget to give your neighbor a Hotline business card. They will love you for it. You can pick up cards in the Master Gardener Hotline room in the Extension Annex Building or you simply tell people to call 281-341-7068 or email FortBendMG@ag.tamu.edu.

**Fort Bend Wins  
Texas Master  
Gardener Awards**

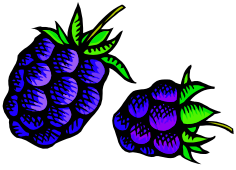


The Fort Bend County Master Gardener Association was recognized at the recent state convention with two awards for 2005 accomplishments:

1st Place in the Graphic Presentations category for “Green Thumb Seminar: Plant Growth and Disease Control” developed by Aleta Patrick.

3rd Place in the Newsletter category for “The Grapevine”.

**Good Job Everyone!**



## Mac's Message

by Margo "Mac" McDowell,  
Fort Bend County Master Gardener  
Coordinator

Always, after every state TMGA conference, I get rejuvenated by all the things I see other Master Gardener groups accomplishing, and think... gee we could that!

I've been doing a lot of research lately about Master Gardener groups, and getting insight as to what others are accomplishing and how their programs are structured. As a group, it seems we are always going from one activity to another to another, and when this occurs I always feel as though I need to replant my feet and think about what we are doing and why we are here.

I am mindful that our program is a "development" program "designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects." In the Texas Master Gardener Management Guide, it says that Master Gardeners are helping Extension by "conducting school garden projects, answering telephone requests for horticultural information establishing and maintaining demonstration gardens, working with special audiences in the community and designed and implementing community improvement projects..." And, you know what? We are doing all of the above.

Since my tenure here, I have had the privilege of visiting many other Extension offices. Fort Bend is one of the very few who has such extensive gardening capabilities. Galveston County Master Gardeners will soon finally have several acres they will be gardening in. Montgomery County Master Gardeners have a lot of space to garden in as well, but still not as much as us. We are very lucky to have such land, and we are incredibly lucky to have Master Gardeners such as yourselves who love to design and work in these gardens.

This afternoon I had a couple come into the office asking questions about peaches and berries. Our Horticulture Hotline is manned only in the mornings, so when people come into the office with gardening questions, I usually answer them. What made my heart feel good today, was their questions on berries and how to grow them. I pulled the "Berry Patch" book from the shelf outside my office, looked into it, and found a layout of the patch. I also downloaded information on how to grow Blackberries in Texas, and proudly took this couple out to the Patch. I was able to tell them which variety the berries were and offered the choice of sampling the berry. What a thrill it was to see them take the berries from vine and eat them and tell me how wonderful they tasted! So now the couple really wants to grow berries, they know the variety they want, and they will hopefully join us in the Fall 06 Master Gardener class! I came back into the office just glorified!

And... our Horticulture Master Gardener Hotline just grows and grows...

Many Master Gardener groups in Texas have become

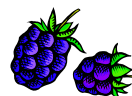
very big on school gardening and JMG. We are fortunate to have our own JMG specialist. The vision one day is that we will have numerous FBMG'ers who have joined Ginny Grant in establishing a strong JMG group who are reaching so many of our neighborhood schools and teaching them about our environment and giving them a sense of pride knowing they can grow vegetables and plants. Did you know that by doing this you can grow self-esteem for these kids? I know you all remember someone in your life, your parents, your grandparents, an aunt or uncle or maybe your teacher introduced you to the world of plants and how happy you were. I have heard over and over from most of you how you got started with the gardening bug and it was someone from your childhood. "You" can be that person in a little one's life too by giving a little of your time to our JMG program. Gardening with children will give back to you too.

Our Plants in the Classroom two-day seminar for elementary school teachers is reaching a special audience. We all have supported this program to help teachers learn more about horticulture so they can teach more to their students. We envision a Part 2; and hope to reach a day when so many teachers signing up we won't have room for them all! Feedback from the teachers who have completed the program to date is that they are excited about what they have learned and what they can teach. We envision this program really growing, and more and more FBMG'ers getting involved with planning and conducting the seminar.

Community projects are wonderful and we need to do for our community. The Green Thumb Seminars reach out to the public, and it is a wonderful program, and our start in the community. The one item that is always a scare is the word "maintenance!" We have had lots and lots of requests from government offices and homeowners alike to implement and "maintain" gardens. Always remember that we, as Master Gardeners, just aren't enough people to maintain all the gardens – but we can implement and advise! If you have a project you would like to get started, a community garden or a school butterfly garden, cylinder gardening, native plant gardening, or even a city sponsored project or any other project that you can think of that can involve other FBMG'ers as well, complete the Project Approval Form and give it to me for consideration. Let's find ways to get more involved in our community.

Our next big community outreach project is the "In the Garden" seminar day in October, and we hope to reach even more of the community.

And in case you have been holding back or just haven't had a chance to talk with me yet about your ideas, please don't hesitate. Come visit me, email me, or call me! I love to hear your thoughts and viewpoints! Don't ever hold back in calling or emailing me – I'm here for YOU!





## LANDSCAPE UPDATES

### Herbal Knot Garden Notes

By Roberta Owen, Herbal Knot Garden Chair, FBMG F2002

The pleasant days of spring are moving by fast. With summer on our doorstep, we at the Knot Garden are trying to finish up the installation of the back bed area. This long and large area will be filled with various herbs, of course. First off, a Mutabulis rose will center this area. On either side of the rose, a row of lemon grass will be planted along the back fence. This will grow about 4+' and help to give us a nice background to the garden. In front of half of the lemon grass will be a "hedge" of Mexican Mint Marigold. It will take a couple of years before it matures and grows together, but this should be stunning in the fall with all the yellow flowers. Then, last but not least in front will be a "basil" garden. We will feature about 8 different types of basil. These will include: Lettuce Leaf Basil, African Blue Basil, New Guinea Basil, Dark Opal Basil, Purple Ruffles Basil, Sweet Aussie Basil, and a few others. I've been impressed with all the different basil types that I've picked up. There's more than just "Sweet Basil" out there on the market!

### Japanese Garden Update

By Cheryl Huber, Japanese Garden, Japanese Garden Chair, FBMG S2004

The Month of May is going to be a busy one in the Japanese Garden. Our big project will be on the Saturday, workday in the garden.

We will prepare a bed by tilling and adding rich compost and top soil to the area under the oak tree, near the Shi Shi O Dishi, (aka Deer Scarer). We will be sure to dig a line for the electricity that runs to the fence, where the new outlet will be located. The soil cannot be raised more than two inches, because we do not want to damage the tree.

We will replace the pump in the Shi Shi O Dishi, clean the basin and fill it with fresh water. The Deer Scarer will be treated with Polyurethane. Then the gray flat rocks will be spread out toward the lip of the bed. We will finish the project with grasses and mums.

My hope is that this project will be finished on the workday, and that other Saturdays and Wednesdays can be times to pick up extra hours pulling weeds, raking the grasses, and doing regular maintenance in the Japanese Garden.

How does that sound to the rest of you? All hands are welcome. There's never so little work, that we can't use all the help that we can get. Did I hear that there might be ice cream? See ya in the gardens.

### From the Cottage Garden

By Becky Smith, Cottage Garden Co-Chair, FBMG F2004

The flagstone area by the swing was completed at the April workday under the leadership of Glenn Dresner and James Buckley, two of the hardest workers in the Cottage Garden. They leveled the area, laid the stones, and added sand to help stabilize the stones. Soon the flagstones will be placed throughout the walkways in the Cottage Garden.

The wine bottles, in front of the swing area, have almost completely bordered the bed. However, we are still collecting wine bottles, so that the entire area by the swing can be outlined with the bottles. All donations are appreciated!

We've had lots of help in the CG on workdays and would like to thank all the gardeners that worked with the flagstone or helped with the beds by weeding, pruning and planting the new perennials. We appreciate everyone and their hard work

The ice cream sundaes were great and enjoyed by all!!!



### A New Home Where Butterflies Roam

By Ellen Frank, Butterfly Garden Co-Chair, FBMG F2005

That phrase sums up the goals for the new Butterfly Habitat. Expanded and completely redesigned, the new garden will feature the essential ingredients for a habitat: food, water, shelter and a place to raise young.

And it will be beautiful: a riot of color from plants known to attract butterflies, with pathways leading to seating areas where human visitors can relax and observe the lepidopteran residents. The arbor will be painted and provide support for exuberant native passionvines. We'll keep the Duranta, native Esperanza and Vitex, adding Almond Verbena, Mexican Buckeye and several citrus. We're also increasing the number of native Texas plants, as a courtesy to native Texas butterfly species. There will be flat rocks, for the butterflies to sun themselves in cool weather; log piles for them to hide in (or hide the chrysalids); a feeding platform for rotten fruit (a treat) and a puddling area of damp, coarse sand where the male butterflies (it's a guy thing) can sip the chemicals that improve their virility. A unique feature will be a series of stepping stones outlining the "Butterfly Migration Game," a school outreach program developed by Habitat Co-Chair Gary Geer. The space includes the former Butterfly Garden and most of what was the Children's Garden, extending to the Cottage Garden.

How did this come about? The answer comes in two parts. First, oversight. This year, the Landscape Commit-

*(Continued on page 5)*

tee, directed by Landscape Director Nat Gruesen, is overseeing the demonstration gardens. According to Nat, this will insure that the gardens are in keeping with FBMG goals and that each garden stays true to its mission. The aim is to have cohesiveness between the gardens and the people who work in them. You'll notice this in such details as the crushed granite used in the pathways of both the Butterfly Habitat and the Cottage Garden. This new approach has been of immense help to us: confronted with the new space, we needed the design expertise of Landscape Committee to help us make the best use of our area, and to see that it fit in with its surroundings.



Second, collaboration. After extensive discussion with Nat, he assigned Landscape Committee member Bill Young to work with us. It was Bill who drew the design, based on input about the butterflies' needs from Gary and myself. We're delighted with the results: a garden Habitat that will be not only a butterfly magnet, but a people magnet as well. So prepare to bring your lunch, and munch with the caterpillars.

### **Vineyard Update**

By Pete Pavlovsky, Grape Committee Chair, FBMG S2000

Hello Master Gardeners and congratulations to all newly certified M.G.'s. I invite you all to tour the vineyard. The grapes are loaded. We have replanted a few vines and have not had a lot of luck, however we do have backup plants in the greenhouse. We do not have a lot to report at press time but we will keep you all posted on any developments in the "Brazos Bottom Vineyard".

Again we ask you to walk thru and admire the future jars of jelly.

### **Berry Patch News**

By Karen Zurawski, Berry Committee Member, FBMG S2004

It's been a 'berry' good year in the berry patch this year. Gardeners are harvesting the second crop of the season -- blackberries.

In March, the committee, under Chair Dell Keene (FBMG S2004), began picking strawberries. Total production so far is more than 74 pounds.

The harvest of blackberries began in April. So far, pickers have collected more than 28 pounds of blackberries. Dell Keene, Berry Patch Chair, has treated master gardeners and staff to several blackberry pies, which were devoured before the end of the day.

After testing the blackberries, Maria Blaise (FBMG S2005) found they had sugar content measuring slightly more than 10 percent, which is up there with wine grapes, according to Dell. That percentage ex-

ceeds the sugar content of strawberries which ranged from 7 percent to 7.5 percent.

The crops are the result of work that included building a wooden frame on which netting was installed over the strawberry patch to protect the fruit against birds. To improve drainage, channels were created to direct water to a new drain recently built.

Recent construction also includes a new bed for blueberries built near the Herbal Knot Garden. Meanwhile, several blueberry plants continue to grow well in whisky barrels at the patch. The plan is to transplant all the blueberry plants into the new bed.

## **Texas Master Gardener 2005 Annual Report**



Have you ever thought about how much the Master Gardeners across Texas accomplish in a year? Here are a few stats from the Texas Master Gardener Annual report for 2005.

Texas Master Gardeners:

- Answered over 4,500 homeowner calls each month regarding landscape and garden topics
- Presented over 2,100 presentations to over 60,000 Texans
- Published and broadcast hundreds of news columns, radio shows and television segments through local mass media outlets
- Provided expertise and guidance to nearly 500 school gardening programs
- Designed, installed and/or maintained over 150 demonstration gardens for the public to view and learn environmentally sound garden practices
- Managed 31 internet websites that are visited by thousands of Texans in search of the best gardening information available in their communities.

In 2005, 115 County Extension Master Gardener programs trained 1,243 Texas Master Gardener interns.

In 2005, the corps of Texas Master Gardeners totaled 4,724 Master Gardeners, providing 353,774 hours of their time to Extension educational projects. This volunteer service, equivalent to 173 full-time employees, increases the human capacity of Extension by 17 percent. The economic value of this service translates to a \$6.1 million benefit to the State of Texas.

The Texas Master Gardener program continues to be the largest Master Gardener program in the United States.

## Monarch Butterfly Trip in Mexico!

By Elsie Keeling, Co-Chairperson, Cottage Garden, FBMG S2002

Excitement loomed as we dreamed and talked of seeing the monarch butterflies wintering in Mexico. But it was not until we would



travel some 900 miles south into the mountainous region of Mexico would we have the experience. After much collaboration, packing, and phone calls, four Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Dee Dee Patton, Ann Ward, Betty Weidemeyer, and Elsie Keeling went on the trip.

Our adventure began at 6:30 A.M. in Harlingen, Texas, on March 13, 2006, as our chartered motor coach with 26 passengers, crossed the border, went through Customs. and traveled south through ranch and citrus farmland. Our very personable guide, full of historical information, put us at ease, answered our questions and issued house rules. Late in the afternoon we found ourselves in the high plains of Mexico in the town of Matehuala. On our second day, we arrived in the Mexican hill town, of San Miguel Allende, which is considered by Americans to be a retiree's mecca. This colonial town with its 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings is a history buff's dream. Each turn of the cobble stone streets presented a new view of the bright pink bougainvillea blooms, that draped the old stone walls surrounding the 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings and homes.

Day 3, excitement looms for tomorrow we will make the trek up the mountain to see the monarch butterflies. In the meantime, we are traveling in the state of Michoacan, to a tiny cobble stoned mountain village called Angangueo. We will spend the night in the Don Bruno, a small colonial hotel. We were forewarned there will be no central heat in Don Bruno, and we should wear our flannel night gown. Lucky for us, the temperature is probably in the low 40's. We are prepared, our suitcases are packed, (stuffed) with a



variety of clothes for the worst snowstorm, to a heatwave, and each time we lift them, we curse ourselves for packing so much stuff.

It's 6 A.M. and there is a knock at the door, -- wake up, today is "the day". We hurriedly dress in layers and report for breakfast. We are told to report to the front of the hotel where bench-seated pick-ups will carry us to an Indian village where we enter into the monarch sanctuary. We discover our transportation vehicles will not be pick-ups, but by our standards, three very old station wagon type vehicles. We pile into one of the three



there is a discussion between the drivers as there isn't a seat for our guide. Another vehicle arrives for our guide. Our hour-long trip from Angangueo took us past fields planted on steep mountainsides, through winding switchbacks and over bumpy dirt roads, through remote Indian villages, and up the mountain into the towering forests of the El Rosario Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary. It is here that the beautiful orange & black winged monarch journeys thousands of miles from Canada and the U. S., seeking forest shelters in tall oyamel trees where they spend the winter months in semi-hibernation.

We scramble from our station wagon leaving it in a parking area of matted down grass. We are in a mountain valley at an altitude of 10,000 feet. It is a basin of weeds and grass, not far from where the pine, and oyamel firs began their gradual ascent. We are met by the preserve's guide who directs us

to a building to see a Spanish film about the monarch butterfly. We are in luck, the film is short, and accompanied by two guides, we head for the sand path, interspersed with steps along the steep hillside. The climb is stiff and the air is chilly. We alternate by laboriously puffing and resting as we trudge forward

up the mountain. Along the way we see butterflies feeding on many types of flowering plants. After an hour, we reach the summit, and we began seeing incredible beauty way beyond what could be imagined. There are people staring up into the trees. Only occasionally a faint whisper, can be heard, and there is a feeling of awe. There are large dark clumps hanging from the bending branches of the tall trees where masses of hundreds and thousands of monarch butterflies are resting. One can only imagine them like bunches of dark moss hanging from trees.

Every so often butterflies would drop off as the sun hit between the branches. The released butterflies would suddenly start to fly or drop to the forest floor. They are so many, one can hear the sound of the fluttering of their wings. The forest floor is covered with butterflies, some still too cold to move, others mating and some who didn't make it.



We learned the wintering monarch must have a proper, constant temperature. They must not be so cold that they freeze or cannot fly to food and water. It must not be so warm that they dry out or burn all their energy reserves. From about November to March, the oyamel fir forest provides such an environment. The forest canopy shades them by day and blankets them at night. Any sudden change or disturbance such as a windstorm or snowstorm could leave them threatened.

The spring migration begins in March, with the surviving butterflies mating, and the female laying her eggs along the journey to southern Canada and the eastern United States. The mating will last from two to twelve hours after which the exhausted male will die. The monarchs survive the winter by flying south, all the way back to Mexico. The individual butterfly is making the trip for its first and only time. Each trip is a new generation, and each new generation knows to return to the same mountain.



# THE PHOTO PAGE

- Scenes from around FBMG -



**Fall 2005 class graduates. The Hawaiian theme sure made it festive!**



Terry Douglass represents the FBMG Hotline at the City of Sugar Land H2O Expo. It was windy but, as always, he gave out lots of good information!



Looks like the ice cream sundaes at the April workday were a hit!



Fort Bend was well represented at the Texas Master Gardener conference. Here we're showing off the 1st and 3rd place awards won by FBMG.

Photo by Wayne Rhoden, FBMG S1996 (Life Member)



County Extension Director Vince Mannino helps shoot the grade in the Front Yard garden so that the proper slope can be calculated for drainage purposes.



## News from the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Committee

By Kathie Shultz, FBMG F2000

Do you remember those long, hot summer days of childhood when your mother shooed you out of the house to play, because "it's too nice to be indoors!"? And how on steamy afternoons you'd flop in a hammock with a pile of comic books until the evening brought cooler breezes and you could play hide n' seek and catch fireflies all over the neighborhood? When I think back to those days, I can almost smell the fresh-cut grass and sweet nectars, but -- above all -- I recall the incessant background hum, buzz, and drone of the insects. We fell asleep at night to the whirr of a fan and the chirping of crickets.

I am disheartened when I comb the nurseries for enticing plants and find, instead, huge aisles of chemical products to cleanse our gardens of insects. It is not just nostalgia that makes me welcome insects to the garden: it is the yearning for a garden that celebrates all the senses with color, textures, fragrance, and the rich animal life it attracts and supports.

Some of us in the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Committee, are converts from the "nuke-em" style of gardening, and some of us are also Master Naturalists, but all of us are increasingly fascinated by the intricate and often bizarre lives of the insects in our gardens. We do recognize that some insects can become devastating pests in a garden, but we're also learning about natural checks and balances -- which can include predatory insects -- and when and how to intervene to control insects.

We have two big projects underway. The first is compiling a laminated set of photo ID cards of Fort Bend area garden insects, including information on their life history and pest/beneficial status. Our goal is to sell these to local gardeners; hopefully, the cards can help them make good decisions as they encounter our more common insects in their yard. The second project is the development of a reference collection of garden insects and spiders, which will be kept at the Extension as an aid in identification of insects, either brought in or described over the phone, and which will also be available to Master Gardeners when they give talks to the community.

The IPM Committee meets at the Extension at 9 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month. We welcome all interested or curious Master Gardeners.



Don't forget the new "In the Garden" seminar day planned for October 14. It will be a day filled with information on a variety of gardening topics. More details to come!



## Master Naturalist Training – Fort Bend & Waller Counties

By Peggy d'Hemecourt, FBMG Vice President, FBMG F2003 and Coastal Prairie Master Naturalist Training Committee Chair

The Texas Master Naturalist™ Program is a volunteer training program sponsored by Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Texas Master Naturalist™ Program's goal is to help improve participants' understanding of natural resources and related management activities, enabling them to earn Master Naturalist certification. Master Naturalists volunteer in their communities, providing natural resource education and participating in community service and outreach projects in support of Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

The Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program, formed in 2004, serves Fort Bend and Waller Counties. Outreach activities include work at Brazos Bend State Park and Duhacsek Park in Sugar Land, work with the Katy Prairie Conservancy and Fort Bend County WC&ID #2, as well as assisting at the Fort Bend County Recycling Center, among other projects.

The Master Naturalist training covers a wide variety of topics including botany, ecology, geology, insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, soil science, weather and climate and archaeology. To maintain certification, Master Naturalists complete 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training each year. Examples of volunteer service projects include park trail interpretation, native grass seed collection, archaeological digs, and quail population studies. Master Naturalists also get volunteer service credit for chapter leadership activities such as serving as an officer or on a committee.

The Coastal Prairie Chapter will hold its fall 2006 class at various locations in Ft. Bend and Waller Counties on eight consecutive Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m beginning on September 7. For information on the Coastal Prairie Chapter and to obtain an application for the fall class, visit [www.coastalprairie.org](http://www.coastalprairie.org) or call 281.633.7042. The fall class will be limited to 25 participants. The application deadline is July 31, 2006. For more information on the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program, visit <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>.

## The Characteristics of Success

Recap by Mary Beth McCaughey, President, FBMG S2000

At the recent Texas Master Gardener conference, one of the featured presentations was “Volunteering—A Gift of Service” by Dr. Ben Welch, Director of the Center for Executive Development for the Mays School of Business at TAMU.

Dr. Welch started by saying that he’d had his secretary double check when this invitation came in—just to make sure it wasn’t supposed to have gone to Dr. William Welch or Dr. Doug Welsh (in fact he admitted that he occasionally receives misdirected emails of a horticultural nature and sometimes he makes up answers just for fun before forwarding the message to one of the “other” Dr. Welch/Welsh - es)!

After that light-hearted opening, Dr. Ben Welch gave an engaging and motivational talk on the characteristics of success and the gifts that successful volunteer programs share. The gist of his presentation came down to the fact that he felt that the Master Gardener program exemplified the following:

Determination—Master Gardeners are determined to add value to their communities.

Industriousness—Master Gardeners work hard together.

Building a Better Future, a Brighter Future— Master Gardeners work to build a better, brighter future for all.

Put forth Effort— Master Gardeners know their accomplishments are worth the effort.

Respect—Master Gardeners have respect for nature, for the world and for each other.

Encouragement—Master Gardeners offer encouragement to the members of their communities.

Power of a Name— Master Gardeners understand the full meaning of the “Master Gardener” name and how it is perceived around the world.

Character— Master Gardeners show strength of character.

Enthusiasm— Master Gardeners volunteer with enthusiasm.

At the end of his talk, Dr. Ben Welch asked the audience to think about the various gifts he’d described and then he pointed out that if you look at the first letter of every gift he’d mentioned, you’d see the word “DIFFERENCE” spelled out. His point was that our volunteering through the Master Gardener program makes a difference in the world. He then encouraged us to keep up the good work!

***Volunteer to help in one of our  
Demonstration Gardens!  
Come out for a regular workday, look  
for the announcement that Twilight  
Gardening has started one evening a  
week or come out any time that works  
for you.***

***Contact our Landscape Director,  
Nat Gruesen, if you want to find out more  
about what’s going on in the gardens.  
ngruesen@ev1.net  
281-326-8881***

***Monthly workdays are brown bag events.  
Bring your lunch and stay for “Make your  
own ice cream sundaes!”***

## Explore our Library of Reference Books!

Gene Powers (Greenhouse Director, FBMG S2002) picked up a few new-to-him books on gardening at a recent “Friends of the Library” book sale and he has generously donated several to our library of reference books. They are:

Enabling Garden—Creating Barrier Free Gardens by Gene Rothert, HTR

Landscape Design for Elderly and Disabled People by John Stoneham and Peter Thoday

Accessible Gardening for People With Physical Disabilities—A Guide to Methods, Tools and Plants by Janeen R. Adil

Our reference books are used as a resource for the Hotline but they are also available to Master Gardeners for general reference. Come in and browse the titles some time. The materials are stored in the Hotline office with some overflow area in Doug Staff’s office. We prefer that they stay on the premises so that they are available for Hotline use but if you want to borrow a title for a day or two, just check with Margo.

***Thank you, Gene—we appreciate the donation.***



## May-June Garden Checklist For South & East Texas

By Dr. William C. Welch  
Landscape Horticulturist,  
Texas Cooperative Extension

- Now is a good time to create summer containers exhibiting succulents such as echeverias, sedums or house leeks (*sempervivums*). The larger rosettes of the echeverias and *sempervivums* may be situated in the container with edgings of smaller-leaved sedums.
- Cut off old blossoms on spring flowering annuals, such as pansies, snapdragons, stock and calendulas, to prolong the flowering season.
- Continue to fertilize roses every four to six weeks with small amounts of a balanced fertilizer.
- Allow foliage of spring flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing.
- Set out plants of hybrid portulaca (purslane) in sunny areas. Make rooted cuttings of your favorite colors by placing 3 to 4 inch stems in moist, sandy soils.

It is not too late to sow directly into the soil seeds of sunflower, zinnia, morning glory, portulaca, marigold, cosmos, periwinkles and gourds. Achimenes, cannas, dahlias and other summer flowering bulbs can also be planted in May.



- Pinch back the terminal growth on newly planted annual and perennial plants. This will result in shorter, more compact, better branched plants with more flowers.
- Plant caladium tubers, petunias, impatiens, begonias and torenias in well prepared shady areas.
- Make cuttings of your favorite chrysanthemums and root them in a mixture of sand and peat moss. Cover cutting box with plastic and place in shaded area for 5 to 6 days to prevent wilting.
- Replace or replenish mulch materials in flower beds and shrub borders to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.
- Take a critical look at your landscape at the height of summer development. Make notes of any plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed, better arrangements for your landscape, and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members. These are good projects for next winter.

## Dates to Remember

*Activities marked \*ATC are eligible for Advanced Training Credit.*



**May 24**—Entomology group meets. 9 AM. Annex Conference Room.

**May 25**—FBMG monthly program, “Easy Snake Identification” by Mike Howlett, Naturalist and Herpetologist with Jesse H. Jones Park and Nature Center. 7:15 PM, Bud O’Sheiles Community Center. Brief Member meeting after program. **\*ATC**

**Jun 3**—Monthly Workday in the gardens. Work starts about 8 AM. Ice cream sundaes provided.

**Jun 8**—FBMG Green Thumb program, “Landscape Planning and Renovation” 7:00 PM, U of H Cinco Ranch.

**Jun 8-9**—FBMG “Plants in the Classroom” teacher training seminar.

**Jun 22**—FBMG monthly program, “Raising Butterflies” by Tricia Thomas, Butterfly Hobbyist, 7:15 PM, Bud O’Sheiles Community Center. Brief Member meeting after program. **\*ATC**

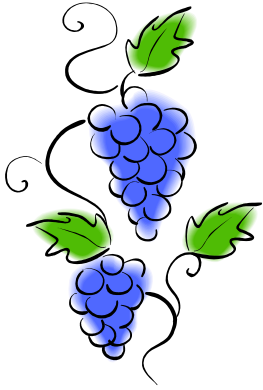
**Jul 8**—Monthly Workday in the gardens. Work starts about 8 AM. Ice cream sundaes provided.

**Jul 13**—FBMG Green Thumb program, “Pests” 7:00 PM, U of H Cinco Ranch.

**Jul 27**—FBMG monthly program, “Garden Railroads” by John Howell, owner of Countryside Water Gardens, and Robert Triche, President of Garden Railroad Club South Texas, 7:15 PM, Bud O’Sheiles Community Center. Brief Member meeting after program. **\*ATC**

**Watch for the start of Twilight Gardening—one night a week. Mac will announce the start in one of her APBees.**

# Reminders

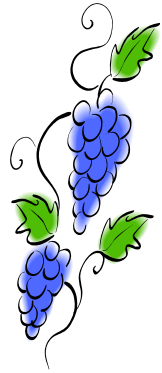
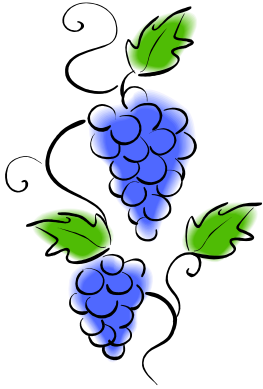


**If you take photos of Master Gardener activities, please forward electronic copies to Margo McDowell. They come in handy for awards write-ups and presentations of all sorts.**

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**You can have your own By-Line!**

**The deadline to submit articles for the July/August edition of the Grapevine is June 22. Send articles in electronic format to the Editor at [mccaugheymb@aol.com](mailto:mccaugheymb@aol.com)**



Texas Cooperative Extension  
Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.  
1402 Band Road, Suite 100  
Rosenberg, TX 77471

## Editors

Mary Beth McCaughey  
Margo "Mac" McDowell

## Contributing Authors/Photographers

Peg d'Hemecourt, Terry Douglass, Ellen Frank, Nat Gruesen, Cheryl Huber, Mary Beth McCaughey, Margo "Mac" McDowell, Becky McKay, Roberta Owen, Pete Pavlovsky, Wayne Rhoden, Kathie Shultz, Becky Smith, Dr. William C. Welch, Karen Zurawski

The

# Grapevine



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Vincent J. Mannino  
County Extension Director