

The "DIG IT" News



VOLUNTEERS

*come in all shapes and sizes
(and species!)*

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HIGHLAND LAKES MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

President's Corner

A big thumbs-up for in-person Green Thumb Programs and monthly meetings!

Greetings, Master Gardeners... I hope this finds all of you out enjoying the beautiful weather that we are having. The days have been just about perfect: cool mornings to work in the yard or garden and warm afternoons to sit on the porch and enjoy a glass of tea. My favorite kind of day!

We are all beginning to get out more, I think. Last week, even though the weather was a bit windy, cold and damp, I attended the Green Thumb Program at The King's Garden. There were 30 people in attendance to enjoy a presentation by one of our own Master Gardeners, Hank Rominski, and his wife, Sissy. The program featured beautiful photos of flowers and butterflies with hints for achieving the same results. Or, in my case, maybe just a little better. Thank you, Hank and Sissy, for a great program. And thanks, Willard Horn, for planning the meeting and providing a very good cake. I hope more of you will be able to join us for future Green Thumb Programs. They qualify for one hour of AT and are being held each month through October at either The Garden in Marble Falls or The King's Garden in Kingsland. A complete list is on the homepage of our website.

Last year, as COVID-19 shut down so many things, some of you had a hard time getting the required volunteer hours. This year, we have many opportunities to work in the fresh air at one of the gardens. Both The Garden and The King's Garden need volunteers. The Oaks Nursing Home Courtyard is busy updating their area and could use some help. Also in the fresh air, each Saturday through November, the Burnet Farmers and Crafts Market needs volunteers. If

You are the creator of your own garden. Plant kindness and compassion. Water with love and gratitude. And you will enjoy beauty all the days of your life.

Julie Parker

you are interested in any of our projects, please give me a call and I will help you get in touch with a project chair to schedule time for you to help them out.

For those of you who read the "Dig It" from top to bottom, you will notice that the meeting minutes and financial pages are missing. Last month, the board approved the omission of those documents. This allows one edition to be viewable to both the public and the membership on the HLMGA website. In the past, two versions had to be created to keep the private documents from public view. The minutes and financial documents are always available under the membership tab of our website.

In fact, those documents are archived starting in December 2019. The link to those documents is burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org/monthly-financial-reports. If you have any questions, please give me a call.

I am so excited about our May monthly meeting! We will be in person at the AgriLife auditorium on Friday, May 14. Yes, a Friday. The date changed due to a conflict at the AgriLife building. For those of you who are not yet comfortable meeting in person, we will continue to have a Zoom link available for a few more months. If you will be attending in person, please be respectful of others by maintaining a safe distance and wearing your mask.

Looking forward to seeing you in person,

Carolyn Stephens

stephens4005@sbcglobal.net
817-874-2138

Find the latest HLMGA news online!

burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org

facebook.com/HighlandLakesMasterGardeners

The "Dig It" News is a publication of the Highland Lakes Master Gardener Association - written by gardeners, for gardeners! Please send all content for publication to editor Gail Braymen at gebfoto@gmail.com. Deadline is the 28th of the month for the following month's issue. The "Dig It" News is published every month except February and August.



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Willard Horn 5
Lyn Mefford 24

PLEASE NOTE THE NEXT MEETING IS ON A FRIDAY



Friday, May 14, 2021 • 2 p.m.
 Burnet County AgriLife Extension Office • 607 N. Vanderveer, Burnet, Texas
ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM WILL BE AVAILABLE
Watch your email or check the HLMGA website at burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org for the meeting link.

PROGRAM: How to Be a Drip!

Presented by Suzy Buchanan,
Master Gardener and Irrigation Specialist

Again, there are no in-person meetings or presentations scheduled that offer Advanced Training credit during May from any of the local nature-oriented organizations (but remember the May Master Gardener meeting will be mixed; you have the option of attending in person or via Zoom).

Also, there are no classes scheduled at Backbone Valley Nursery in Marble Falls or The Natural Gardener in Austin. However, there are three IN-PERSON and four VIRTUAL AT Opportunities listed here. All require pre-registration because of space limitations.

IN-PERSON EVENTS

MAY 2 — “The Art and History of Bonsai” with Ryan Odengaard, Bonsai Educator and Tiny Tree Trimmer, 10–11:30 a.m. (1.5 hr credit), at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place, San Antonio. Fee: \$10. Pre-registration required at sabot.org/learn/adult-classes, click on May calendar, click to find Week 2, click on class, click on “register” and follow instructions. Masks required.

MAY 11 — “Tour of The Garden” with David Waldo, Highland Lakes Master Gardener, 1–2:00 p.m. (1 hr credit), at Trinity Episcopal Church, 909 Ave. D, Marble Falls. Free. Sponsored by the Green Thumb Program of the Highland Lakes Master Gardeners. Masks required.

MAY 15 — “DIY: Marigold Tequila” with Chef Katrina Flores, Culinary and Wellness Program Specialist, and Maeve Bassett, Conservation and Volunteer Programs Specialist, either 11 a.m.–12 p.m. (1 hr credit) or 12:30–1:30 p.m. (1 hr credit), at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place, San Antonio. Fee: \$25. Pre-Registration required at sabot.org/learn/adult-classes, click on May calendar, click to find Week 3, click on desired class time, click on registration for desired class time and follow instructions. Sample drink at the end.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

MAY 6 — “Bicycling with Butterflies” with Sara Dykman, the first person to bicycle the entire route of the migrating monarch butterfly, from Mexico to Canada and back, 6:30–7:30 p.m. (1 hr credit). Free from the LBJ Wildflower Center. Pre-registration required at wildflower.org/learn/adults, scroll to May calendar, click on class, click “Register” and follow

instructions. Her book, “Bicycling with Butterflies,” “part science, part adventure, and part love letter to nature” is available at the Wildflower Center and at booksellers.

MAY 8 — “Closed Terrarium Workshop” with Rosalie Kelley, Youth and Family Program Director at Wildflower Center and Leslie Uppinghouse, Horticulturalist at the Wildflower Center, 1–3 p.m. (2 hr credit), from the LBJ Wildflower Center. Fee: \$45. Pre-registration required at wildflower.org/learn/adults, scroll to May calendar, click on class, click “Register” and follow instructions. Materials and instructions included with registration and available for pick-up at the Center or by mail for additional fee.

MAY 13 — “Flowers of Life: Musical Performance” with Gabriel Santiago, composer and award-winning acoustic guitar player, and Andrea DeLong-Amaya, Master Horticulturalist at the Wildflower Center, 7–8 p.m. (1 hr credit). Free from the LBJ Wildflower Center. Pre-registration required at wildflower.org/learn/adults, scroll to May calendar, click on class, click “Register” and follow instructions.



MAY 15 — “Highland Lakes Water Quality Protection: How Can We Help?” with Lisa Benton, Head of LCRA Clean Rivers Program for the Colorado River, 1–2 p.m. (1 hr credit). Sponsored by the Highland Lakes Native Plant Society. Pre-registration required at us02web.zoom.us/j/84461204447?pwd=Z0p0aU9uZWVkdzRlY0ZkdDk0Yy9k.

ONGOING

Doug McCoy, Membership Committee and MG Board of Directors, has put together a list of Approved Advanced Training Opportunities for May, all VIRTUAL, that appears on the MG Website under the heading “Library of AT Resources” at burnetcountyhighlandlakemastergardener.org/library-of-at-resources.html. Such a list will appear on the HLMGA website each month. Check it out!

(P.S. If you find a virtual class about gardening that looks interesting, please notify Ray Buchanan at drraybuch@gmail.com.)

Launch of new reporting system delayed

By Amy Parke

We all probably knew there would be a delay... after all, what hasn't been cancelled, rescheduled or delayed in this last year? As I write this April 25, there is no date planned for the launch of the new Volunteer Hours Reporting System.

You may remember from last month that the original date for launching was scheduled for April 1, the same day the old system was turned off. It was planned that our recorded hours would automatically switch to the new system. As anyone who has attempted to record volunteer hours since March 31 knows, none of that happened.

The state Master Gardener committee has asked us to be patient and please record all hours on paper until the system is launched. Once the system is launched, either Kelly Tarla or I will send out an email with instructions on accessing the system.

It may be good that the people developing the system are trying to make sure the new system runs without any problems. I am all for working out the kinks prior to launching. It should be an



If you try to log in to the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management System website right now, this is what you'll see. At last report, it's unknown when the new Volunteer Hours Reporting System will make its debut.

amazing system once we can access it. We will be able to record hours using our cell phones, and I am very excited about that.

So, for now, I ask that you track your hours however works best for you: on paper, on your phone calendar, whatever easily words for you. Remember to track advanced training (AT) and

volunteer hours (VS) separately. On AT hours, please remember to note the speaker's name or the program's name or topic. Also, travel time counts for VS hours, but not for AT hours.

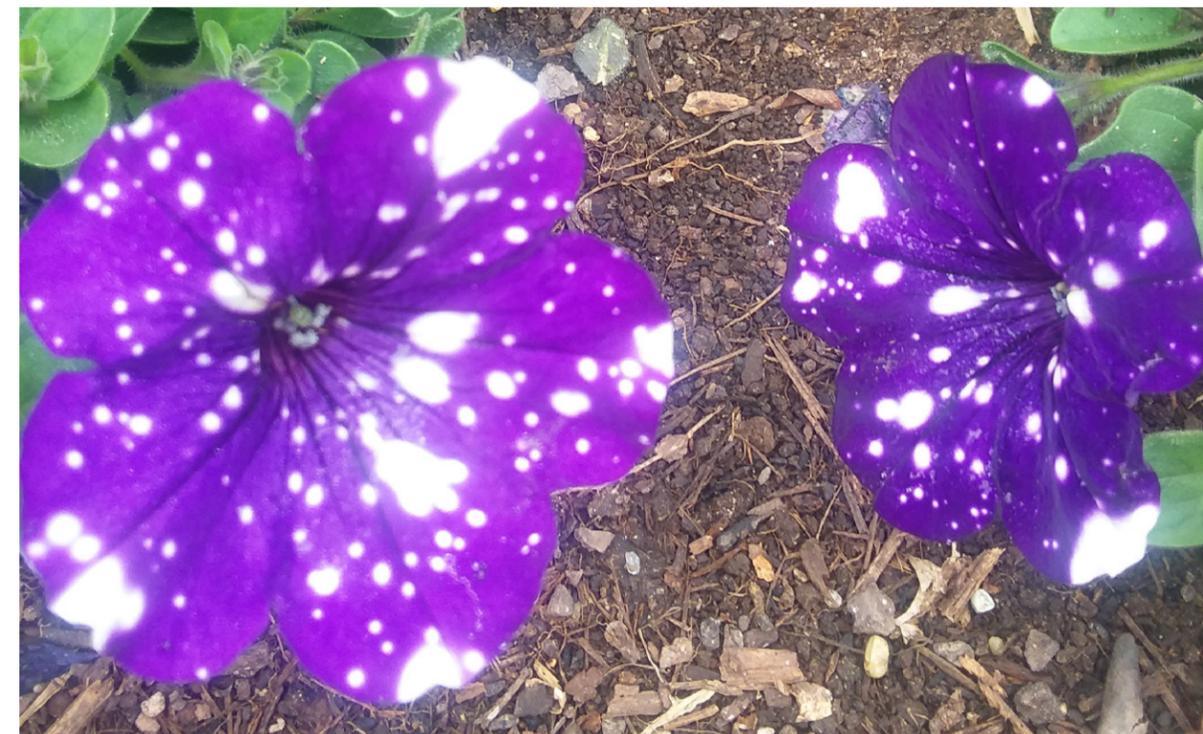
Please contact me if you aren't sure of how to track hours. Thank you for your patience. Hopefully, I will have more information soon! 🌱

Where were these petunias in the '60s, when tie-dye was all the rage?

~ Willard Horn



What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at gebfoto@gmail.com.



Backyard Orchard

Interdependence

Beautiful blossoms turn into fruit thanks to hungry insect pollinators

It is a privilege to tend a small fruit orchard in spring, especially after the pruning is done. Never has that been more true than this year. Each tree that began to put on buds post-freeze gave joy. And though it took into April for our youngest persimmon to prove it was more than a stick, we are thrilled that every tree survived, even our fig.

And then there are the flowers. Our gnarly old Methley plum tree opened its first creamy white blossoms February 28, before anything else was blooming anywhere. Flowers were more numerous than we've ever seen. The bees, beetles and first of the year's butterflies were constant visitors. A raggedy Monarch hung around for days finding food, as did a Black Swallowtail and my new favorite butterflies, the Great Purple Hairstreaks.

Next to bloom was our Kieffer pear tree, which is usually pretty stingy about putting out fruit. But this year it was vibrating with buzzing bees, and our hopes for a better harvest began to grow along with the emerging leaves.

Exquisite peach blossoms always make my heart

smile. Apparently, bees agree. Throughout March and on into April there has been a wealth of blossoms to smile about. Our low-chill-hour La Feliciana had few

blossoms this year, but we were surprised it had any. The other peaches have more than made up for it, including a lovely four-year-old Loring that has never given us a single peach. At first, we mainly spotted feral honey bees that live nearby; on warmer days some of the smaller bees came from our hives down the road. But native bees soon began to forage, as well, and one day I was thrilled to photograph a tiny green jewel, guessing it to be a sweet bee.

I sent the photo of the green bee to [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) and learned it is an *Augochloropsis metallica*, aka Metallic Epauletted-Sweat Bee. The iNaturalist website and the app are both super simple to use and provide access to a world of experts when I can snatch a photo. However, pollinators are often too fast or too wary, especially the native bees. I rely on two online resources to make a more educated guess at what I am seeing — looking at you, Large Carpenter Bees!

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Great Purple Hairstreak butterfly on plum blossom



Kieffer pear forming

Story and photos by Carolyn Crouchet



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

The Bees of Central Texas General Guide includes gorgeous photos of native bees in our area, as well as notes about other Central Texas key pollinators. It is published by UT's Department of Integrative Biology and can be found at w3.biosci.utexas.edu/jha/wp-content/uploads/Texas-Bee-ID-Guide.pdf.

Not to be outdone, Texas A&M has a Bee Identification website which includes photos of wasps and bees and links to articles on each type of insect. This comes from the Texas Apiary Inspection Service and can be found at txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/public/bee-identification.

As we head into May, an amazing amount of fruit is forming on the trees. That Loring peach tree is loaded with so many baby peaches that I am thinning fruit daily, while visions of homemade ice cream dance in my head. Thank you, local pollinators! 🐝



Honey bee on Methley plum blossom

ABOVE: A Metallic Epauletted-Sweat Bee rests on a Loring peach blossom.

RIGHT: Peaches form on a Loring peach tree.

FAR RIGHT: The first baby plum appears.



GARDEN-FRESH RECIPES

Scrumptious asparagus recipes come this month from Allie Bennet, who says, "Spring is my favorite season for several reasons, but one is that my asparagus bed produces an overabundance. I am blessed to have more than 1,000 stalks from eight crowns each year. My dog barks repeatedly in order to get a handout when I have just come from the asparagus patch. I have two recipes to share that I think you will all enjoy."

CHICKEN ASPARAGUS ROLL-UPS

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup yogurt
- 3 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 lemon, juiced and zested
- 2 tsp. dried tarragon (*This really makes the dish special! If you don't have this, borrow from a neighbor.*)
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 16 spears fresh asparagus, trimmed
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 4 slices provolone cheese
- 1 cup plain panko crumbs

Preheat oven to 475° F. Grease a baking dish. In a bowl, mix together the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, lemon zest, tarragon, salt and pepper until well combined.

Saute asparagus until bright green and tender and set aside. One at a time, place chicken breasts between two sheets of heavy plastic (resealable freezer bags work well) on a solid, level surface, then firmly pound with the smooth side of a meat mallet to a thickness of about 1/4 inch.

Place one slice of provolone on each chicken breast, and top the cheese with four asparagus spears per breast. Roll the chicken breasts around the asparagus and cheese, making a tidy package, and place seam sides down in the baking dish. With a pastry brush (or drizzle with a spoon), apply a coating of the mayonnaise mixture to each chicken breast. Sprinkle each breast with panko crumbs, pressing the crumbs into the chicken to make a coating.

Bake until the crumbs are browned and the chicken juice runs clear, about 25 minutes.

CREAM OF ASPARAGUS SOUP

- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 lbs. asparagus
- Salt and pepper
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup cream
- Chives
- Dill

Saute garlic in butter in saucepan. Add asparagus, salt, pepper and broth and cook for 10 minutes. Transfer to blender and blend until smooth.

Return mixture to saucepan and add cream, dill and chives. Heat through.

Note: You may substitute milk for cream, but you will need to add cornstarch to thicken. Heat and stir until it reaches desired consistency.

"Rare gems" discovered in Hill Country

Those in attendance at the April 22 Green Thumb program were treated to a real delight. Set against the backdrop of The King's Garden, and situated under ancient oak trees, Hank and Colleen "Sissy" Rominsky gave a heartfelt and passionate talk on attracting and photographing wildlife.

The venue resembled an outdoor music concert filled to capacity. There were more than 15 Master Gardeners present, but, even more impressive, we also had more



**GREEN
THUMB
PROGRAM**

than 15 members of the general public present.

This was a win/win in so many ways: 15 people were exposed to Master Gardeners, and some I

overheard pledging to get involved. Keith Atwood volunteered to give those present a personal tour of The King's Garden. This included both the general public and Master Gardeners who had never been to the Garden before. All, as well as I, were in awe of the beautiful produce they had growing.

The event was a little like a family reunion. Many members I had not seen since last year were present, and for a moment we were able to reacquaint with old and precious friends. We even resurrected some old traditions such as dessert and social conversations.

Of course, the real "gem" was Hank and Sissy's presentation.

Sissy displayed some of her breathtaking photos, including her original artwork while in college. I had grossly, but unintentionally, underestimated her talents.

Hank provided a PowerPoint presentation that was just exemplary, with beautiful slides to support their subject matter. It was colorful, well stated and a visual delight.

Hank and Sissy impressed all in attendance with their

Story and photos by Willard Horn



information and expertise. I feel safe in stating that we will never think of them in the same vein again. They are our own "Dynamic Duo." I don't know if or when they may ever do another presentation, but we can all agree that, for someone up to bat for the very first time (literally, Sissy had never spoken in a public setting before), they just knocked it out of the park. At last check, they were still searching for the ball.



Eagle Scout project takes wing



Just about one year ago (May 31, to be exact), I was contacted by a former Sunday School student asking for help on a project he had designed. He had a beautiful vision for a butterfly garden in the park. With help from a construction company, approval of the City of Lampasas and the Parks Department, he laid out plans for a Monarch Waystation.

His plan included curbing laid out in the form of a butterfly, with handicap walkways and a drip irrigation system for ease of maintenance, all under the wings of the butterfly sculpture fluttering just above.

He researched native plants, held fundraisers for expenses and had lined up a supplier — Barbara at Wright's Nursery — but still needed a little help with plant placement. He remembered that I am a Master Gardener and a native plant enthusiast, and we sat down for about an hour on a Sunday afternoon and discussed how to combine different plant heights and textures, bloom times and color schemes.

Only a few weeks later, I was in the park and saw his progress. By August, it was in full bloom and the (real) butterflies were loving it. This has been a lovely addition to the

Sculpture Garden at Campbell Park in Lampasas, where folks use the paved walking trails weaving between the unusual sculptures every day. I was pleased when I visited recently to see the freeze did not make an impact on any of his choices.

A formal dedication of the garden was held March 24, 2021. I am very proud of this young man and humbled to have been just a small part of his project. I hope his love of nature and of native habitat leads him to even greater dreams in the future.

Story and photos by Gail Eltgroth

 **Eagle Scout Project** 
Monarch Butterfly Garden
John Taylor Saucedo
Troop 200 Fall 2020

Special thanks to my first mentor, My Grumpy. My Den Leader as a Cub Scout. The man that started my journey and sacrificed more than I could have ever imagined.
Pierre Leblanc
My beloved Granny, her endless love and belief in me has never faltered. May I have your courage and strength to overcome any obstacle in my path. A butterfly in your Honor as a symbol of your fight against cancer.
Carmel Leblanc
Thank you to my Troop Leaders, Fellow Scouts of Troop 200, LAFTA, My Project Mentor Joene Räsänen and to:
M.W. Hail Construction Inc.
I'm grateful for your patience, tireless work and effort that was put in to make my vision of this project a reality. The end result is more than I could possibly have imagined.
To our community by supporting me with their donations.
Last but not least my parents,
John Paul and Sonia Saucedo
They stood by me, encouraged and kept me in high spirits. Without their support, patience and love I couldn't have dreamed of making my project come to reality.
"May the Monarch Butterfly be a sign that you are on the right path to achieve your goals."
 BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®



UPDATE The Garden

Well, spring has sprung! We had a shaky start with the wind, but with the help of a few frost barriers we were able to soldier through. Things are looking pretty good at this time.

We have all the raised beds and in-ground areas planted. The plan at this time is to harvest potatoes in a couple weeks, amend the beds and plant okra. We also plan to create a couple new in-ground areas for watermelon, which did really well last year.

Along with the veggies, our B Team is doing a great job with their areas, which does a great deal to enhance The Garden's appearance.

Harvesting will begin shortly, and that is when we could really use some extra hands. We are in The Garden every Monday, Wednesday and Friday starting at 8 a.m. Please realize you are always welcome, and there is always something to do. 🧡

Story and photos by David Waldo



PLANT PEST ALERT



I had these bugs all over my Ash tree. I emailed Wizzie Brown, who told me they are leaf-footed bugs and will eat your plants. She suggested putting on gloves and having a bucket with soapy water to drop the bugs in. They die instantly.

Contributed by Lavona Fry



Join the fun!

Burnet Farmers and Crafts Market

Every Saturday, May 1–Nov. 20,
on the Courthouse Square in Burnet

Market Hours 9 a.m.-1 p.m.



For volunteer opportunities, contact Jenny McCoy at 770-363-7706 or burnetfarmersmarket@gmail.com

Ode to the Honey Bee

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. I agree. I love to look at an inspirational picture and see what it has to say to me. Respectfully, I will forgo the longer version and just offer up the heart (crux) of what it has to say to me. I hope it speaks to you as well.

Photo and poem by Willard Horn

Come unto my heart and see
the sweetness I have reserved for thee
wrap yourself around me
consume the love I have to offer
drink until you have satisfied your needs
for this is your treasured coffer
and once spent do not fear
for you will have given me the seeds
that will bloom another year

~ Whorn



Pictured on this page: Lampasas Community Garden

LAMPASAS COMMUNITY GARDENS

www.LampasasCommunityGardens.org
lampasascommunitygardens@gmail.com
Like us on Facebook

GARDEN BED RENTAL PRICES

Little Sprout Garden	4'x4'	\$25 year
Produce Garden	4'x8'	\$50 year

One Time Fee \$20 clean up/readying bed
One Time Fee \$20 for tool usage
Scholarships may be available

HOURS 7AM – 8PM

Community Gardens

HLMGA-approved activities continue to grow in Lampasas and Lometa

Lampasas County Family and Community Health Agent, Karen DeZarn, just completed the six-week series Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities at the community garden locations in Lampasas and Lometa to jump-start the spring gardening season. Assisting her with class topics in Lampasas was Freida Holland; in Lometa were Lanetta Sprott, Pat Ivey, Anelicia Cheney-Campbell and Gail Eltgroth.

Attendees learned about soils and amendments, pest control, seed selection, growing and harvesting healthy vegetables and rainwater collection, and they were able to start seeds indoors.

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Pictured on this page: Lometa Community Garden

Story and photos by Gail Eltgroth



Lampasas Community Garden

Asparagus & Artichokes

Story by Hank Rominski

Photos by Colleen "Sissy" Rominski

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Being a Master Gardener has expanded Sissy's and my gardening skills exponentially. Probably the biggest change is that we conduct a little research and do some homework before planting and as soon as we see problems developing in our garden.

Some of my old methods of trial and error have fallen off the tractor and are now buried in a furrow long behind. Unfortunately, some remain. Slow to learn, or stubborn?

Asparagus and artichokes did well in my gardens in the Northeast. However, during my first three years in Texas, many plants and crowns died a slow and agonizing death way before making it to maturity. I lost the

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Lometa

The raised beds at the Lometa Methodist Church were donated and constructed by church members for the use of the community, and a rain barrel was donated by HLMGA members Jackie and Winston Depew. Tools have been donated by the gardeners and are kept in a locked shed adjacent to the garden. Spring planting has begun and, as we have enjoyed cool weather and some recent rains, a watering schedule has not been necessary. We hope, as the gardens continue to take shape, more community members will want to jump in and get their hands dirty.

Lampasas

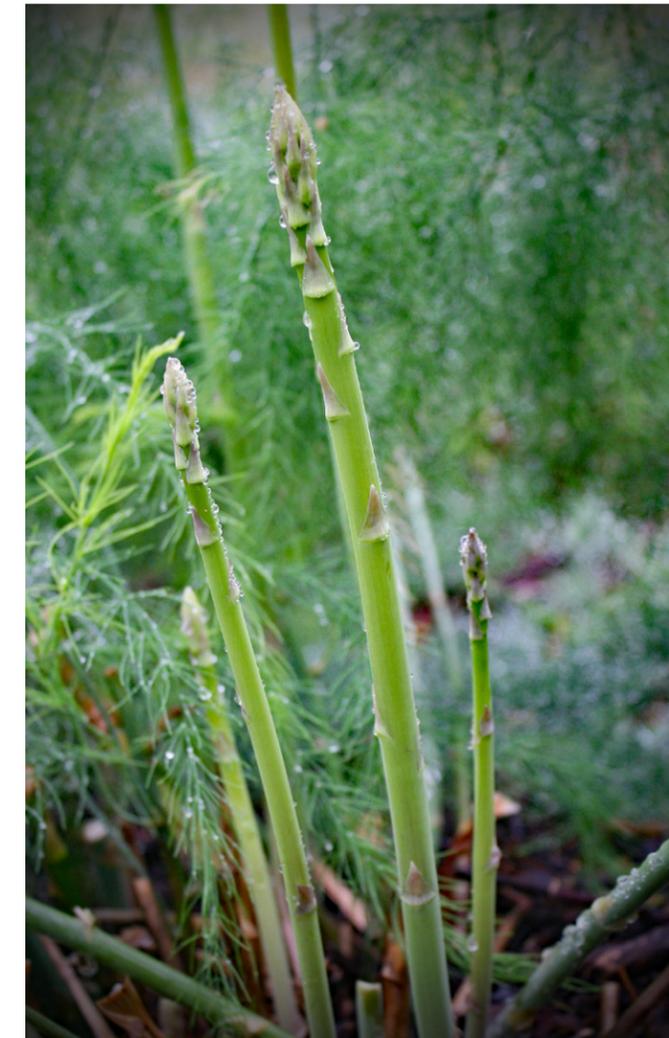
The Lampasas Community Garden held an open house April 17. Board Director, Janet Crozier, with the help of community members and

Master Gardeners, has turned her vision of community gardening into a reality. Cooperation from the City of Lampasas Parks Department, monetary grants and material donations have helped the garden come a long way in a very short time, transforming an abandoned volleyball pit full of sticker burrs into a productive and beautiful community area behind Hanna Springs Pool in Campbell Park. Plots vary in size and are available for rent. More

information can be found at lampasascommunitygardens.org and [facebook.com/lampasascommunitygardens](https://www.facebook.com/lampasascommunitygardens).

The Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities series will be offered again at both locations in time for the fall gardening season. HLMGA members in Lampasas County are encouraged to get involved in these approved activities. 🌱

We hope, as the gardens continue to take shape, more community members will want to jump in and get their hands dirty.





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asparagus for a couple of reasons. My first mistake was to not properly amend the sandy soil. The second was not having a watering system; I top watered using a hose or oscillating sprinkler. We had plants survive the summer, but they dried up during the winter due to extreme thirstiness.

Each spring, I prepped the soil and planted artichoke seeds. The seedlings would emerge from the soil and produce a few true leaves. However, when the heat of the summer approached, the plants would begin to wilt. My response was to add more and more water as they wilted, shriveled and went away.

Nevertheless, we kept trying.

Last fall, when we were considering our fall garden, we consulted the planting guide and saw that it recommended a different planting time. It said that September was the time to put artichoke transplants in the ground.

Amazing how that little bit of information led me on a quest to do a little sleuthing and to actually use the resources available and learn some specifics about artichokes, such as



the best time and place to plant artichokes. You can see here that we were successful with eight plants this year.

They really are pretty with those magnificently large leaves and developing flowers that shoot up tall and proud. We plan on eating the first two chokes and will leave the rest to go to flower this year. We will start some seeds in late August to be able to increase our artichoke plants to an even dozen.

Last summer we wound up with a packet of asparagus seeds, and Sissy decided to give it another try. Prior to planting this time, we went to the AgriLife website and read up on the dos and don'ts. Growing asparagus from seed is really cool.

You start out with this toothpick-sized, itty bitty asparagus stalk. Slowly the stalk became wispy just like the large stalks that you eat. More and more stalks sprouted. Subsequent stalks sprouted larger and larger, growing into fine feathery wisps.

As July turned to August, our little plants were now large enough to put in the soil. We prepped a row for the 20 plants,



and they put up larger and larger stalks. The plants were so productive that we selectively started picking one or two stalks per plant when we felt like eating asparagus. We continued doing this until just before the freeze, when the growth slowed down and the tops turned brown.

Before the freeze, we covered the row with about 6 inches of compost. Afterward, it was amazing to see how the plants exploded with new growth. We continued our selective harvesting until about the beginning of April. With no more eating, all the stalks are left to make the crowns bigger and stronger for next year.

Thank you, Master Gardeners, for introducing me to a better way to garden.

You can see here some photos of our plants. We hope that you also can see the beauty of them.

The rest of the yard is exploding with new flowers that are attracting pollinators. Sissy just handed her favorite photos to me. She is a bit partial to poppies this month. Here they are for your viewing pleasure. 🌸



CREATURE FEATURE

By Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist

A lifetime of learning about insects

I remember way back when I was in college and I called my mom, excited to share with her that I decided to change my major. It went a bit like this...

Me: Mom, I decided to change my major. I'm going into entomology!

Mom: What?

Me: Entomology. It's the study of insects.

Mom: What are you going to do with that? Do you plan on spending your life spraying bugs?

Me: I have no idea, but it will be fantastic!

While at the time my mom could not see exactly what I was going to do with a career in entomology, fortunately for me, I found an amazing job with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, where I have the opportunity to educate people on insects. Fortunately for my parents, they now have someone to identify all their insects.

So why the story? Well, you all have the same opportunity

as my parents to become educated on various insects. There are a variety of ways to do this, and all are resources that I directly post or am involved with in some way. If you want to learn more about insects, you can connect with me (or my colleagues, in some cases) through:

Instagram: [urbanipm](#)

Facebook: [facebook.com/UrbanIPM](#)

YouTube channel: Wizzie Brown

Podcasts: I am involved in two different podcasts:

- Bugs by the Yard — insects in the landscape
- Unwanted Guests — structural pests

Insect ID requests:

- Email me at ebrown@ag.tamu.edu
- Submit images to texashighplainsinsects.net

Educational webinars on various insect topics — email me to get onto the list for sign up links.



For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist, at 512-854-9600. Check out Wizzie's blog at urban-ipm.blogspot.com.

My two Cherokee Purple tomato plants are real showoffs this year, and I have a new garden helper who is keeping some garden pests under control.

~ Lyn Mefford



What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at gebfoto@gmail.com.

Call for Content!

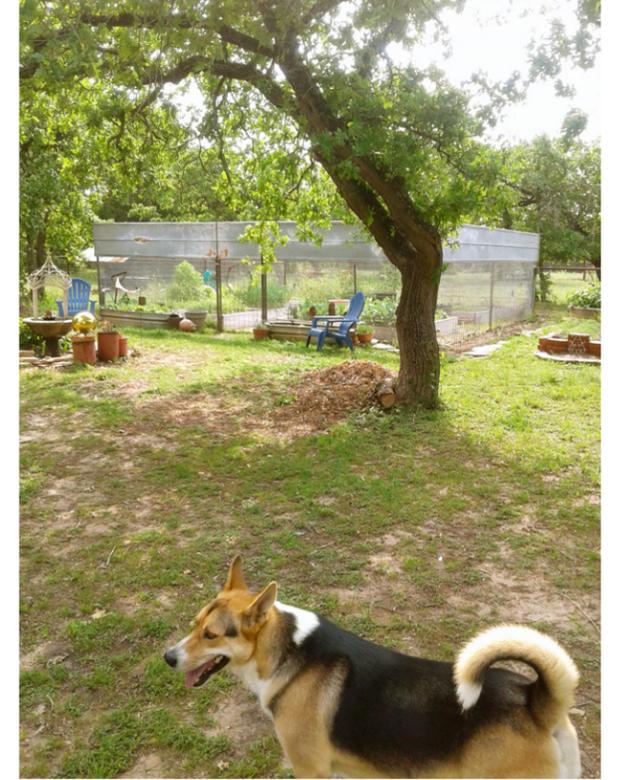
The Dig It News is written for gardeners, by gardeners... and that means we need to hear from YOU! You can send material at any time to Gail Braymen at gebfoto@gmail.com, but the deadline for the next issue (June) is May 28. You can send content as the text of an email or in a document – whatever works best for you. Cell phone pictures are fine, and photos are welcomed with all types of submissions.

Here's a list of submission categories, but please don't feel limited – if a topic interests you, chances are it will interest other HLMGA members!

- Articles - Stories about people, projects, plants, places or anything else you think would interest readers. Those of you with specialized training or knowledge are especially invited to share your expertise with the rest of us! Photos are a plus. (BONUS: time spent writing articles counts as volunteer time!)

- Photos / What's Growing On - Share pictures of plants, projects, people, you name it. Please include a brief description of what is in the photo and identify any people.
- Gardener's X-change - Please include your email address and/or phone number so folks know how to contact you.
- Q&A with the HLMGA - Send gardening questions you have, or answer questions published in a previous issue.
- Diggin' the Dirt - Share your gardening knowledge and experience by answering the question of the month. Please email your answer to Suzy Buchanan at docinia@yahoo.com.
- Garden Hacks - Share your best tips and tricks.
- Recommended Reading - Send the titles of your favorite gardening books.
- Links & Apps - Share your favorite online gardening links and applications.
- Recipes - Because who doesn't like to enjoy the fruits – and veggies – of their labor?

Roxanne's garden



After a very unusual winter, I really cannot complain about my garden this year.

My early plantings of onion, potato, arugula and Swiss chard all went through two hail storms and our unprecedented winter freeze. They're a little beat up, but they survived.

My husband built me a seed-starting station in my workshop, so this year was my first attempt at starting seeds under lights and heating pads. Again, I really cannot complain about "Year One." My greatest successes were the cool weather crops of broccoli, endive, kale and Swiss chard and the herbs thyme, Mexican tarragon, basil and parsley. My failures — oh, I mean learning experiences — were peppers, milkweed and coleus. They made it, but were very, very slow in starting.

My Sweet 100 tomatoes were also a great success from seed. I decided this year, based on last year's bumper crop, that I was only going to plant Sweet 100. I had wonderful, tasty, little tomatoes all year long. I learned on the TV food channels that you can easily make sauces and cook with them without blanching and removing the skins. Just stick them in the food processor. It works fantastic and they live up to their name: SWEET!

In the photo at left, the two raised beds on the right are my potato and asparagus beds. Potatoes were a success last year and look OK this year. Asparagus is in its first year and the plants are growing! The two stock tanks had rotted out in the pasture, so I just added a few more drainage holes in the bottom, and four o'clocks, radishes, thyme and parsley seem happy in them. I have eight raised beds inside the fence. The tin across the top is to keep squirrels out, and it seems to be working. The tin also give the plants a breather from the hot sun as it moves across the sky — an added bonus, and really just my theory.

I love my garden — hope you enjoy. 🌱

Story and photos by Roxanne Dunegan



Luedecke Lessons

By Bill and Martelle Luedecke

Keep your souls and soles in your garden! Remember the True Master Gardener: Jesus said, "I am the vine; my Father is the Gardener." John 15:1

Rabies

Please, if you see an animal behaving oddly, do not approach it. Rabies is not like in the cartoons where the wild animal is frothing at the mouth, with a neon arrow above. Some odd behaviors may be a nocturnal animal in the middle of the day, a "drunken" walk or wobble, or no fear of human contact/a wild animal acting tame. "Any mammal can theoretically be infected with rabies and can therefore transmit the disease to humans if exposure occurs." (rabiesalliance.org)



Grasshoppers

Begin the vigil for grasshoppers. We have already reached the critical time of the first hatch. You can see them when you mow your yard; they are those little bitty white things that try to stay ahead of the mower.

When you see the grasshoppers, it's time to get the flour out. Fifty pounds will be more than enough to do the average yard. All-purpose flour will work; self-rising is best. It is best to apply the flour of choice early in the morning, when there is a heavy dew on the ground. Step number one is to determine the direction of the wind (hint hint). Step two, throw with the wind (hint hint hint unless you would like to look like the

Pillsbury Dough Boy). Step three is to cast the flour by hand over infested areas in the yard and garden. Repeat the process in about two to three weeks, when the next hatch begins.

You can also help control grasshoppers by planting marigolds and zinnias. The flowers draw soldier beetles, which prey on grasshopper eggs.



Photos courtesy Texas A&M University

Spiders

Sheryl Smith-Rodgers, local expert on spiders, tells us that Spiders help keep the ecosystem balanced in our gardens by eating insects, many of which we consider to be pests. There's no reason whatsoever to kill a spider on a web or wandering among your plants. Only the black widow and brown recluse spiders have venom that's considered dangerous (but not deadly) to humans.



Dill & Mint

We're going to plant some dill. Want to know why? Dill attracts lots of beneficial insects to your garden! Some of them are ladybugs, green lacewings, braconid wasps, tachinid flies, hoverflies, mealybug destroyers and aphid midges. By planting dill, you can lure beneficial insects to help control aphids, tobacco hornworms, tomato hornworms, whiteflies, leafhoppers, mites, fleas, Colorado potato beetles, cutworms, squash bugs and some species of mealy bugs. And then, when your cucumbers are ready for harvesting, use the dill for pickling.

And while we're planting herbs, don't forget the mint. Mint repels the less desirable visitors such as aphids, cabbage moths, flea beetles, fleas and ants.

(Side note: there are more than 500 species of mint, including spearmint, pineapple, orange, chocolate (favorite), lavender, calamint, grapefruit, basil, ginger, pennyroyal, licorice... they will each get the job done.)



Have questions or comments?

Contact Bill Luedecke at bill@texasland.net or Martelle Luedecke at Luedeckephoto@gmail.com.

628 POUNDS
 HARVESTED
 SO FAR THIS YEAR



The April 21st harvest



Zucchini



Onion



Cris Northrup works in the pollinator garden.

THE KING'S GARDEN

UPDATE

I want to begin this update with a big shout-out to Keith Atwood, the brains and beating heart of our fair little project. He makes it so easy for the rest of us to do our thing and contribute to The King's Garden's success.

Reviewing the diary from last year, Keith figures that we lost three weeks due to the February freeze — one week of the absolute coldest, most miserable, stinking weather that I have experienced in a while — and two weeks recovery. Nevertheless, with lightweight lettuces, spinach and a few cabbages harvested, we are

still ahead of last year's production. We will be exponentially extending the lead over last year very soon. Squashes have taken off and have very pretty fruit and flowers. Tomato plants are setting nicely with some decent-sized green tomatoes. The potato plants are completely covering the beds and choking out the weeds. And, of course, the onions are putting on a show. Many other plants are also proudly establishing themselves in order to boast that "I am a King's Garden plant."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



STORY BY HANK ROMINSKI | PHOTOS BY COLLEEN "SISSY" ROMINSKI



ABOVE: Gregg Cockrill knocks down a dirt pile to create more parking and planting space.

RIGHT: Hank Rominski moves one of about 15 wheelbarrow loads of dirt from the parking lot to the garden.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

There was some activity and excitement at The King's Garden last month. We hosted a Green Thumb presentation by yours truly and Sissy. Our program, Attracting and Photographing Wildlife in Our Backyard, was nicely attended with more than 30 attendees. Half of them were community members and not MGs. Our members worked extra hard and pitched in with housekeeping and weeding to present our best face to our visitors.

We enlisted Gregg Cockrill to bring his front end loader to knock down a dirt pile that served no purpose except to grow weeds. We also moved about 15 wheelbarrow loads of the soil into the garden to extend some of the beds. We now have some more room for parking and more space for Cris Northrup to plant things that will attract more pollinators.

Gregg, THANK YOU, big time, for your help. It never would have happened without you and your equipment.

Ingrid Hoffmeister decided that our shed needed some artwork that says "welcome" to our guests. It is truly amazing what a creative mind can do with chicken wire, an old door, some paint, fake flowers and trained butterflies.

Mickey York continues to dedicate an enormous amount of work to our orchard. The trees this year are doing so much better than last. We are hoping to harvest the fruit before the mockingbirds do.

We need to give additional recognition to Cris and what has become of the Pollinator Garden. She not only looks at it for the purpose of attract-

ing pollinators, but also the beautification of all the areas not vegetable-related. Her efforts have made a huge difference in the appearance of our little home away from home. Last week we even had a number of hummingbirds drinking from her feeders. Once we attract ostriches and emus, her work will be done.

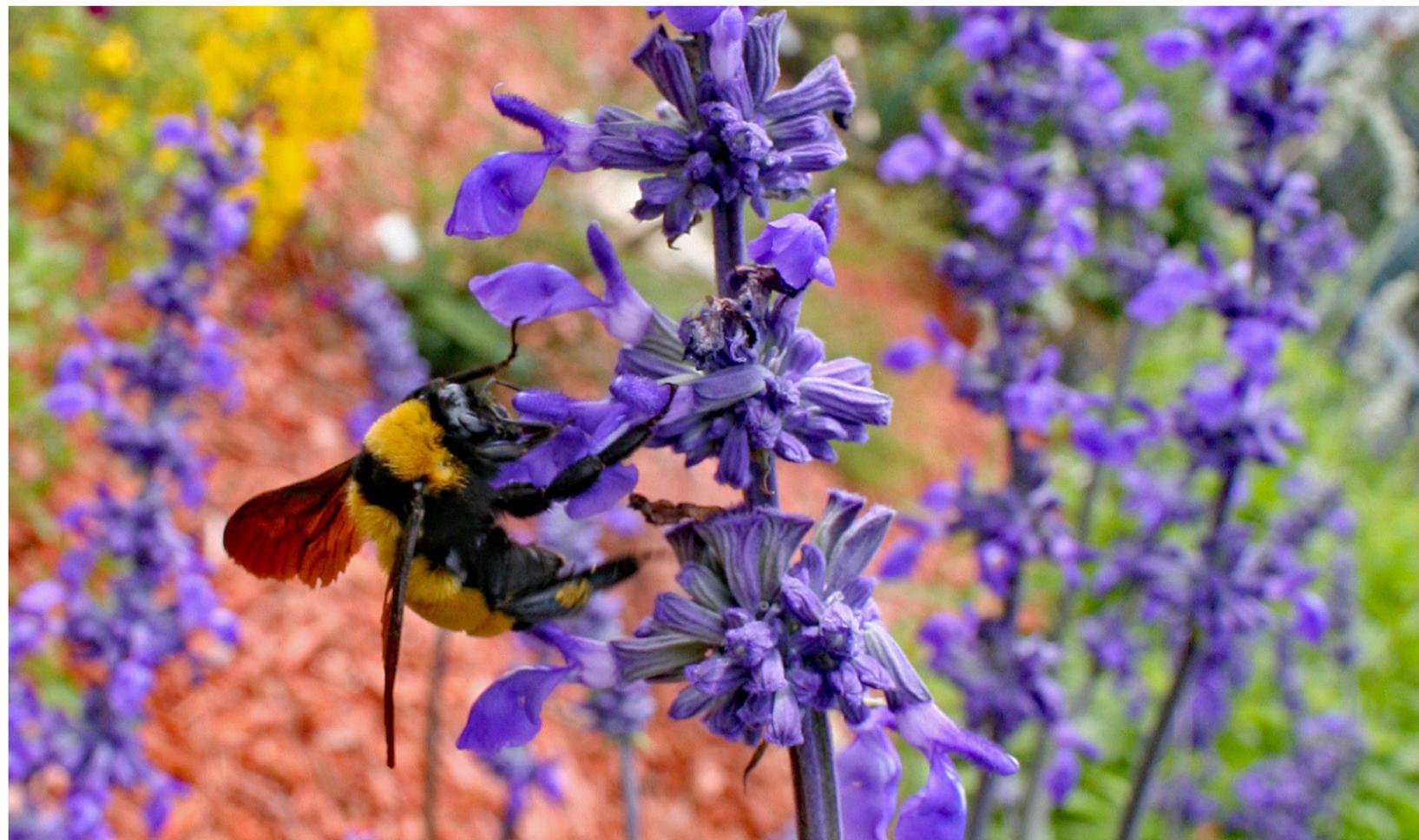
Between Cris' pollinator flowers and Ingrid's newly posted artwork, it feels like you're walking up to a well-kept residence when approaching The King's Garden.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



LEFT: Ingrid Hoffmeister created this artwork to welcome guests to the garden.

BELOW: A bumblebee visits the Pollinator Garden.





The welcoming Pollinator Garden



Red Admiral butterfly



Female Black-chinned Hummingbird with pollen on beak

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

We hope that we can increase our number of regular visitors in the coming weeks as we enter our big harvest period. Last year, on some harvest days we picked well over 200 pounds. It would be nice to have a few more hands. Think of harvesting as all the fun of gardening without the prep work. Come for the friendship and stay for the fellowship.

As communities are being vaccinated and the immunity base increases, please take an outing to visit The King's Garden. You can see some old friends or make new ones. Perhaps some of our onion plants might even dance for you.

With more than 11,000 square feet of vegetable garden and about 1,500 square feet of pollinator space to be tended, it is easy to maintain your "social distance" and become super excited about well-grown vegetable plants. Just stop by, or contact Keith Atwood (713-203-8846) or Hank Rominski (860-575-8098) for information if you want to visit or volunteer at The King's Garden.

We are in winter hours and will be at The King's Garden every Monday, Wednesday and Friday starting about 9 a.m. Usually someone is there until about 11-11:30.

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ICE CREAM CRANK-OFF
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 COOKING DEMONSTRATION BY CHEF ERICKSON
 AWARDS CEREMONY (Entries judged Thursday)

SATURDAY
42 DOMINOS TOURNAMENT
OPEN MOTORCYCLE SHOW

SPONSORED BY BLUE KNIGHTS AND MOTORHEADS
 People's Choice Award to be Presented



Blue Knights

