Horti-Bull

HORTICULTURAL BULLETIN

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Todd Mernin

From your President

I think we are all spending more time on home and garden than we are use to doing due to the pandemic. I know I have. I have been watering grass, plants, and garden. My purple Martins and bats are eating the bugs. The recent rains have been a God-send. My almond Verbena is blooming its' heart out, along with my lemonquat.

Please take this time to reflect on our blessings and educate the ones around you about the love of plants and the joy of gardening. Please share your pictures of your garden with us. Till we meet again may you have dirt under your fingernails and healthy plants in your garden. Todd.

2020 MGCSA Calendar of Events

June 6: Club's Annual Summer Picnic at MacArthur Park **CANCELLED**.

No general meeting, June and July.

Back to Business in August with our meeting on **August 6**.

October 3. Herb Fest at the Pearl Farmer's Market, being evaluated.

October 17: Annual Malcolm Beck Tamalada at Barbara Lamm's home.

November: Celebrate Arbor Day, date and time to be announced.

A Little COVID-19 Humor 2019 - Stay away from negative people. 2020 - Stay away from positive people.

MORE ABOUT EGGS. 15 astonishing uses for eggs that will blow your mind.

1 Face Mask: The white is great for tightening the skin, shrinking pores, and reducing the excess grease that leads to oily skin. The egg white is packed with magnesium, potassium and protein, nutrients which aid repair, hydration and promote youthful, radiant skin.

2. Leather Cleaner: Egg white used on your leather will come up so shiny, you'll never buy polish again.

3. Nail Revitalizer: Eggs promote nail growth, help to smoothen cuticles and give strength to weak and damaged nails, preventing them from peeling and cracking. Mix up ¼ cup warm milk and 1 egg yolk, soak your nails for 10 minutes. Rinse with cold water.

4. Edible Paint: Combine an egg yolk with one teaspoon of water, add coloring and glaze over uncooked cookies to create beautiful designs. Bake as normal.

5. Hair Treatment: Whisk up an egg yolk, add 3 tablespoons of honey, 3 tablespoons olive oil, and an optional dollop of yogurt and leave on your hair for 30 minutes before rinsing. The egg yolk holds a bounty of beneficial vitamins for your hair, including vitamin A, B and D; you'll see a drop in dandruff, improved hair growth and added glossy luster.

6. Jewelry Oxidizer: Professional jewelry maker, Rena Klingenberg, has a wonderful, step-by-step video.

7. Healing Cuts: A National Institute of Health study found that egg membrane might be an ideal covering for skin graft dressings, as it promotes healing, helps protect wounds and provides pain relief.

8. Glue: Egg whites make a truly eggcellent glue for all your art and craft needs.

9. Plant Water: Before you hastily pour out that water down the drain, give your flowers an eggstravagant treat and nourish them with it. The calcium found in eggshells is highly utilizable by your garden for growth and will have it looking so dreamy.

10. Under Eye Mask: Split open an egg, separate the white, and apply a thin layer under your eye using a cotton bud. Wait a few moments until this drys, coat over another layer. Minimized puffiness, swelling, and an all-over, lighter and fresher look.

11. Magical Eggs: Copy some of the tricks in Buzzfeed's video to have the kids and adults amazed!

12. Slurp Your Protein: Add a heavy dosing of nutrients and protein to your liquid lunch with the addition of eggs.

13. Blackhead Removal Strip: Whisk together one teaspoon of lemon juice and two egg whites and apply to a clean face. Let dry and tighten on your skin for 15-20 minutes, then peel the mask off, and your blackheads along with it.

14. Shaped Eggs: Check out the entire article devoted to egg shaping by Just Bento.

15. Eggsperiment: If you have exhausted all your eggy options, it is time to start eggsperimenting!

From '**expert home tips**'. A follow-up to '**What do you know about eggs?**' in the May Horti-Bull. From: ***Vallerie Hartfield.***

Calvin's Corner

By Dr. Calvin Finch, Retired Texas A&M Horticulturalist

Horti-bull Gardening Calendar for June

If you kept your tomatoes irrigated and fertilized, you should be harvesting both cherry and full-sized fruit. Peppers, okra, eggplant, cucumbers, tatuma and watermelons should also produce this month.

It is not to late to fertilize your lawn if you will be able to irrigate it and or we get sufficient rain. If the lawn is dried out, however, it is unable to use available nutrients. If you applied a preemergent herbicide to prevent the germination of sand burs and crab grass, it is recommended that a second application occur in mid-June. Sand burs are notorious for germinating over a long season. Amaze, Dimension, and XL are the usual preemergents used to control grassy weeds. They are also effective for preventing some of the broadleaf weeds. Check the label instructions for the required methods of its use and the expectations of the results.

Recommended mowing heights are 3.5 inches for St Augustine grass, 1.5 inches or less for Bermuda grass. And 2 inches for zoysia. It works best if the grass is mowed frequently enough that no more than one/third of the blade is mowed with each mowing. That recommendation usually translates to mowing every week.

The purple martins are in the middle of their nesting. The young will appear at the entrance to the apartments and emerge before we proceed very far into the month. Early next month the mature birds and young of the year will all assemble for their migration to South America.

Zinnias respond to cutting flowers by producing more buds. If you do not harvest the blooms for bouquets or deadhead the spent blooms the flowers will brown out and drop seed. A bed with lots of brown flowers is not as attractive as a garden dominated by new blooms but it is sure popular with seed eating birds. Lesser goldfinches, cardinals and other seedeaters will eat many of the seeds and the rest will germinate to produce new zinnia plants.

Zinnias are among the most popular source of nectar for butterflies, honeybees, and hummingbirds in June. Other sought-after sources are mistflower, milkweed, porterweed, Mexican flame vine, penta, Mexican honeysuckle, lantana, salvia and firebush. Deer do not usually eat salvia, lantana, milkweed, and Mexican honeysuckle.

For blooms in full sun even if the weather is especially dry and hot consider esperanza, thyrallis, firebush, poinciana, and duranta. The deer do not eat thyrallis, esperanza, and poinciana in most neighborhoods.

Keep up your spray program to protect the late maturing peaches such as La Feliciana from diseases and insects. The peaches in June are ready to harvest when the background cover changes from green to yellow.

If your rose blooms are brown and deformed around the edge it is probably damage caused by thrips. Acephate is an effective systemic insecticide to treat thrips.

If your lawn has too much shade to produce a compact lawn consider one of the shade tolerant groundcovers such as Asiatic jasmine, liriope, monkey grass, or dwarf Mexican petunia. To save water in the sun replace your lawn grass with a groundcover such as prostrate rosemary or cemetery iris. SAWS customers can use the Landscape Coupon Program to help pay for the new plants and any mulch or hardscape needed.

MEMBER NEWS

I hope you all are taking care of yourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. Please let me know what you have been doing to cope with this pandemic.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY To all who have celebrated another year of life, it is truly a blessing. May God continue to bless you with his love, peace, and happiness with family and friends. *From Vallerie Hartfield*

Delphine Beck is home with family and resting in a familiar environment. *From Barbara Lamm*

Jeff Brown continues his recovery in a slow, positive manner. Not driving yet but doing limited yard work and daily exercises. *From Larry Cromer*

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Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands???

Great Gardening Myths

By Mark A. Peterson

During the last couple of months, we have been hearing a lot of supposition, postulation, hypothesis, conjecture, and pure guesses in the news. Well, that got me thinking about all the notions and juju I have heard about the garden…some benign, some not so ….
Let's see what I have overheard during the last 36 years…

"A lawn needs one inch of water per week…"
One of my duties with SAWS is to keep track of the weekly water requirements for lawns and beds. I have never found lawns to require more than ½ to ¾ inches of water per week, except for occasionally 3-4 weeks in late July and early August. Certainly, if you have one or two trees in the yard you should never need to water more than ½ inch of water per week.

Similarly, **"St. Augustine grass is a water sucker…"**
A very, very San Antonio myth. I have made two different TAMU Turfgrass Extension Specialists repeat to me, in public, with lots of witness, that research clearly demonstrates that all the warm season grasses – St. Augustine, Zoysia, and Bermuda – all require the same amount of water to stay green throughout the year. Still, I hear it all the time…St. Augustine uses a lot of water. No, ALL grass uses a lot of water.

"You should always use a root stimulator…"
There is no scientific evidence, at least for woody plants, that root stimulators per se do any good. However, since the 1930's products that contain the plant auxins, IAA or IBA [Indole Acetic Acid and Indole Butyric Acid, respectively], have been used for rooting of plant cuttings. Always read the product label. Do not listen to someone on the radio proclaims something new…including me.

"Phosphorus is important for root and flower development. So, you should always add phosphorus to the planting hole…"
Lambkins, again, there is no scientific evidence that phosphorus stimulates or promotes woody plant root production. I am not as familiar with phosphorus in vegetable flower and fruit production. There may be a significant physiological response to it.

But, I can say categorically that phosphorus moves in the soil with the proverbial speed of molasses in January. One phosphorus particle may move 1 inch in 1000 years. Malcolm Beck swore by adding rock phosphate or colloidal phosphate to the planting holes of vegetable. I will trust Malcolm on this one. It couldn't hurt. On the other hand, I can state that too much phosphorus in the soil will tie up available iron and manganese.

"Burning oak wilt-killed live oak firewood will spread the disease…"
For 36 years, I have been battling this nonsense. Oak wilt is a fungus, a living organism, and will be destroyed by the 200+ degrees F of a fire. In fact, we know that oak wilt dies at approximately 95 degrees F. So, stop the nonsense, clean up some of your ranchettes, and burn a little live oak in the fire place.

"I top my crepe myrtles every spring…"
You know what, I am not even going to waste my time with this. Anyone commits this heinous act of plant abuse should be spanked long and hard, in a public forum.

"I have my river rock, how do I do a xeriscape…?"

First, xeriscape is defined simply as less than 50% turf in the landscape. Nothing about river rock or succulents. In fact, river rock provides no nutritional benefit, heats up the surrounding soil and air to the detriment of the plants, increases stormwater, and is a maintenance nightmare. A landscape with plenty of flowering perennials, limited turf, and no in-ground irrigation system is a true xeriscape.

Finally, **"ball moss is a parasite…"**

I left this one for last because it is so contentious but so obvious. Botanists all agree that ball moss is an epiphyte, that is, a plant that has no roots and must absorb nutrients and water through the air. Therefore, if it has no roots, it has no means to become a parasite.

A forester or botanist notices that ball moss favors low light/high humid interior locations within the canopy. Why, the same location where branches are suppressed and forced by the tree to die. No parasite evidence here.

Finally, drive throughout San Antonio and notice the ball moss on phone and power lines. If it is a parasite, then how does it absorb nutrients and water from an inanimate object?

No, proverbial "Karen", ball moss is not a parasite and after 36 years I am really tired of your complaints. It is ugly, nothing more, move on.

Thank you for allowing me to rant. If any have said or practiced one or more of these garden myths, do not take offense, be forgiven, and gentle Puck will make all amends.

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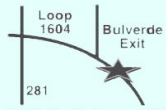

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History of the MGCSA Annual Picnic
by Paul D Huegel, MGCSA Historian

It's June and we should be looking forward to our annual Club Picnic but instead we are still hunkering down in our "bunkers" to fight the Corona, COVID-19 virus with "social distancing". Picnics are suppose to be just the opposite of social distancing. Picnics are one of the many social gatherings that we all look forward to as a tightly knit group for camaraderie, good food and drink and fun. Since we cannot celebrate our annual June 2020 picnic, maybe we can remember picnics of the past in a special way over 51 year history.

The Club was chartered in 1969 but it was not until 1973 when we had our first June picnic thanks to Malcolm and Delphine Beck who hosted the first picnic Tamalada at Beck's Organic Farm. While it was not referred to as a picnic per se it had all the makings of a picnic with a Tex Mex flair. Sixty people attended this first June picnic and enjoyed the company of our gracious hosts, Malcolm and Delphine Beck who had just joined the Club in 1972. The Becks were just getting started on the road to becoming the foremost organic gardening experts in Texas while embarking into the early stages of their successful business which became Garden-Ville. They made the Tamalada picnic an annual June event which continued to be hosted by them for twenty four consecutive years until 1997. It did not take long for the Tamalada picnic to grow in popularity. In just two years from the first picnic, attendance grew threefold with 180 members and guests attending. In 1986 the Tamalada picnic introduced a new menu with barbecued chicken and brisket which pleased a crowd of 300 attendees. This was the largest gathering ever and set the stage for future picnics. In 1987 the Tamalada evolved into more of a traditional picnic with hot dogs and hamburgers being served. While the Becks hosted the picnic, a committee chaired by Jim Carter with excellent help from many of the members produced an outstanding meal and program. Part of the program was the judging of hanging baskets to be used in the Club's first participation in the Folklife Festival. In 1988 the Tamalada Picnic was chaired again by Jim Carter and once again beef tamales with all the trimmings were served to 300 members and guests.

The Club celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 1989 with a grand picnic at the Beck's Farm. Jim Carter served as chairman for the third year and the Club honored the three remaining charter members, Dr. Robert Dewers, George Combs and Paul Offer. The highlight of this picnic was a guided tour by a proud Malcolm Beck of the Beck Farm and "compost and soil factory". It should be noted that the compost and soil building business that Malcolm was growing as a successful business and was already featured in "Organic Gardening" magazine on a number of occasions. Beck's compost and organic soil was considered to be one of the finest operations in the USA.

The 1990 annual picnic was held once again at the Beck's Farm but for the first time was catered by Anita's Catering Service. There were 245 meals served and everyone enjoyed the picnic festivities which included the presentation of the Region's highest gardening award, the Green Bronze Medal to Spike Ringen for his recruiting efforts. A tour of Malcolm and Delphine Beck's newly named Gardenville was the highlight of the day and Jim Carter who chaired the annual picnic for the fifth year in a row was consider to have organized "the best" of the picnics. Once again in 1991 the annual picnic was catered at the Beck's Gardenville by Anita's. The MGC Southwest region presented 13 awards and 260 attendee had a good time. In 1993 the Beck's hosted the annual picnic in the rain. The 1994 25th Anniversary picnic held at Beck's Gardenville was attended by 177 members and guests who enjoyed picture perfect weather. There were interesting show and tell exhibits and numerous door prizes after a delicious barbecue meal. The 1995 annual picnic held at Beck's Gardenville was chaired by Gregg Walrafen who continued to serve as Chairman up until the current era. There were 145 attendees who ate good barbecue and homemade deserts. Everyone enjoyed "The Great Tomato Taste" contest conducted by Bob Marsh. Ben Boyd was the winner with his "Gardener's Delight" cherry tomato. The 1996 picnic was also a great success following the same menu and program established by Gregg Walrafen. The 1997 was the last year that the annual picnic was held at Beck's Gardenville Farm. It was a tamalada picnic once again just as it had been 24 years before. There was another tomato contest and 240 attendees. We will always be grateful to the Becks for there gracious hospitality for those 24 years. The June tamalada picnic is no more but the Beck's Tamalada in honor of Malcolm Beck is now an annual event in October held at the Beck's original San Antonio homestead which is now the home of MGCSA Director Barbara Lamm.

The 1998 June picnic was held at Camp Bullis and chaired by Gregg Walrafen who became a "permanent" chairman from that year forward. There was good BBQ, good weather and Earl Siebold assumed the duties as Master Chef for the first time. The 1999 annual picnic was once again at Camp Bullis with over 100 in attendance. The menu included pot roast prepared by Howie Marbach and Chef Siebold's famous BBQ chicken. Neville Cartwright conducted his Best Tomato and Zucchini contest. The millennial 2000 June picnic held at Camp Bullis was postponed to July 8 because of bad weather. The BBQ was prepared by Lynwood Siebold and Rey Salazar. Earl Siebold, Bill Siebold and Frank Rios were actively involved in all aspects of the picnic. The 2001 annual picnic was again held at Camp Bullis, was a success and involved most of the same volunteers with the addition of Joe Shinners As always whenever the Siebolds were involved Joyce Siebold was behind the scene making sure everything ran smoothly.

The venue of the annual picnic changed in 2002 to take place at MacArthur Park and Gregg Walrafen managed to get perhaps the best pavilion in the park and has done so every year. This year will be the first time in our history that we had to cancel the picnic which would have been different in other ways. Perhaps the most profound difference would have been the fact that our Master Chef, Earl Siebold would not be working side by side with his associate Master Chef Rey Salazar. Earl is now with the Master of all Masters and his memory as one of the annual picnic prime movers will live on for those annual picnics yet to come. We will get through this pandemic and abandon social distancing for good friends, food and frivolity next year.

Quarantine has turned us into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We are told "no" if we get too close to strangers. And we get really excited about car rides.

The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house, and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!

Good Bye 2020 Mac-Arthur Park Picnic.

Thought it would be a good time to look back on some happier picnic occasions. Some were a surprise and some we came to expect.

Clockwise from top right.

In 2014 we were fortunate to have 8 past Presidents in attendance; Elena Schriner, Frank Rios, Gregg Walrafen, Joe Shinners, Jeff Brown, Myra Fischer, Gen. Charles Elia, and John Opiela.

In 2015, Master Chefs Earl Siebold and Rey Salazar have their mouth watering Bar-B-Que'd Chicken ready for the serving table.

In 2013, we had a surprise wedding between Deena and Gus Joya. An added treat was the presence of Gus's niece, Mom, and sisters, and dog Chico all from Killeen, Tx.

These plants are indicative of the plants we offer at every picnic. Some from the Greenhouse, some from individual members, and some walk onto the grounds on their own. All are beautiful and appreciated.

Our Chief Auctioneer John Opiela offers up a ceramic pot at the closing auction. The auction is a tradition at every picnic. John has a knack for getting the most out of our auctions (Translation—he makes a lot of money for the club). There are always an abundance of donated treasures for auctioning!

We are saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Tom Harris, a friend of the MGCSA. After a career in education Tom turned to gardening, excelling in both. He was a co-founder of the GVST and past president of the GVST and the Master Gardeners. A man of many talents, he was a woodworker, fisherman, educator, writer, and a fix-it man. We can remember him as a wonderful guest speaker who knew his subject and how to present it to his audience. He ALWAYS had a friendly greeting and smile. Dr. Harris is shown above with Jeff Rico in May 2016 after his presentation on drip irrigation. He wears his official, unofficial title on his shirt, "Hill Country Gardener".

MULCHING CONSERVES MOISTURE:

Mulch is a layer of non-living material covering the soil surface around plants. Mulches can be organic materials such as pine bark, compost, and woodchips; or inorganic materials, such as lava rock, limestone, or permeable plastic, not sheet plastic.

Use a mulch whenever possible. A good mulch conserves water significantly reducing moisture evaporation from the soil. Mulch also reduces weed populations, prevents soil compaction and keeps soil temperatures more moderate.

From: **Earth Kind:** Environmental Stewardship Program *of* Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

June 2020 MacArthur Picnic

With the COVID19 still swirling around us, there was nothing left to do but cancel the picnic. The books for park reservations are still closed, so there is no reservations for the rest of 2020 at this time. And now we are reading/hearing of a second wave of the virus to come, of which there is no certainty yes or no. We do not know what that will bring, if anything. If you have already read Paul's history of the picnic you see that the picnic has had several names, several locations, and several themes. On our 'calendar of events' on page 1, the annual Beck Tamalada at Barbara Lamms' is still on. With much enthusiasm that will be our 2020 picnic and Tamalada all rolled into one. Maybe we can add some extra events to the Tamalada such as the auction, door prizes and the annual Community Sing Along led by Gary Ross. Oh, wait, we don't do a community sign along, sorry. Let's focus on the Beck Tamalada in October.

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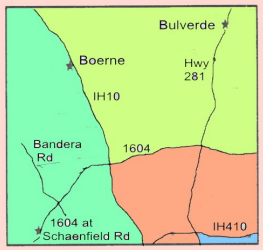

Day 25 at home and the dog is looking at me like, "See? This is why I chew the furniture!"

Since we can't eat out, now's the perfect time to eat better, get fit, and stay healthy. We're quarantined! Who are we trying to impress? We have snacks, we have sweatpants – I say we use them!

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