Horti-Bull

HORTICULTURAL BULLETIN

Published Monthly by the SAN ANTONIO MEN'S GARDEN CLUB

A club for Men and WOMEN interested in all aspects of gardening

WEBSITE: mensgardenclubofsa.org

Volume LIV May 2023 Number 05

Coming Events

Monthly Meeting , May 4th at the San Antonio Garden Center.

6:30pm - fellowship/mingling

7:00pm - meeting begins

Speakers -_Ms Betty Keece

See Below

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Coming Events:

May 20 - Annual MGCSA Summer picnic Page 7

June 3 - Festival of Flowers at the Shriner's Auditorium Page 6

Robert McDaniel

President's Corner

Hello fellow members and gardeners, May Is here and with luck, one glorious month of Spring. There has been plenty rain this April, great for gardens and I hope the rains turn gentler through this month as you establish your home gardens. Jane's is exceptional with 6-inch cucumbers and 12-inch squash. I have another year on the asparagus, but they weathered last year's heat and cold well. Tomatoes now grow among them, some already fruiting. I have replanted and reinvigorated my blackberries – they are 1st cane varieties and may produce this August. Still, the garden flourishes as does the grass. Yes, the grass is not all St. Augustin as before, but it is recovering. A thin layer of compost and rye seed help. The rains may wash some seeds away, yet that is gardening – plant, watch, grow, repeat.

There are many upcoming events. Our MGCSA picnic this 20 May and our participation in the Festival of Flowers on 3 June. And those with a free Wednesday morning, I invite to join me at the Gardeners at Large May 3 meeting at the San Antonio Garden Center (same as where we meet). They will install new officers, have a presentation from Louis Valdez of the Orchid club and a opportunity to meet other area gardeners.

The June 3rd Festival of Flowers is our next sales event, including our interactive Children's Garden. Darlene Badorski is leading. It is a one-day show with free parking and no entry fee for show volunteers.

There will be no June or July meeting; however, the Board will meet for June. We will be setting programs for the rest of the year, and we welcome your input. This past Board meeting Ken Wolfgram presented concepts for social media and plant sales.

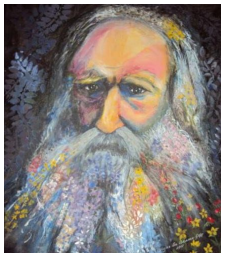
Last, a special thank you to our member volunteers at the Hollywood Park Community Garage Sale, and a big hug to Ida Santiago for hosting us.

Refreshments for our May meeting,

A thru L

ITS YOUR TURN. We encourage you to stay after the meeting to help clean and straighten up so everyone can leave as soon as possible. It only takes a few minutes for the cleanup if all pitch in to help!

May Meeting's Speaker will be Betty Keece, a Comal County Master Gardener. Ms Keece's topic will be the life and accomplishments of Ferdinand Lindheimer who is known as the **Father of Texas Botany**. He was an early citizen of New Braunfels and a multi -talented thinker. The meeting will be opened for a 'question and answer' and general gardening topics session.



Ferdinand Lindheimer

The weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in a row. –***Doug Larson***

Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.—***A.A. Milne***

The lesson I have thoroughly learnt, and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives. –***Gertrude Jeyll (2011)***

We learn from our gardens to deal with the most urgent question of the time: How much is enough? - ***Wendell Berry***

He who plants a garden, plants happiness.—***Chinese proverb***

Horti-Bull Gardening Calendar for May

From Dr. Calvin Finch

It looked for awhile that we were going to transition from April into May in the midst of generous rainfall. It turned out not to happen, however. We still need to wish for rain and be alert and careful with our irrigation resources.

If you expect to harvest some tomatoes, you need to move fast and obtain one or more of the large transplants available in one gallon or larger containers. Seek out one of the determinate selections such as Ruby Crush, BHN968, or Thunderbird so that the plants grow to full size quickly and then concentrate on setting fruit.

It is time to plant okra and southern peas. If you don't want to have to shell the peas harvest them just like green beans before they harden. They taste great. It is also time to plant eggplant and peppers.

Continue mowing the lawn to keep the winter weeds in control. Be especially alert for beggar's lice plants. They have white flowers and produce sticky seeds that are unpleasant to try and keep out of your pet's fur. I use a string mower to try and trim the tops off.

Enhance the number and variety of butterflies that move into your landscape by planting blue curls, zinnias, mist flower, and porter weed as nectar sources this summer. Provide sites for the Monarchs to lay their eggs by planting milkweed. Grow the native milkweeds, the green milkweed, antelope horn milkweed, and butterfly weed. The native milkweeds are more difficult to grow than Mexican milkweed. Grow it in your landscape to fill any gaps until the native milkweeds grow.

For color in the shade this summer use semperfloren begonia, penta, firespike, and whopper begonia. Whopper begonias are especially showy and are surprisingly drought tolerant. In the sun use zinnias, vinca, cosmos, purslane, and moss rose. Use zinnias for cut flowers.

It is still a reasonable time to plant shade trees in our area. Consider anaqua, bur oak, cedar elm, Mexican sycamore, red oak, lacey oak, Mexican white oak, or live oak. If your neighborhood is dominated by oaks or hosts oak wilt, select one of the non-oak species.

Oblate Gift Shop Court Yard The twelve planters bordering the Court Yard were hard hit this winter, especially the cold front that we had earlier, and needed to be renewed. The MCGCA was asked by the Grotto to replant with fresh flowers purchased by them. Barbara Lamm and Paul Huegel did a beautiful job replanting all 12 pots with bright, colorful plants.

AT Right: At the 2016 picnic we were fortunate to have eight **past presidents** in attendance. They are left to right: **Elena Shriner, Frank Rios, Gregg Walrafen, Joe Shinners, Jeff Brown, Myra Fischer, Chuck Elia, and John Opiela**

MGCSA Officers for 2023

President	Robert McDaniel	210-542-1888
1st V.P	Ivan Roman	210-845-7073
2nd V.P.	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466
3rd V.P	Vacant	
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Secretary	Ida Santiago	210-387-5092
Chaplain	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466

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John Opiela	210-532-5963
2022-2024	
Teresa Martinez	210--534-8100
Gary Ross	210-408-1676
2023-2025	
Barbara Lamm	210-648-8001
Leonard Martinez	210-514-0584

Other

EX Officio	Todd Mernin	210-218-4155
HB Advertising	Paul Huegel	
Historian	Paul Huegel	
Webmaster	Ivan Roman	
HB Editor	Larry Cromer	210-521-5350

Plants and the Weather
by Joe Shinners

I thoroughly enjoyed perusing the Texas Superstar booklet handed out by our April speakers. By my count I had 21 of the plants in my landscape. The publication will inspire me to consider more, by selecting plants beyond, "I like how it looks". Care and maintenance you may be willing to invest should really be a key determinate, as long as the plant actually survives our drought and freeze conditions.

The hardiness zone chart at the end of the booklet reminded me of it's fluid nature over the years and just how I approach selecting plants that will work with our conditions. To state my conclusion first, the hardiness map is a interesting reference, but gardeners should look within themselves for guidance as to what they might be willing to deal with. Don't just eliminate anything outside our suggested 8b zone. As an example, Esperanza is shown in the booklet as Zone 9. Just be willing to cut it to the ground after most harder freezes so it can come back from the roots.

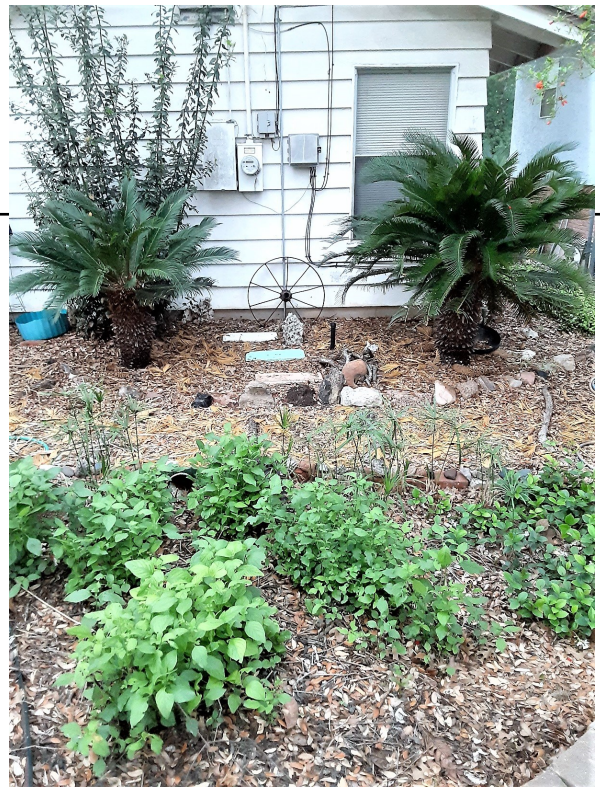
Even with the suggestion that we in Zone 8b can expect an **average low** temp in the 15-20deg range, the Winter temperatures here will range from single digits (2021) to not even dropping below freezing on any given year. Do you plan for the suggested average or just prepare for the exceptions? It's up to you how much work makes a plant worth it. My own target has been a fingers-crossed expectation that the San Antonio low temp will most often be above 23deg (I consider myself 2deg south of the official San Antonio temp at the airport, so 25deg at my house).

If I wanted a near-zero effort, I would limit myself to plants that would blow through a 15deg low unscathed. I would still have to consider some protection or recovery work for some plants when temps inevitably still dropped much below that. After many years of not protecting my sago palms (generally good to at least 20deg) they survived well, but surrendered all branches to the big single digit freeze we had. The work became pruning, and they now have a lollipop appearance versus my preferred full look -- I wonder what the result would have been, if I had worked upfront to protect them.

Covering, or putting out a heat source, is the active versus reactive approach to the workload. It could be a wasted effort as not being required after all, but more rewarding. Many plants you just need to accept and concede to most years pruning them to the ground to start over. A sampling of frequent start-overs from my own yard are Pride of Barbados, Shrimp Plant and Turks Cap. At the top end of the scale is Firebush, which I consider the canary in the cave that lets me know the temp actually hit 32deg for a sufficient time to do damage.

The next level are plants that rarely need to be pruned to the ground , but still have certain lower thresholds along the way. Some plants I'm learning as I go along. My Myrtle bush experienced its first ever freeze damage, but came back from the ground after Snowmegeddon. Then it partially survived last years 15deg. I'm considering cutting all to the ground again anyway. Rejuvenation is work, but can be good for better appearance in the long run.

(**Continued on page 4)**



Sago Palm pruned to a fountain look after loosing most leaves in the below 15 degree weather. Puffs of Shrimp Plant recovering in the foreground.
From Joe

Ronnie Grell
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Plants and the Weather (Continued from page 3)

One point to note with the presented chart is that it is basing our 8b label on temps from 1976-2005 (Older and a colder stretch for us). I first mapped out numbers for 1990-2020 and found most years (24 of 30) had favorable low temps above the suggested 15-20deg. The following two extra cold year's we just experienced in apparent conflict with the norm finally drove me to look farther back, and I found the opposite trend in earlier years. Most years from 1962-1989 (19 of 28) hit chilling temps below 20Deg. Maybe we're returning to that and an updated zone designation is coming.

A couple of afterthoughts....

The low temp is reached early morning and usually for maybe just an hour. A plant that is advertised good to 20 would likely withstand a recorded low temp of say 18Deg w/o protection.

Potted plants can rob a plant of up to 20Deg of tolerance. They need a more closer watch of temps -- even well above their advertised safe mark.

I've read that covering adds about 4Deg to the plants tolerance. Add a light/heat source for more protection.

The lowest temp ever was zero in 1949. I would disregard that maybe once in a century exception in deciding what plants to put in your landscape. *Happy Gardening, Joe*

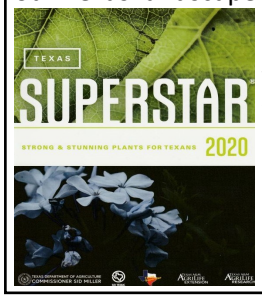
Picture taken 15 April of Esperanza recovering from pruning to the ground.
From Joe

April 4th 2023 Garden Club Meeting *From Mary Martinez*

Our presenters were:

Nancy Mills and Liana Benavides, Master Gardeners

Nancy and Liana spoke on plants that become Texas Superstars. Superstars are selected if they demonstrate outstanding performance and are easy to propagate. The Agrilife Extension Service evaluates plants for Superstar status and in the process, they must perform well with minimal soil preparation, reasonable water, and are not treated with pesticides. These superstars will perform well in our Texas landscape. They are easy to find in our nurseries and are reasonably priced. The Texas A & M Agrilife Extension publication entitled "Texas Superstar 2020" was referenced as they spoke of various examples of annual and perennials and how they performed in our soils. Our members shared their experience and satisfaction with many of the Superstars in their gardens and landscapes.



MGCSA
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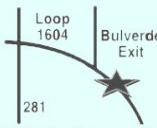

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To Seed or Not To Seed, That Is The Question?

by Paul D Huegel

As gardeners we rely mostly on transplants that we buy at one of the nurseries in the San Antonio region. There are a few members in the Club like John Opiela and Barbara Lamm who would rather plant seeds than buy transplants. It is certainly less expensive to plant seeds and you can produce more plants per dollars spent. However, planting from seeds has some challenges.

Wouldn't it be nice if you could just throw seeds in the dirt and they'd happily grow? Unfortunately it's not that easy and seed starting problems are common. From seeds not germinating, plants disappearing, mold on the soil or seedlings collapsing, there are many things gardeners have to deal with once you start sowing seeds. Common seedling problems include: (1) Seeds that do not sprout (2) Seedlings that are leggy (3) Seeds that rot (4) collapsed seedlings (5) Seeds that disappear(6) Mold on the soil (7) Damping off .

There are a few reasons that your seeds didn't sprout. The most common reasons: **The seeds were too old.** You can germinate old seeds, but often they have less plant vigor. Just because they are old, doesn't mean they won't sprout, however in general older seeds have lower germination rates over time, which means if you sowed 30 seeds, maybe only 10 germinated if they are older than a few years. This depends on how they were stored and the type of plant. **The seeds were sown too deeply into the soil.** This is a very common mistake, people sow seeds too deeply. Be sure to carefully read the seed packets and make sure you're sowing at the right depth. Tiny seeds like carrots or lettuce only barely need to be covered with dirt. **Someone stole the seeds.** If you sowed your seeds outside, it's possible that a critter stole the seeds. Seeds like sprouted peas or corn are often taken by birds or squirrels. **Washed away.** Seeds sown outside right before heavy rains might have been washed away. If the soil in your garden beds looks disturbed after heavy rainfalls that might be cause of seeds not germinating. The most common reason why seeds rot is over-watering. This is a problem both inside and outside. Your seedlings need water, but let the soil dry out in between watering and make sure you have a fan going for air circulation. There are also some seed starting trays where you water from the bottom instead of the top. Some people just use a spray bottle and mist the plants, but that's a lot of work. Because so many seedling problems are related to water saturated soil, it can really help to water from the bottom. **Leggy seedlings** are when the plant is long and thin and not growing straight up. This is really easy to happen for the following reasons: **The light source is too far away and the plant is reaching for light.** If you have grow lights it's better to have them a few inches above the plants and raise them as the plant grows **The plants are overcrowded.** Although growing densely is great for indoor microgreens , the plants become stressed and compete for light and resources creating leggy plants. Be sure to thin out your seedlings.**They need wind for strength.** Plants grown outside are faced with windy days which in turn create a stronger thicker stem. When you grow inside you need to 'create wind' by adding a fan. A fan is not only great for air circulation, it also helps with preventing leggy seedlings. Some people also swear by 'brushing' the seedlings to simulate wind too. If you have leggy seedlings you can save them! The trick is to re-pot your seedlings so that most of the thin leggy part is in the soil. Gnats are similar to fruit flies and love to lay eggs in your soggy wet soil. These fungus gnats will feed on your seedling and cause it to collapse, creating **'damping off'** which is where you'll see your seedling bent in the middle. Damping off will kill your seedlings and can spread to your other plants within a day or two destroying your precious seedlings. Here are few ways to prevent fungus gnats: **Don't over water!** They love wet soil so less watering is a major preventative step. **Sprinkle cinnamon and disinfect seeding trays.** To prevent fungus and soil problems make sure you clean and disinfect old seeding trays. Air Flow. Just as a fan is important to prevent leggy seedlings, having good **air flow** is important for preventing fungal problems. Mold on the soil is caused from over watering, not having air flow and not disinfecting your pots. If your seeds or roots are rotting that's also caused from over watering and not enough drainage. Be sure to use seed starter soil because it's nice and loose and allows for root expansion.

This year a few of us have donated plants started from seed to be grown to full maturity in the Grotto Greenhouse to increase our profits at fund raisers. We need more seed starters to make this an ongoing process that will help us financially and give the Club bragging rights at various events.

Garden Club Members

GREAT NEWS

The Festival of Flowers Show at the San Antonio Shrine Auditorium **is back,** Saturday, June 3, 2023, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The auditorium is located at 901 N. Loop 1604W on the northside access road between Blanco and Stoneoak Parkway exits. Take the Stone Oak Pkwy exit and head west on the access road. Stone Oak Pkwy is approximately 2 miles west of Hwy 281. Parking is free and no entrance fee to club members who are working the Men's Garden Club booth and Children's Garden. We will be selling a variety of hanging baskets and indoor and outdoor plants. The Mobile Children's Garden will be set up to host an educational, hands-on experience for the children. The children will be working with containers, seedlings, garden tools and soil. The theme will be "Caring for your Plantings at Home and Watching Them Grow". The garden will be set up on center stage for all to see and enjoy.

Ken Wolfgram will be working the booth next to the Club's Booth selling his specialty pottery. Come join us for a fun, educational, eye pleasing event. As usual, your plants are needed to supplement what we already have. We need volunteers to set up the Children's Garden on Friday, June 2nd and to work the show on Saturday, June 3rd.

Please call Darlene at 1-815-436-3970 and schedule your volunteer time. Thanks to everyone.

From Darlene Badorski

The Festival 0f Flowers Show where we had some of our biggest crowds, and best looking set-ups

The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul. ***Alfred Austin***

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THE MAY 20th MGCSA PICNIC

We are now getting ready for the Men's Garden Club picnic at McArthur Park at 1611 NE Interstate 410 loop.

It will be on Saturday, May 20th. We will have the social hour starting at 1:00 p.m. There will be soda water, water, and – the best part of the picnic – beer. The traditional auction is at 2:00 p.m. This is the time when we can get rid of valuable items that you don't want and help the MGC make a few dollars, so look in your garage, backyard, or closet for anything to sell - especially if you no longer have a need for it. And bring money, you may want to buy the gizmo that 'they' did not want. At 3:00 p.m., we will eat. The MGC will be supplying all the chicken and sausage. Attendees will be bringing the side dishes.

Vallerie Hartfield will be collecting the money. It will be 10.00 dollars this year. Her address is 2410 Monticello, SA, Tx 78223. Please get your money to her as soon as possible so we can have a good head count. You can also sign up and pay at the May MGC meeting on May 4th.

Barbara Lamm will be coordinating the side dishes, so call her and let her know what you are going to bring. That way we will not all bring the same thing. Her phone number is 210 648-8001.

Almost forgot! We will have several door prizes, and plants for sale. See you all at the meeting on May 4th and picnic on May 20th.

From John Opiela, picnic Committee Chairman

THE AUCTION:

John said "sold". Phil said "not me"

45th MGCSA Annual PICNIC 2023

Date: Saturday May 20 at 1:00PM to 5:00PM.

Location: MacArthur Park Pavilion #4 Loop 410 West Access Road between Harry Wurzbach and Nacogdoches.

The price this year will be **$10.00 for adults** and **$4.00 for children under 5**.

Send completed form to: **Vallerie Hartfield—2410 Monticello Court, San Antonio, Texas 78223**.

To ensure a variety of sides, please contact **Barbara Lamm at 210-648-8001**- for coordination/ suggestions.

Here's my check for $ _____ for ___ adults and ___ children. Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Please write **legibly**, and the name of your guest on the back of this form.

The Beer Keg is a popular gathering spot.

There is plenty of good tasting food to satisfy everyone's taste buds. The chicken is just a starter.