



Horti-Bull

HORTICULTURAL BULLETIN

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MGCSA Calendar 2021

The COVID scare is heavier than ever, but with the arrival of the vaccine there is hope for the future.

ZOOM is coming! The MGCSA is anticipating a full-blown Zoom meeting in February with a moderator and guest lecturer. Last week we did a zoom board meeting, and it went very well after a few bugs were ironed out. With the set up and guidance from our Web and Zoom Master, Ivan Roman, we managed to conduct a meeting with 7 people participating, and plan for a 2nd board meeting on January 7 with all board members present. In preparation for the February general meeting, 4 members – Darlene Badorski, Teresa Martinez, Mary Martinez, and John Opiela will be calling the membership to see who is interested in participating in the meeting, and who needs help in setting up (information will be provided to those who need it). Remember, it can be done from a desktop, laptop, smartphone, or iPad; and is easy-as-pie once you are set up (and the set up is straight forward and simple). They will also hear your questions about other club activities and membership. Please welcome the call. If you miss it, return the call as soon as possible.

Thanks!

Oh Yes! Ivan sez our guest speaker in February will be **David Rodriguez** and his topic will be the 'Greenies Urban Farm' — 4 February, 7PM.



Todd Mermin

From the President. Fellow Gardeners,

There is reason to celebrate. First, there is a vaccine for COVID 19. Currently, people on the frontline battling this virus are getting inoculated. What this hopefully means for us is the safe gathering and meetings for our group has a silver lining. In the meantime, we are also preparing for the continuance of quarantine measures by having zoom meetings. I would like to thank Ivan and Darlene for their hard work in making this a reality. Again, I ask for any contributions that may be useful to others in growing the various types of plants that fall under the term "gardening". Many members know that I am one of the people who fall under the term, from the aspect that I have designed an evening/night garden with various types of plants that bloom and waft their aroma in the night and morning hours

This month's fragrant plant from my garden is the *Brugmansia* or otherwise known as the **Angel Trumpet**. There are seven species of this plant. They can be found in Yellow (most common), white, pink, apricot, and several mixtures. The flowers hang downward on this spineless woody shrub. These are also strongly associated with datura. In my garden I have a double white and a pink variety. Once these plants start to bloom, they spread their fragrance in the night and at dawn. I have noticed at night the smell is faint and grows stronger toward dawn. I hope you experience this fragrance along with many others provided by the evening gardens and plants that make them up.

Until next time, keep gardening and sharing pointers and tips with fellow gardeners. It is a fun way to pass on the knowledge. Love, Todd



MEMBER INFORMATION

Happy New Year to all of you. May God bless you with good health, peace, joy, and love with family and friends in 2021. Please take care of yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually. We are hopeful that 2021 will be a better year in so many ways. HAPPY BIRTHDAY to all who have celebrated another year of life, truly a blessing. Did you have a parade? Let us know when you have a birthday. *From Vallerie Hartfield*

Delphine Beck is still with her daughter, doing much better, energetic, good spirit, and doing her gardening again. *From Barbara Lamm*

Cynthia Thompson is still at the Westover Hills Memory Care facility and enjoying her world. *From her Daughter Judy, By Larry Cromer*

David Dawson still sheltered, on a weight loss program, and talks about returning to San Antonio and the Garden Club. He is limited in his out of facility activities because of COVID, but does drive and get out on his own. *From Larry Cromer*



Calvin's Corner

By Dr. Calvin Finch, Retired Texas A&M Horticulturalist
Horti-Bull Gardening Calendar for January

Most landscapes suffered two freezes so far this winter, one in November and then a lighter freeze in mid-December. It has been cold enough that gardeners lost their zinnias, tomatoes, okra, and peppers. We should also expect some cold weather in January. Most years the January cold is enough to cause the snapdragons, stocks, and petunias to pause in their blooming. Expect them to start a new bloom period in February.

Bougainvillea, Mandevilla, tropical hibiscus, plumeria and other cold sensitive plants should already be in shelter. Have fabric coverings and heat sources ready to protect your citrus. Mexican limes and lemons are especially cold sensitive. It is advisable to have a heat-source to place under the fabric covering. Make sure the lights providing the heat are old-fashioned and not LED technology. Mechanics' lights and poultry lamps with the old-fashioned bulbs work well.

If you have pansies, violas, alyssum, and dianthus they should keep blooming until late spring unless the cold turns out to be severe. Cyclamen and primula manage to bloom through the winter and their foliage is invincible, but many gardeners cover the cyclamen when temperatures are forecast to be 30 degrees or less. The plants are expensive, and it takes so long for a new set of flower buds to be produced that it is not worth the gamble. Spread a piece of Insulate fabric over the top of the plants to protect the cyclamen flower buds.

Out in the landscape between the cold weather and the lack of rain lawns, have turned brown unless you have been able to keep it irrigated. If you are disappointed by a brown lawn, keep in mind that the same weather that caused the brown lawn has also prevented much weed production. Rescue grass, annual bluegrass, and horseherb, the weeds we rely on for the sustainable winter lawn (SWL) as of mid-December were nowhere to be seen. Do not be deceived though, they will come up quickly if we get some rain.

The cold weather has also frozen back coral vine, rogue climbing roses, and wisteria so gardeners "blessed" with those dominating vines can probably see their roofs and fences again. Think about pruning them back and then using "Cut Vine and Stump Killer" to win back some of your property.

In the vegetable garden plant onion transplants now to harvest full-sized bulbs in May. Prepare the soil by incorporating 2 inches of compost and 10 cups of slow-release lawn fertilizer (19-5-9) into every 100 sq. ft. of bed. If you place a transplant every 2 inches you can use 2 out of 3 for green onions while the 3rd transplant matures.

Plant potatoes at the end of the month. They can be harvested for new potatoes when they start to bloom. Leave part of the crop in the garden until the plants brown. For more information on growing potatoes visit plantanswers.com.

MGCSA Officers for 2020

President	Todd Mernin	210-218-4155
1st V.P	Ivan Roman	210-845-7073
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Other

EX Officio	Paul Huegel	210-493-9853
HB Advertising	Paul Huegel	
Historian	Paul Huegel	
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Linda Hollingsworth's beautiful Christmas Cactus is 3 cactuses of varying colors combined in one pot. The 3 color eye-catcher gets everyone in the Christmas Spirit.

This is just one of Teresa Martinez's Christmas arrangements in her dining room. How fortunate you are when you love what you are doing and are really good at it.



TO MULCH OR NOT TO MULCH, THAT IS THE QUESTION.

by Paul D Huegel

The short answer is “yes” but there is more to mulching than meets the eye and here is “the rest of the story”. Mulch is to the garden what cleaning out the closet is to your home; a spring right of passage.

There is no debating the many benefits mulch provides to your plants and gardens:

Mulch insulates the soil helping to provide a buffer from heat and cold temperatures.

Mulch retains water helping to keep the roots moist.

Mulch keeps weeds out to help prevent root competition.

Mulch prevents soil compaction.

Mulch reduces lawn mower damage.

Plus, it just makes your gardens look nice and clean.

But, installed incorrectly, mulch can also bring a host of avoidable issues that can be detrimental to the hard work you have put into your landscape.

Mulch Mistake 1: Using The Wrong Mulch

The old adage “you get what you pay for” applies here. Everybody loves a bargain but free mulch is often one that should be avoided. The ground up wood that many municipalities including San Antonio give away is no friend to the garden. It often contains weed seeds, pests and pesticide residues. It also, generally, does not look as good as properly processed mulch. When processed properly, most mulches go through an aging period. This process creates very high temperature which kills off insects and weed seeds, leaving a healthy, problem free mulch to be applied to gardens.

Mulch Mistake 2: Not Mulching

As listed above, the benefits of applying a fresh layer of mulch to your garden are many. To not apply mulch annually leaves your plants and garden vulnerable to problems. Roots can be damaged by hot and cold temperatures or dry out during times of low precipitation, soils become compacted because no fresh organic matter has been introduced, and weeds can grow unchecked, creating competition for the desirable plants and becoming a haven for insects and diseases. All of these issues can weaken plants and slow up their maturity and development. These issues may not be recognized for some time and by the time they are recognized, the damage is already done.



Mulch Mistake 3: Making Mulch Volcanoes

Mulch volcanoes are the worst! This refers to the practice of piling mulch up against the trunk of a tree or shrub so that it resembles a volcano. I’m not sure who thinks these look good but the damage it can do to trees and shrubs is immense. Piling up mulch around the trunks traps in moisture and leads to rot. Once the wood starts rotting, it is a gateway for insects and fungi to invade the plant. It is important to keep mulch an inch or two away from the trunks of trees and shrubs. In the case of trees make sure the root flare is totally visible as many trees are planted too deep. You may have to use an air spade or high pressure water to remove the soil covering the root flare. In the long run it will be worth the extra effort as it will extend the life of your trees.



Mulch Mistake 4: Using Too Much Mulch

If some mulch is a good thing, a lot of mulch must be better, right? Well, no. Root systems need air to survive. Too much mulch also leads to too much water being retained which leads to rotting root systems. Keep the mulch level to around 2 inches. That is plenty of mulch to do the job. Also, do not forget to strip out old mulch if it is starting to pile up. If your old mulch breaks down into compost leave it alone and just add the new mulch.

Mulch Mistake 5: Using Too Little Mulch

Using too little mulch means that there is not enough mulch to do the job it is intended to do. For instance, putting down not enough mulch means that weeds will not be prevented and root systems will not be insulated properly. As stated above, a 2 inch layer is just enough to do the job properly. One other note. Mulch is organic, meaning it will break down over time. Not putting enough mulch on your trees and gardens mean there will be even less in a few months.

I hope you take mulching seriously as it will pay big dividends in your landscape and gardens. Texas has some extreme temperatures, mostly hot and dry. We get freezes but we enjoy mostly warmer weather. Either way it is wise to mulch to protect our trees and other garden plants. Also, we should compost our lawns yearly during periods when it is cooler to build up the soil. Composting then mulching our trees and garden plants give our landscapes the “one-two punch” for healthy, happy horticulture or H3.

Which of Santa’s reindeers is most impolite? Rude-olph.
What did the Christmas Tree say? I need help getting dressed.
What do you say when Santa takes rollcall? Present.
What do you get when you cross a snowman and Dracula? Frost Bite.

Thanks, Vallerie Hartfield

History of Men's Garden Club of San Antonio

Part 8- The early 1990s—by Paul D. Huegel, MGCSA Historian

After taking a hiatus from our history articles, I return with Part 8. Hopefully, you recall Part 7 which took us back in history to a turbulent 1990 which was a pivotal year of dissension and success setting the stage for Club independence. We continue into the early 1990s to see how we grew as a more independent and vibrant club.

1991- Our newly elected President Spike Ringen who was Gardener of the Year for Texas in 1987 and Southern Region for 1989 was awarded a Bronze Metal for Service in December 1990 just before taking the reins as President. He was a perfect fit for the Club in terms of horticultural knowledge and leadership. Like any good president he was well organized and picked the right members to fill the various committees to lead us into a successful year. One of those committee Chairs was General Chuck Elia who is currently serving as our most senior member. Spike was also our National and Regional Representative and personally took the lead at the Botanical Children's Garden. Clearly, Spike was an active President and leader.

The Club started 1991 with guest speaker, member and icon of the organic gardening world, Malcolm Beck. Lifetime member Malcolm Beck spoke on "Mulch and Microorganisms" for which he was dedicated to while promoting the natural approach to gardening in his business, books and "garden evangelism". Malcolm shared his experience as a teen when he saved his fathers orchard by spreading hay and watering it down to release the beneficial microorganisms that enriched the soil and retained the ground water.

Unlike recent years, the President's Traveling Trophy was presented in January to Joe Hegar for his cultivation of superior Chrysanthemums. In those earlier years, awards were based on actual horticultural accomplishments. Other high award winners included current Lifetime member Charles Bartlett. Charles who is still a major force in the science of horticulture and the name behind the newly established Charles Bartlett Horticultural Award given the youth at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair that the Club has supported for 44 years.

The March 1991 meeting attended by 280 members heard the then WOAI radio personality Jerry Parsons talk on how to start a Spring garden. Jerry still offers his advice in a humorous fashion and gardening expertise every weekend on KLUP. He still supports and respects the MGCSA as he did recently when he promoted our Hollywood Park event last October on the weekend South Texas Gardening shows on KLUP.

Once again in May 1991, we got to hear Malcolm Beck talk about beneficial and not so beneficial bugs that help and hurt our gardens. We got to hear firsthand the "rest of the story" about bugs even before he and Howard Garrett co-authored the best selling book "Texas Bug Book: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" which is still a best seller among gardening books. Delphine and Malcolm Beck once again hosted the 18th Annual Picnic at the Gardenville farm in June 1991.

In August 1991 Calvin Finch who for 31 years has written monthly articles for our Horti-Bull, who was the Bexar County Agent and "Headmaster" for the newly established Master Gardener Program in San Antonio, spoke to the Club on his plans for the Program. Calvin is still a prime mover in the gardening world and continues supporting the Club with his Horti-Bull articles and on the air with the KLUP radio Gardening in South Texas weekend shows.

In November, Manuel Flores, another horticultural radio celebrity and Lifetime MGCSA member spoke on Nature and Garden Photography. Maybe not as visible these days as he was in his radio days, Manuel has been consulting on horticulture and supporting MGCSA as a guest speaker. We are fortunate to have garden gurus from our past still connected to our present and hopefully our future.

The Year of the Spike as it was known was aptly named because that year was marked with 70 new members of which President Spike himself was responsible for 36 new members. Now that is what I call leadership and club dedication. So, in 1991 the tension of 1990 eased somewhat as we focused on making our Club more active and poised to be totally separate and independent in the future.

RECIPES: Did you try something new this year during Christmas, or did you use the traditional ones that you have used for years? We would like you to share your recipes and good treats ideas with us.



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THE TOP 9 NUTS TO EAT FOR BETTER HEALTH

From Vallerie Hartfield

RESOURCE: Healthline, Written by Ruairi Robertson, PhD on September 26, 2018

Nuts are healthy snack options. Though they're high in fat, the fat they contain is a healthy type. They're also good sources of fiber and protein. Most of the fat in nuts is monounsaturated fat, as well as omega-6 and omega 3 polyunsaturated fat. They do contain some saturated fat. Many studies have shown that people who eat nuts live longer than those who don't. Eating nuts may help reduce risk factors for many chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes.



ALMONDS: A number of small studies have found that eating an almond-rich diet can reduce "bad" LDL cholesterol, total cholesterol and oxidized LDL cholesterol, which is particularly harmful to heart health. Almonds have been shown to reduce inflammation in people with type 2 Diabetes. Almonds may have a beneficial effect on your gut microbiota by supporting the growth of beneficial gut bacteria, including Bifidobacterial and Lactobacillus.

PISTACHIOS: Pistachios may improve cholesterol levels. Eating 2-3 ounces of pistachios a day may help increase "good" HDL cholesterol. Pistachios may help improve other heart disease risk factors, including blood pressure, weight, and oxidative status.

WALNUTS: Walnuts are an extremely popular nut and an excellent source of the omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid. Several large studies have found that eating walnuts significantly reduced total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol while increasing "good" HDL cholesterol levels. They may also improve other factors related to heart health, including blood pressure and the normal flow of blood through your circulatory system. Walnuts may help reduce inflammation which can contribute to many chronic diseases. A study in college students found that eating walnuts increased a measure of cognition called "inferential reasoning," suggesting that walnuts may have beneficial effects on the brain.



CASHEWS: A number of studies have examined whether diets high in cashews can improve symptoms of metabolic syndrome. Cashews contain a number of important nutrients and studies indicate that they may improve blood lipid levels and reduce blood pressure.

PECANS: A few studies have shown that pecans can lower "bad" LDL cholesterol in people with normal cholesterol levels. Pecans also contain polyphenols, which are compounds that act as antioxidants.

MACADAMIA NUTS: Macadamia nuts are a great source of monounsaturated fat. A number of studies have shown that diets rich in macadamia nuts can lower both total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol in those with high cholesterol levels.

BRAZIL NUTS: Brazil nuts are an incredibly rich source of selenium. Selenium is a mineral that acts as an antioxidant. They may also help reduce cholesterol levels, oxidative stress and inflammation.

HAZELNUTS: One study found that a hazelnut-rich diet reduced total cholesterol, "bad" LDL cholesterol and triglycerides. It also lowered markers of inflammation and improved blood vessel function. Other studies have shown that hazelnut diets can improve cholesterol levels and increase the amount of vitamin E in the blood.

PEANUTS: A study in over 120,000 people found that higher peanut intake was associated with lower death rates. Peanuts may also improve heart disease risk factors. Peanuts are usually salted, which may eliminate some of their associated health benefits, instead try to choose plain, unsalted, unflavored peanuts.



This holiday season the Garden Club Elves did some work behind the scene at the MARTIRES OBLATOS DE ESPANA (The Oblate).

Thank you to Christmas Elves Barbara Lamm, Mary Martinez, Larry Cromer, and David and Darlene Badorski who were busy decorating the Christmas Tree in the meeting room and the one in the hallway at the Oblate. And a special thanks to Christmas Elf Paul Huegel for his beautiful water fall in the Bethlehem Scene in the meeting room and the lighting at the life-size Manger on the Oblate grounds.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In the December Horti-Bull we initiated a new 'Letters to The Board' section and asked for your inputs on any subject that pertained to the club. By popular demand the title has been changed as seen above. But the intent is the same. We received several—and THANK YOU. We appreciate the kind remarks. Our one request from Sharon Hughes: "ask people to add recipes maybe the ones they would've used for Christmas. People have brought great things for the refreshment table, or maybe what they used to use up their garden at the end of the year,". Response: Vallerie has routinely ask for recipes from our readers, but with minimal success. But we are trying once again with a jazzed up appeal seen elsewhere in the Bull. **We welcome your comments, concerns, questions, etc.**



Linda Hollingsworth's 3 bulb Christmas-Red Amaryllis is looking so inviting this time of the year.

Men's Garden Club of San Antonio (MGCSA)

Open to men and women. **2021 Membership Application**

Rates will remain effective until January 1, 2022

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Annual Members	3-Year Membership	Life Membership
\$20 Individual	\$50 Individual	\$200 Individual
\$25 Joint*	\$60 Joint*	\$250 Joint*

*Joint Membership is one individual and one additional residing in the same household. Both members may enjoy all the member benefits of MGCSA but do not individually receive the Horti-Bull, the monthly newsletter.

Please Circle (above) the type of membership. This will help us keep the MGCSA files straight. Use one form for each membership or joint membership. **Please print/write legibly!**

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Phone: (210) _____ E-mail: _____

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Today's Date: _____ New Member

Sponsor _____ Renewal

If you haven't done so, use the form on the left to renew 2021 membership. If you can't print the form, put the info legibly on bond paper. If you are unsure of your status, call our treasurer Phil Byrd at 210-497-8044 and he will help you. Remember, 28 February is fastly approaching.

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February General Meeting
Master Gardener, Karen Gardner



San Antonio Men's Garden Club
Mark's Plant Picks for SA

Mark A. Peterson
Project Coordinator

SA Men's Garden Club
January 9, 2020

January General Meeting



2020



WELCOME
MGCSA JUDGES
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Ken Wolfgram's Christmas Wonderland

