



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](http://www.mensgardenclubofsa.org)



Volume 2025

December

Number 12

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Alberto Del Rio

It was my great pleasure to serve as your president this year, and to be recommended to continue to serve again next year.

As another year comes to an end, I want to thank everyone who volunteered and helped us make our events this year such a success.

It's good to put ourselves out there at gardening events. Our membership has a huge horticultural expertise that is valuable and worth sharing. Reaching out to other gardeners is a worthy goal. Unfortunately, through the years, other garden clubs have folded due to lack of volunteers and members not wanting to step up to be an officer. But, we have persevered and continue to receive many requests to participate in gardening events. We are not getting any younger, so it's good for us when we recruit new members to help out in our club activities.

The holidays are upon us. Let's give thanks for what we have, and if one is able to share, help those who are less fortunate than us, or volunteer your time where it can make a difference. A little time of yourself goes a long way.

Looking forward to seeing all of our membership at our Christmas party. Blessings to all now, and in the coming year.

Feliz Navidad y Prospero Anoto all.

Alberto Del Rio



**MGCSA
2025 Officer Installation
And
Christmas Party
5 December at The
Oblate's St Eugene Hall
6:00PM to 9:30PM**

----- COMING IN 2026 -----

**Alamo Regional Science and Engineering
Fair: 21, 22 February**

**Basil Fest at Fanick's Garden Center 16
March**

**Festival of Flowers at the Shriner Auditorio,
30 May**

DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED:

SAWS Spring Bloom, usually in March

Irish Heritage Festival, Feb/March

Hollywood Park Yard Sale

STAY TUNED

Welcome to The Installation of Officers for 2026 & Christmas Dinner The Men's Garden Club of San Antonio

Mail checks to 'Vallerie Hartfield, 2410 Monticello Court, San Antonio, Tx 78223
\$20.00 Each Please bring your favorite Holiday Dessert.

1. MEMBER

Full Name: _____ Phone # _____

2. Spouse/Guest

Full Name: _____ Phone # _____

Payable to MGCSA, Total Amount Rendered & Check #: _____

Horti-Bull Gardening Calendar for December 2025

From Dr. Calvin Finch



Some wonderful cool weather in November and then back into record heat!

The peppers, okra, radishes, rutabagas, and greens have fared pretty well in the heat, but it has been tough on the tomatoes and most of the root crops.

If you lust for fall tomatoes like I do, thank goodness for the BHN 968 and Ruby Crush small, fruited selections, they taste great and are producing like they usually do! If the weather stays above 40 degrees, some of the semi-determinates and heat tolerant selections like Tycoon, Red Snapper, Phoenix, Celebrity and Heatmaster are showing promise with large green fruit. Harvest any tomatoes that reach full size and show any color change. Let them finish ripening on the kitchen counter.

Reseed root crops that haven't germinated by 3 weeks after planting. In my garden, that included carrots, beets, and lettuce. It is also time to plant spinach and onion transplants.

In the sun portion of the flower garden the snapdragons, pansies, violas, calendulas, stocks, and alyssum are doing well, and more transplants can still be planted. The fragrances of the stock and alyssum are especially pleasing. The hot weather planted zinnias and pentas are hanging on in the heat, which is not bad because they are favorite nectar sources of the butterflies and other pollinators. Expect any remaining Monarchs and hummingbirds to continue on their migrations south in December.

Freezing weather will probably show up sometime in December. When temps start to stay near 40 degrees move the subtropical plants such as Porter weed, bougainvillea, tropical hibiscus, and plumeria into shelter for the rest of the winter. For your citrus, especially the limes and lemons, you will need a tent-like structure and a heat source such as non-LED mechanics' lights for cold protection.

For some spectacular color, plant cyclamen and primula in the shady part of the garden. Protect them from the slugs and snails with bait produced for the task. Also have some agricultural fiber ready to cover the plants if the temperature is forecast to fall below 28 degrees. The cloth has to be large enough that the edges can be secured from the wind with bricks or other weights.

Now is a good time to plant trees. Do you like to get double value out of your tree purchases? If you are a CPS Energy customer, they will give you a \$50 rebate each for up to 5 shade trees if you plant recommended varieties and locate them in the landscape where they reduce energy costs from cooling. Your favorite nursery or the CPS website will have the specifics. Another way to save money is to buy a Christmas tree that can be planted in the landscape after it finishes its task as a holiday tree. Among the tree species that are successfully used as dual purpose trees are Arizona cypress, deodora cedar, Aleppo pine, blue point juniper, Japanese black pine or Italian stone pine. Use evergreen species that are attractive, grow to the size you want in the landscape, and will survive. To that end do not use loblolly pine, eldarica pine or other species that won't survive in our environment.

The Christmas Party form on page 1 gives you one last chance to let us know before hand that you are coming to our Christmas gathering on December 5th. The better the headcount, the better we can set up the dinning room, and have enough food for everyone. You are invited to bring your favorite Holiday Dessert to share with others.

MGCSA Officers for 2025

President	Alberto Del Rio	210-518-5097
1st V.P.	John Opiela	210-532-5963
2nd V.P.	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466
3rd V.P.	Vacant	
Treasurer	Paul Huegel	210-385-8972
Secretary	Jeff Brown	210-993-6215
Chaplain	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466

Directors

2023-2025

Barbara Lamm	210-648-8001
Leonard Martinez	210-514-0584

2024-2026

David Badorski	815-436-3970
Ken Wolfgram	210-788-0177

2025-2027

Gary Ross	210-836-4952
Andrew Waring	210-307-9704

Other

EX Officio	Elena Schriener	210-268-8222
HB Advertising	Paul Huegel	
Historian	Paul Huegel	
Webmaster	Ivan Roman	
HB Editor	Larry Cromer	210-521-5350

We hope you are making plans to be at our 56th Annual Officer Installation and Christmas Party. Join us for plenty of good company and good food. You might also bring home a door prize or two.

**HAVE A
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A SAFE
HOLIDAY SEASON**

Thanksgiving thoughts from Jane

By Jane McDonald

The trouble with a cuppa tea.

I'm sitting here late on a Sunday evening, drinking a large cup of tea - true to my Irish roots. Did you know that the Irish drink 50% more tea than the British?? Yeah, we're solid. It's been a pick-me-up for me so many times: family emergencies, so comforting to hold a warm cup in my hand when things had calmed down; after I had my first child I demanded tea and against midwife, Sister Waldemara's advice, I got it. The time when the tent in which we were camping was blown away, destroyed in a midnight storm - we fled to a nearby hostel that had hot tea, a balm to unquiet spirits and time to replan what to do. And there's the whole dance about whether or not to put the kettle on for tea when visiting an Irish home: "Ah, I can't stay.." "Yes you can, stay for a cup of tea, it's no trouble.." "I can't put you to the trouble.." "It's no trouble, I was just making one for myself.." "Well, if you're making one already.."

Gratitude: it comes in so many guises. Small gestures, unexpected gestures.

Our life is made up of invisible threads which bind us to one another. The favor done unexpectedly. The worry taken off one's shoulders by a generous offer from a friend.

We have a lot to be thankful for. I certainly have!



**** Membership Spotlight ****

SHARON HUGHES: Sharon is a Life Member and has been a member for 25 years. She enjoys the friendships she has gained and nurtured, and enjoys all aspects of gardening, and all the different outings and activities that the club provides. Sharon even enjoys preparing food for the meetings.

Sharon especially likes working with hanging baskets. At one time she had an impressive collection of pottable plants in salvaged commodes.

She likes coming up with her own recipes, and sharing these and gardening experiences with others.



Sharon stands between her gardening friends, Darlene Badorski and Mary Martinez

SPRING HOURS

**Tuesday - Sunday
9:30-6:00**



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CHRISTMAS PUNS

- Why is Santa afraid of getting stuck in a chimney? He has Claus-trophobia.
- Why does Santa have so many gardens? So he can hoe hoe hoe.
- I asked my wife what she wanted for Christmas. She told me that nothing would make her happier than a diamond necklace. So I bought her nothing.

Arroyo Sweetwood

BY Charles Bartlett

A rare and beautiful tree for your yard, it's been the subject of great interest for some years for its unique characteristics and the rich history surrounding its discovery. The Arroyo Sweetwood (*Myrospermum sousanum*) is a very fragrant, understory tree that reaches 12-18 feet tall in Central Texas, and about 10' wide. Although it continues to be a rare find in the landscape and nursery trade, it should be used more often because this tree meets so many of the desirable traits we all seek in our residential landscape.

Each Spring, the tree is covered in white, highly fragrant blossoms – April to September – that are very attractive to many bees, more than a dozen varieties of butterflies, and even nectar-seeking hummingbirds. As they bloom, the pea-like clusters of up to 15 blossoms emit a strong scent of cinnamon and vanilla, and its branches bear small, pinnate leaves resembling a large fern.



The wood and seeds of the tree are also scented like the blooms.

This wonderful, subtropical tree is a true gem of the border region, native to southern Texas and northern Mexico and was discovered by legendary plantsman Lynn R. Lowrey and friends Emmett Dodd and Dr. Ray Jordan in 1982, in a dry, gravel arroyo near Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The tree was named for Dr. Mario Sousa, an authority

on the legumes of Mexico, and described botanically by Dr. Alfonso Salinas and Dr. Marshall Johnston of the University of Texas, Austin in 1984.

The Arroyo Sweetwood was among many plants native to the US Southwest promoted by Lynn Lowrey. I first saw the tree in March 1995 at Lynn's Anderson Nursery operated by his daughter Patsy and her husband Mike Anderson. Lynn was a quiet, unassuming man who truly became a legend in his own time. He was a horticulturist by training (graduated from Louisiana State University in 1940) and a collector by nature. He collected plants and he collected people – a mentor to many. Lynn always referred to himself as a student, saying he would be a student all of his life, but by sharing his knowledge with so many others, he became a consummate teacher.

The tree was originally grown by Lynn at the Anderson Nursery in Houston but soon found its way to arboretums and sites all over the Southwest and the Nation. It has grown well at the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh, North Carolina, survived 9 degrees F. in Dallas, and Denton, Texas, with large trees in Austin and Waco, and is present in many locations on the West Coast.

The plant's optimum soil is a highly alkaline, gravel, and limestone rocky site, but it does well in a wide variety of soils. It is xeric and VERY drought-tolerant when established. Its green compound leaves transform into a stunning golden hue in the Fall, adding to its beauty.

If you have a place in your landscape for a beautiful, mid-size, highly fragrant, care-free tree, consider the Arroyo Sweetwood. Potted specimen trees will be available at our upcoming MGCSA meetings in the Spring.



Advice from a Honey Bee: Create a buzz
Sip life's sweet moments Work together
Mind your own beeswax
Always find your way home
Stick close to your honey
Bee yourself!



December 2025

How about a Thanksgiving story? A man in Phoenix calls his son in New York and says, "Your mother and I are divorcing, 45 years of misery is enough." "Pop, what are you talking about?" the son screams. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the man says. "Call your sister in Chicago and tell her," and he hangs up. Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone. "Like heck they're getting divorced," she shouts. "I'll take care of this." She calls her dad and says, "You are NOT getting divorced. We'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing!" and hangs up. The man turns to his wife. "OK," he says, "The kids are coming for Thanksgiving and paying their own way."



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Beck Tamalada—2025

By Paul Huegel

The 2025 Beck Tamalada lived up to its legacy and was a great success with a good turnout at the Garden Center. I think the tamales were excellent and the sides that everyone brought were a perfect complement as were the desserts. There was plenty to eat and drink so nobody went home hungry. Attendees managed to consume seven dozen tamales from two different sources; Mary Martinez donated three dozen and the club purchased, with my help, four dozen tamales. Mary and I had a friendly competition as to which tamales were better. Based on feedback from the members, both sources were enjoyed by all. Everyone present seemed to be having a good time and I did not hear any complaints from anyone. I chaired the event but got help setting up the food line from our club "master caterers" Marion See and Marie Reyes, who never let us down with their food service at every meeting.

The Beck Tamalada was officially named seven years ago in honor of Malcolm and Delphine Beck in 2018, the year that Malcolm went on to his greater glory. However, the history of

the Tamalada goes back fifty-two years to June of 1973 when Malcolm and Delphine graciously invited the MGCSA to their Gardenville homestead to enjoy the first Tamalada picnic. This started the annual June picnic tradition. Malcolm and Delphine continued the Tamalada picnic for twenty more years at their homestead at the original Gardenville location.

Coupled with the Tamalada was the election of MGCSA Officers who will be installed during the annual Christmas Party and Installation of Officers on December 5, 2025 at the St Eugene Hall at the Oblate Grotto location.

We were also privileged to have an excellent Show and Tell presentation by our longest serving member and horticulturist extraordinaire Charles Bartlett. He introduced the members to some hard to find plants that he and our president Alberto Del Rio grew and which they generously raffled off after the presentation. We once again enjoyed another successful Tamalada with plenty of good food and social interaction among all who attended.



From Left to Right: 1. The Dessert table at the Tamalada. All low calorie. 2. David and Darlene Badorski show off the ribbons that Justi, their AKC Sports Champion, Soft Coated Wheaton Terrier, has won (so far). 3. Charles Bartlett and Alberto Del Rio doing their potted plant Show and Tell.



THE NECTAR BAR - NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

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MEMBERSHIP

Attendance: November 6, 2025

46 Members, 1 Guest.

Happy Birthday to all November births.

Healing and recovery to all who are sick.

Strength, comfort, peace, and love to all who are coping with losses.

From Vallerie Hartfield

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Botanical Garden's Children's Vegetable Garden Program

The children had the Vegetable Contest on 11/22/2025. They are now harvesting their vegetables and maintaining and winterizing their plots. The last day for the fall season is 12/6/2025. The more dedicated participants are already visualizing what they will plant come the spring gardening season.

From Vallerie Hartfield

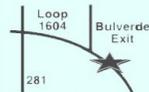
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2026 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Below is your membership application for 2026. You can copy it, fill it out, and mail it in. We will have forms available at the next meetings for your convenience. If you cannot copy it, put all the info needed on paper and mail that in with your check. In all cases, PLEASE write legibly.

December 2025



Men's Garden Club of San Antonio (MGCSA)

Open to men and women **2026 Membership Application**

CK# _____

Cash _____



Annual Membership	3-year Membership	Life Membership
\$20 Individual	\$30 Individual	\$200 Individual
\$25 Joint*	\$60 Joint*	\$250 Joint*

*Joint membership is one additional member residing in the same household. Both members may enjoy all the member benefits of the MGCSA, but only one receives the club newsletter, the Horti-Bull.

Please circle above the type of membership. Use one form for each membership or joint membership. Please print or write legibly.

Name _____ Spouse _____

Street Address _____

City _____ TX 78 _____ Occupation _____

Phone Number _____ E-Mail _____

Best way and time to connect _____

Today's Date _____ New Member

Sponsor _____ Renewal

Make checks payable to MGCSA; Address:

Paul Huegel, 15619 Cloud Top, SA, TX 78248



SEEN AT THE TAMALADA

Clockwise from top right:
 1. Club's new 3rd Vice President, Robin Van Dusen demonstrates the art of helping to clean up after the meeting so everyone can go home as soon as possible. 2. Welcome, Sharon Pfeiffer. Enjoy your plant. 3. Paul Huegel conducts the Election of Officers. 4. Mike and Lidia Stepp and Robin Van Dusen, are intrigued by Mark Weigand's tale of his family pet, a tortoise. 5. Mr. Mark Weigand tells his wife Mary, "I don't think they believed me. I'll just bring our tortoise to the Christmas Party for a show and tell." 6. Rey Salazar, son Geraldo, and Lady Friend Rose Dolorosa, on their night out. 7. Marie Reyes and Barbara Lamm discuss Marie's latest status she received on her Christmas Amazon order. 8. The Rosses, Gary and Marrienne, are happy to be at the Tamalada. 9. New member of the Board of Directors for 2026, Sylvia Tamez, brought her friend Sam Ruiz to the Tamalada.

