



July/August 2004 Volume 3, Issue 4

M. Bloomers

A Garden Journal

"The late summer garden has a tranquility found no other time of year"...William Longgood

Landscapes.... Tim Kiphart, Landscape Staff

Irrigation and Water Conservation...In a previous article my predecessor, David Smith, stated that numerous studies have shown that automatic sprinkler systems commonly deliver 30-50% more water than is needed by our landscapes. And from field experience, I can tell you this is absolutely correct. Much of the waste occurs during spring and fall when rainfall is higher and plant use is lower. A dormant plant or lawn requires little to no water. There is also a tendency to over water newly installed gardens. Fine-tuning your irrigation management will eliminate unnecessarily inflated water bills, overly saturated soils, poor drainage, and increased disease/insect potential, all of which affect plant health and ultimate landscape performance.

Here in Texas and across the arid west there has been an effort to promote the use of water conserving trees, shrubs, and groundcovers in urban landscapes. Using native, heirloom or other hardy adapted plants can definitely help, but continued diligence is necessary. We must go beyond just changing our plant palate. If we only change the plants we are using without changing how we grow and care for the plants, then a real change hasn't taken place. This is not only a disservice to the plants; it eliminates a

landscape windfall for you.

Water is a dwindling natural resource, and Texas is growing by leaps and bounds. Our current population of 21 million is expected to increase **fifty percent** by 2030.

Long-term water conservation strategies will take each of us doing our share...and what better place to start than our own homes.

WATER FACTS:

One inch per week is a good general rule. This depends on garden age, soil type, and plant species.

Use a screwdriver or your finger to check soil moisture about 2-3 inches down. It's like checking a cake. If it comes out moist, then it's adequate.

Turn your system off during the winter. Supplement during peak summer months or during prolonged drought conditions.

Hand water if only one or two plants needs it, besides it gets you out in the garden.

Monitor so as to fine-tune your irrigation controller with the plants needs. If needed, we can provide that service for you.

Daily per person water consumption (in gallons/day) Austin (132), College Station (219), Dallas (250), Houston (160), San Antonio (142).



"A man of words and not deeds, is like a garden full of weeds."...Nursery Rhyme



From the Hot House... David Albrecht, Horticulturist

Wright's Desert Honeysuckle— One topic at the forefront of many people's mind this time of year is what they can plant in the full sun that will not only be attractive but, also heat tolerant. One plant that fits this description very well is Wright's Desert Honeysuckle. There are also other common names such as hummingbird bush and flame anisacanthus. The botanical name is *Anisacanthus quadrifidus*. This Texas native is hardy to Zone 7 and frost tolerant to 5°F. It's native habitat is along streams and dry ditches in the southern-most edge of the Edwards Plateau of south Texas. Besides being heat tolerant Anisacanthus is drought tolerant and handles reflected heat, such as from sidewalks, streets, and walls.

Anisacanthus is also an excellent hummingbird and butterfly attractant. It is well adapted to a variety of soils and can be

grown in part shade but performs (blooms) best in full sun. Anisacanthus is best described as a small, deciduous, perennial shrub that reaches a height of three to four feet and a width of about the same. It has a very open architecture and lance shaped leaves three-fourths to two inches long.

Since Anisacanthus comes out in the late spring, there is plenty of opportunity to promote a more compact and attractive plant with pruning. In most nurseries it is available with either orange or red flowers that are one and a half inches long by one half inch wide. The flowers are trumpet or tubelike and borne on terminal spikes. These flowers begin in the heat of summer and last until frost. Even in the winter this can be an attractive and interesting plant due to the upright architecture and the exfoliating bark it exhibits on the larger branches. 🐾

Water Gardening...by Karen M. Breneman, Author

Color in the Summer Garden...Red, fuchsia, turquoise, pink, black, emerald green, and white, all colors of the rainbow flutter by on the wind with an occasional yellow with black stripes, orange with black or bright lemon yellow. No, the color and movement in the garden is not flowers nodding in the breeze, but the true jewels of the garden are the dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies and birds attracted to a pond. Ponds of all sizes can and do attract wildlife. The larger the pond the more activity; therefore, the saying "Prepare it and they will come" is once again proven true.

"What about mosquitoes?" This is often the first question asked in pond discussions.

Creating your own therapy garden is fun and easy.

Yes, mosquitoes are attracted to water, but a properly stocked water feature captures the adults and prevents any laid eggs and larvae from reaching the adult

stage, thus reducing the number of biting adults. The mosquitoes provide food for the fish, dragonfly and damselfly, water beetles, tadpoles, frogs and others attracted to the

water. The properly planted and stocked pond provides places for the predators to live. The underwater plants allow places for the young to hide, since many of them are also food for others in the pond. The floating plants provide places for the dragonflies and damselflies to lay their eggs. The marginal or bog plants with their taller stems give places for the damselflies and dragonfly nymphs to climb above the water level for the step from nymph to adult. This is also the place to look for different frogs laying in wait for anything that flies too close. A multitude of hungry mouths are watching and waiting for the mosquitoes.

Water gardens from small containers to large earthen bottom ponds add another dimension to the landscape. In today's stressful society many ads promote drugs to alleviate the stress, but a less expensive and healthier solution lies in utilizing the creatures of nature. Horticultural therapy is a recognized method of relaxation and rehabilitation. Creating your own therapy garden is fun and easy. Plan and stock your own water garden and see how the stress floats away on the wings fluttering in the summer breeze. 🐾

"If you would be happy your whole life long, Become a gardener"...Old Chinese Proverb



Decorating Tips... Tricia Barksdale, Petals 'n Bloomers

Discover a World of Fresh Ideas (from the Bahamas to Tuscany)... If you need a tropical punch added to your summer, join us for our Summer Floral Luncheon. We won't be eating flowers, but we will enjoy many delicacies by Pam Hays from Café M. Bloomers. Fourteen tables will be decorated by Petals n' Bloomers with themes such as:

Bahama Mamas	Provence
Birthday Princess	Tuscany
The Cottage Garden	Pink Flamingos

After the wild and crazy fun we had at the Spring Floral Luncheon, we look forward to this one also being a great outing for you and your friends. Why just give a party when you could host an event?

Organics... Sharon Murry, Staff

Mother Nature's Way... There are many gardeners today looking for natural practices for fertilizing, and eliminating disease and insects in their gardens. They have learned that poor soil can only produce poor plants.

Re-building the soil to the way Mother Nature intended is the logical way to keeping your soil healthy. Think of the forest floor. Mother Nature fertilizes the forest with dead leaves, animals, twigs, branches, rain water and anything else that has spent its life there. The forest thrives and the soil underneath the "compost" on the forest floor is rich in nutrients and micro-organisms to keep the soil and vegetation healthy. Remember this as you prepare your gardens, flower beds and lawns.

Earthworms thrive in organic matter. Having earthworms in your soil is like having a

tunneling machine working 24-hrs a day to aerate your soil. An extra bonus is that the Earthworms leave behind their "black gold". Earthworm droppings are very high in nitrogen. Use natural ingredients for foliar and soil fertilizing to prevent harming the Earthworms. These natural ingredients include fish emulsion and seaweed at a rate of 2 tablespoons of fish emulsion plus 1 tablespoon of seaweed per 1 gallon of water for foliar feeding or for soaking root areas.

Do not add anything to the soil that could harm the beneficials that live there. Make your own compost and add it to your existing soil.

Learning how to use ingredients such as orange oil for killing fire ants, garlic-pepper teas for insect and disease control, compost teas with molasses for fertilizing are just a few ways of preserving and re-building soil the way Mother Nature intended. Don't forget to feed the birds as they are an important part in the life cycle of pest management.



Summer Floral Luncheon

Monday, July 12, 2004

Two Seatings:

10:30 am—12 Noon Brunch Menu

1:00 pm—2:30 pm Lunch Menu

Cost \$25.00 per person.

Reservations confirmed with credit card by calling Tricia at (936) 825-8577.

Send a Smile Any Day!

Petals 'n Bloomers Florist

(936) 825-8577

Email Update

We recently changed software programs. If you are no longer getting your email notices, please let us know by emailing your name and email address to

shirleen@marthasbloomers.com.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

"A man should never plant a garden larger than his wife can take care of"... T.H. Everett



Compost...from a friend

Gardens Are Friends...*This is a story from a friend...* One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes.

My heart went out to him, so I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, and I saw a tear in his eye. As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives." He looked at me and said, "Hey thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to a private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before. We talked all the way home, and I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play a little football with my friends. He said yes. We hung out all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him, and my friends thought the same of him.

Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books every day!" He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak.

Graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself

during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than I had and all the girls loved him. Boy, sometimes I was jealous. Today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!" He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach...but mostly your friends...I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them.

"I am going to tell you a story," he said. I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his Mom and Dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize the depth a friendship can have.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life...for better or for worse. God put us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way.

God gave us gardens to have a place where we can find solitude and peace...a place where we can find strength in our weakest moments. A garden is our friend with a colorful smile, a friendly wave in the breeze, and a fragrance to touch our very souls. Gardens are our friends. "Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."

There is no beginning or end. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. Show your friends that you care.

Editor's note:

This issue of "A Garden Journal" marks the sixth anniversary of planting the seed of what has become Martha's Bloomers. By the way, at that moment, I was with a friend in her garden. At that time of great strife in her life, she told me, "without my garden, I could not make it". The seed has flourished, thanks to Barbara Floyd. ST



"A garden is a delight to the eye and a solace for the soul"...Sadi

Ask Martha & Bloomer....

Dear Martha: How can I "cool" off my outdoor courtyard?

Martha here... Give your outdoor courtyard a feeling of coolness by adding the sights and sounds of water. An arbor with flowering vines and blooming shade plants like Hoya's and Violets would be nice too.

Dear Bloomer: What is a good plant that will give me lots of color in this hot Texas summer sun?

Bloomer here... Why the hibiscus, of course! It comes in a variety of beautiful colors that will last all summer long.

What's Cooking at Café M. Bloomers?...Amy Keilers

Seven Ways to Cool Off your Kitchen... Right about now you can probably see the summer heat rolling off the pavement outside your kitchen window. So naturally, the last thing on your mind is to fire up the oven to prepare a hearty meal. Try these tips to keep your cool this summer:

1. If possible, cook before the heat of the day. While you are cooking, make double portions to use for another day.
2. Take advantage of fresh fruits and vegetables. You can make a salad into a meal by adding grilled or deli meats. Fruits such as grapes, peeled bananas and melons can be frozen and served as an afternoon snack or for dessert.
3. Visit a delicatessen. Sliced deli meats can replace hours of hot kitchen cooking. Make sandwiches, wrap them loosely in foil and place them on the grill for 8-10 minutes for a hot meal.
4. Serve cool desserts. Fill a pie crust with your favorite ice cream. To serve, top it with syrup, whipped cream or nuts (depending on your ice cream choice) and freeze until firm.
5. Dress up your drinks. Make special ice cubes by placing a berry of your choice in

each section of an ice cube tray and fill the ice tray halfway with water. Freeze and add the cubes to your favorite drinks. To dress up iced tea, add a sprig of fresh mint or lavender to your tea as it brews. Decorate beverages with edible flowers such as orchids or nasturtiums and serve them in a frosty glass.

6. Move the heat outdoors. Host a backyard barbeque and grill your favorite meats and vegetables in a marinade of choice. But remember once you have marinated the meat, the marinade should be discarded. If you plan to serve the marinade with your meal, reserve some prior to adding the meat.

7. Go out to eat...Visit Café M. Bloomers and let us do the cooking. For summer time, we are featuring special dishes to keep your kitchen (and ours) cool.

For further tips and recipes to help you keep your kitchen cool, register for Molly Fowler's "Cooling off the Kitchen" cooking class July 7 at 10:30 am. We will be preparing a cool fruit soup, Cobb salad and a summer parfait. Limited seating for this morning cooking class. Make your reservations today by calling

Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277.



Café M. Bloomers

Lunch served Tuesday—Sunday 11 am to 3 pm
Open for desserts & beverages until 4 pm
Closed Monday.

For Your Special Event, Call Bonnie Larsen, Event Coordinator at (936) 870-3277.

"Homer never wrote on an empty stomach"...Rabelais



Calendar of Events.....

“Cooling off the Kitchen” Cooking Class—Wednesday, July 7 at 10:30 am.
Presented by Molly Fowler. Limited seating. \$25 per person. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required. Call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for reservation confirmation.

“Beds and Breakfast” Seminar— Saturday, July 10. Offered at 7:30 am and 10 am.
Presented by Millie Burrell. Continental Breakfast at 9 am.

“Summer Floral” Luncheon & Decorating Demonstration—Monday, July 12. Two seatings:
10:30 am—12:00 pm, Brunch Menu. 1:00 pm-2:30 pm, Lunch Menu. \$25 per person. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required. Call Tricia at Petals ‘n Bloomers at (936) 825-8577.

“Summertime Entertaining” Cooking Class—Tuesday, July 13 at 6:30 pm. Presented by Molly Fowler. Limited seating. \$40 per person. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required. Call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for reservation confirmation.

“The Natives are Friendly” Native Plants Seminar-Saturday, July 17 at 11 am.
Presented by Tim Kiphart.

“Turf Grasses” Seminar-Saturday, August 21 at 11 am. Presented by David Smith.

“Living with Shade” Seminar—Saturday, August 28 at 11 am. Presented by Wanda Jones.

For more information on our seminars, visit us at www.MarthasBloomers.com.

Saturday Seminars are Free!

To Register: Call (936) 870-4044 or email us at: registration@MarthasBloomers.com.
We welcome your suggestions for future seminars.
Please email to: suggestions@MarthasBloomers.com



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