



January/February 2004 Volume 3, Issue 1

# *M. Bloomers*

## *A Garden Journal*

*"Count the garden by the flowers, never by the leaves that fall. Count your life with smiles and not tears that roll." Author Unknown*

*Master Gardener Classes...Doree Osman, Master Gardener*

### **GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS' CLASS 2004**

If you want to learn more about care and maintenance of your plants, are eager to participate in a practical intense training program and share your knowledge with others, the Grimes County Master Gardening program is for you.

Being from the city and moving to the country was a new experience for me. Through the Master Gardener course, one can obtain a lot of knowledge and meet some very interesting people. These new friends have now become my good friends.

Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and to help others. What sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is the special training in horticulture.

The training course is taught by Texas A&M staff, cooperative extension service specialists and local experts. The program covers fifty-two hours of instruction that includes top-

ranging from lawn care, ornamental trees and shrubs, insect, disease, soil and plant nutrition, to vegetable gardening, fruits, nuts, propagation and flower gardens.

Grimes County Master Gardener classes for 2004 will begin Monday, February 2nd, and continue thru April 26<sup>th</sup>. Classes will be held at Martha's Bloomers each Monday from 8:30am until 12:30pm. Orientation will be the first day of class at 8:00am. The cost of the class is \$100 per person, which includes the Master Gardener handbook.

If this program is for you, please call the Grimes County Extension Office at 936-825-3495. Applications are available at their office located at 208 S. Judson, Navasota; applications are also available at Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6, Navasota.

Being a Master Gardener  
is a  
rewarding experience.



*"No two gardens are the same. No two days are the same in one garden."...Hugh Jackson*



## *From the Hot House "Conifers"... David Albrecht,*

The use of conifers in the landscape is often overlooked in an effort to provide maximum space for the more colorful and showy perennials that are so popular in today's garden. There just never seems to be enough room to accommodate everything. Now is a good time of year to take a look around and note which plants have not frozen back to the ground. Or better yet, take note of the plants that are still green, lush and full of life even in the deadest part of the year. Part of this group is the conifers.

Conifers are those trees and shrubs that have a generally conical shape, needle or scale-like leaves, and uncovered seeds in cones. All are members of the pine family. Most require full sun and are drought tolerant once established. The following conifers discussed have proven themselves time and time again practically throughout the entire state of Texas.

Probably the first cultivated and most well recognized conifer is our native red "cedar". This utilitarian tree has been used for windbreaks, screens, Christmas trees, and fence posts for decades. This rapid grower really isn't a cedar at all, but a juniper that is more closely related to the cypress. If one is interested in a true cedar tree, take a look at Deodar cedar, another tree of great stature. While still small enough to decorate, this tree makes a great living Christmas tree planted in the landscape. Be aware that in alkaline soils

this tree may exhibit occasional iron deficiency symptoms.

Another large, well recognized tree is the Loblolly pine, which is the species that inhabits Lost Pines State Park. It also may exhibit iron deficiency symptoms in alkaline soils. If one is looking for a large pine that will easily tolerate alkaline soils, use the rapid growing Elderica pine or the slow growing, but extremely good specimen, Australian pine. Either of which also make great living Christmas trees. One last tree of mention is the Leyland cypress, which is very graceful hybrid that and can reach 40 feet tall and 25 feet wide.

Not all conifers come in the shape of large trees. The slow growing blue point juniper only gets to about 12 feet tall with a spread of 6 feet. This makes a great screen and also another great living Christmas tree. A much shorter conifer is the seagreen juniper. This rapid grower makes for a good foundation plant that reaches 4-5 feet tall and equally as wide. Two of the best-looking, low growing conifers are the Procumbens juniper and the Blue Pacific juniper. The Procumbens is a very dense low growing juniper up to 2 feet tall and 10 feet wide that makes an excellent ground cover. A lower growing conifer with blue-green foliage and a softer look is the Blue Pacific reaching only 1 foot tall and 5 feet wide. Both of these look great on slopes, but work just as well on level ground.



## *New Daytime Cooking Classes*

The response to our cooking classes have been phenomenal. Requests for daytime cooking classes have poured in. In January, we will be offering our first luncheon cooking class. Our guest chef is Erin McFarlane. Erin graduated from the famous Cordon Bleu in France with her specialization being French pastries.

Her first class, "Chocolate Delights for Valentine's Day" will be Wednesday, January 28, at 10 am. This demonstration-style cooking class includes chocolate creations that are sure to tempt your sweetheart. Learn to prepare *Chocolate Croissants, a Flourless Chocolate Cake and Grand Marnier Truffles.*

On Wednesday, February 25, at 10am, Erin

presents "French Bistro Salads." You will enjoy learning how to prepare light, yet substantial, main-course salads. Recipes include *French-style Chicken Salad, Curly Endive, Bacon and Roquefort Salad, Parisian Goat Cheese Salad with Garlic Toasts* as well as *Classic French Vinaigrette.* Demonstrations will last one hour and will be followed by a sampling of each dish while enjoying a salad lunch. Everyone will take home a complete recipe packet and plenty of new ideas to liven up their menus.

Limited seating. \$25 per person. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.

***Café M. Bloomers***  
**(936) 870-3277.**

*"Unlike your favorite painting or sentimental vase, a landscape is alive and constantly changing"*



## *A Valentine Affair at Café M Bloomers... Pamela Hays*

Looking for that perfect place to romance your sweetheart this Valentine's Day? Consider bringing your special someone to Café M. Bloomers for an intimate and elegant candlelight dinner.

The Café will host two seatings for dinner on Saturday, February 14th. Reservations for both the 6pm and 8pm seatings are required and must be confirmed by credit card or paid by cash or check when the reservations are made.

The menu for the evening will consist of soup, salad, a choice between two delicious entrees, homemade bread and one of our sinfully delicious desserts garnished with Valentine's Day essentials...chocolate covered strawberries and a red rose for

your sweetheart. The price of this romantic evening is \$24.95 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Wine and beer are available for an additional charge.

Reservations will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis until both seatings are full. To reserve your special table call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277. Don't delay....we will fill up fast.

Order our luscious chocolate covered strawberries and our decadent chocolate desserts for your Sweetheart to enjoy in at home.

*Pamela Hays*  
*Café M. Bloomers*  
**(936) 870-3277**

## *Spring Floral Luncheon... Trisha Barksdale, Petals n' Bloomers*

If there is a shower or party in your future this spring, you may want to come to our *Spring Floral Luncheon*. We won't be eating flowers, but you will enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by Pamela Hays at Café M. Bloomers.

Each table will be set up with a different theme. After a great meal, Trisha Barksdale, Floral Designer, will discuss each tablescape based on these events: Valentine's Day, Baby Girl, Baby Boy, Tea Party, Wedding Shower, Spring, Easter, and Girls Just Wanna Have Fun.

Some of the floral arrangements will be given as door prizes. This meal and presentation is sure to pull you out of the winter blahs and into anticipation of a beautiful spring.

### *Spring Floral Luncheon*

*Tuesday, February 10, 2004*

**2-seatings**

**11am or 1pm**

Limited seating for this wonderful luncheon tablescape class. \$20 per person.

*Trisha at Petals n' Bloomers*

**(936) 825-8577**

Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.

**REMEMBER:** Valentine's Day falls on Saturday this year. Please order your bouquets early. A great variety of flowers are available. You may consider taking them to your Valentine's place of employment on Friday.

*Send a Smile Any Day!*

**New 2004 Cooking Classes!!** Molly Fowler will be back with her own enthusiastic style to guide us through two more painless delicious meals. French Bistro Dinner on Wednesday, January 21, at 6:30pm, and A Romantic Valentine Dinner on Tuesday, February 10.

Reservations confirmed by credit card are required

Call Pamela Hays at *Café M. Bloomers* (936) 870-3277.



## *Orchids—Phalaenopsis Culture... Dr. Rainer Fink*

At Martha's Bloomers we are becoming the leading edge Phalaenopsis grower. Our specialization is in the hard to find dark red, orange, yellow and the newest rage - harlequins. It is important to us that we share the method we use to grow our plants. It is our goal that the plants purchased from Martha's Bloomers thrive and continue to bring you pleasure over many seasons.

Since winter is here and the temperature and light level is fairly low, it is time to reduce feeding. Discontinue or reduce nitrogen fertilizer. It is critical to use systemic bactericide/fungicide such as Funigex Rose Pride, Consan 20 or Kocide 101 twice a month to cope with the hazard of rot. Try to maintain a temperature minimum of 65 F.

On the other hand in spring and summer, with the high level of summer temperature and light, you will need to increase air circulation and humidity (to about 80%). Increase watering and increase nitrogen fertilizer for fast and solid growth in the early spring. Reduce any strong summer sun by shading well. A simple way to tell if the light level is OK is to hold your hand about one foot above the leaves of the plant – if you can see a clear shadow of your hand, the light level is too high. To reduce risk of pseudomonas and problems with spots on leaves, use systemic bactericide/fungicide every three to four weeks.

In the spring, we like to re-pot our Phalaenopsis (they like to be re-potted once per year). After re-potting especially young seedlings or smaller plants, water them using 10-52-10 fertilizer several times to encourage root system growth. This is followed by a balanced fertilizer 20-20-20 until spiking starts. Then use 20-5-30 to encourage a strong spike and good flower substance. All fertilizer is used at the rate of 350 parts per million or what is recommended for tomatoes. Every fourth watering use clean water to wash out any excessive salt accumulated in the potting media. Using quality water is very important (especially if you are using Brazos

County area water). Reverse osmosis or rainwater is best. Rainwater is about PH 7.1, but after adding fertilizer, it drops to below PH 6.5. Phalaenopsis absorb most of the fertilizer between PH 5.5 and PH 6.5.

Water the plants only when necessary!!! Clear plastic pots enable you to look inside to see when the plants need water – green roots means “don't water”, white roots means “water me”. It is critical not to over-water these plants. It should be safe to water once per week.

The media you grow your plants in is a personal choice. Their root systems are very fleshy and need loose, airy media that will not dry too quickly or stay soggy all the time. Martha's Bloomers has an excellent potting mix made up of fir bark, charcoal and perlite.

Common pests like scale and mealy bug can be disposed of by brushing with rubbing alcohol or spraying with Safer Soap. Although the regular systemic treatment described earlier should stop these pests before they get started. To get rid of slugs and snails use Hi-Yield Snail Pellets. In general, in a household orchid collection, fungus is a much greater problem than pests on phalaenopsis plants.

Martha's Bloomers hopes you enjoy our offerings of fine orchids and we are always ready to be of assistance. Feel free to call the store to set an appointment with Rainer Fink, our orchid grower.

Saturday, February 28, at 11 am,  
Dr. Fink will present a free seminar  
“Orchid Basics—Potting & Care”  
Call Martha's Bloomers registration line  
(936) 870-4044 to register or email  
[registration@MarthasBloomers.com](mailto:registration@MarthasBloomers.com)



### **Premium Orchid Exchange Club**

Joining the Orchid Exchange Club will provide you with a continuous blooming Premium Orchid throughout the year. Your orchid selection is available from our Premium Private Stock Orchids that are not generally for sale.

*“Gardening requires lots of water—most in the form of perspiration” H. Fred Ale*



## Ask Martha & Bloomer....

### Dear Martha:

Do Purple Martins have "scouts"?

**Martha here...**The first martins are simply here because they are usually the first to return. It seems like they go back to get the others, but the rest of the flock are just right behind these "early birds."

**Dear Bloomer:** When should we expect Purple Martins to arrive in our area?

**Bloomer here...**Purple Martins will be returning soon. They generally arrive around on February 20th, but last year they made their appearance here on February 12th. Purple Martins are loyal and will return to their old homes, but as any guest, they prefer a clean abode.

If you have not put Martha's Bloomers on your email safe list, please do so. Many of our email messages are being returned due to spam control. Martha's Bloomers will continue to highlight upcoming events via email.

## Seeds... Gay Houston, Staff

Winter is the time to read seed catalogs and dream of spring. However, in South-east Texas, winter is often still a good growing season for many plants. December may have blooming roses and perennials that are still doing well. Of course, our pansies, snaps, and other annual color are really beginning to show off.

Now that January is here, we may not have cold and snow, but gray, chilly days make us start thinking about springtime seeds. Seeds are sometimes scary to a beginning gardener. Will they come up? Will they rot off just as I get my hopes up? What if they wash around and all come up in one spot? That can happen, but many seeds are so easy to grow that is worth trying a few. You can plant varieties such as big, wrinkled nasturtium seeds, reliable sweet peas, and sugar snap peas in February.

Now is the time to start looking for some seeds that are not always available. Our favorite seed company, Rene's Garden, now offers many of the different basil, old-

fashioned tomatoes, Easter egg radishes and astonishing squashes, eggplants, and corn. We try to keep the old familiar varieties, but also bring in also bring in different seeds that are still easy to grow. Don't forget to buy a few sunflower seeds, corn, beans or peas and help your child or grandchild plant them. Children enjoy watching the easy germination of familiar plants.

Seeds are often slighted in the garden since bedding plants are readily available. However, historically they are so basic for the gardener that we all should try them. Our ancestors brought over their favorites seeds and relied on their skill to grow the plants of their home country. Locked within the tiny seeds were their hopes for survival.

One of my favorite authors summed it up best: "I don't find it hard to believe in miracles when I look at those tiny things--some no larger than grains of dust. You could hardly believe there was life in them, let alone color and scent if you hadn't seen spring."



*"A garden is a friend you can visit anytime"*





## Calendar of Events.....

**Fruit and Nut Trees Seminar**— Saturday, January 10, at 11am Presented by Bill Adams.

**French Bistro Dinner**—Wednesday, January 21, at 6:30 pm Presented by Molly Fowler.  
Limited seating for this two and one-half hour cooking class. \$40 per person.  
Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.  
Call Pam Hays at Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for your reservation confirmation.

**The Right Tree for the Right Place Seminar**— Saturday, January 24, at 11am Presented by Karen Weir.

**Chocolate Delights for Valentine's Day**— Wednesday, January 28, at 10am Presented by Erin McFarlane.  
Limited seating for this luncheon cooking class. \$25 per person.  
Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.  
Call Pam Hays at Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for your reservation confirmation.

**Ikebana, The Art of Japanese Flower Arranging Seminar**—Saturday, January 31, at 11am Presented by Nan Mitchell.

**Master Gardener Class**— Master Gardener classes will be held at Martha's Bloomers every Monday from 8:30 am-12:30pm, starting February 2, through April 26. The cost will be \$100.00.  
Call the Texas County Extension Office (936) 825-3495.

**A New Look at Old Roses Seminar**— Saturday, February 7, at 11am Presented by Glenn Schroeter,  
from The Antique Rose Emporium.

**Spring Floral Luncheon & Tablescape Seminar**—Tuesday, February 10...Presented by Trisha Barksdale. .  
Limited bookings for two seatings: 11am or 1pm. \$20.00 per person.  
Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.  
Call Trisha Barksdale, Floral Designer, at *Petals n' Bloomers* (936) 825-8577.

**A Romantic Valentine Dinner** —Wednesday, January 21, at 6:30 pm Presented by Molly Fowler.  
Limited seating for this two and one-half hour cooking class. \$40 per person.  
Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.  
Call Pam Hays at Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for your reservation confirmation.

**Candlelight Valentine Dinner with Café M. Bloomer**— Friday, February 14.  
Limited bookings for two seatings: 6pm or 8pm. \$24.95 per person.  
Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.  
Call Pam Hays at *Café M. Bloomers* (936) 870-3277 to reserve your Valentine table.

**French Bistro Salads**— Wednesday, February 25, at 10am. .Presented by Erin McFarlane.  
Limited seating for this luncheon cooking class. \$25 per person.  
Reservations confirmed by credit card are required.  
Call Pam Hays at Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for your reservation confirmation.

**Orchid Basics-Potting & Care Seminar**— Saturday, February 28, at 11am Presented by Dr. Rainer Fink.

For more information on our seminars, visit us at [www.MarthasBloomers.com](http://www.MarthasBloomers.com).

**Saturday Seminars are Free.**

To Register: Call (936) 870-4044 or email us at: [registration@Marthasbloomers.com](mailto:registration@Marthasbloomers.com).  
We welcome your suggestions for future seminars.



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