



July/August 2003

Volume 2, Issue 5

M. Bloomers

A Garden Journal

*"In winter I get up at night and dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer quite the other way, I have to go to bed by day."*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Café M. Bloomers, A Tea Room

Summertime favorites...From lazy evening cookouts to formal gatherings, fresh fruits and produce available during the summer months make it easy to dress up any table or place setting. For your summer table, use a carved out watermelon to make an outstanding centerpiece. Not only does this add to your summertime theme, but it is also an excellent serving container for your fresh fruit salad. A whole fresh pineapple can also be used as a "pin cushion" for those toothpick spears of cheese, meat or veggies. For a splash of color, serve dips and spreads in edible containers – hollowed-out round bread loaves, bell peppers, and small red or green cabbages are great to make into "bowls". After filling with your favorite dip, set the "bowl" on a serving plate and surround it with an assortment of crackers, chips or bite-sized vegetables. A clear vase filled with whole lemons and limes and then filled with water and flowers makes a great centerpiece. Floating candles are also a nice touch to any table. Fill your vase with whole lemons, limes and sprigs of rosemary and float your favorite candles.

It is easy to add flair to summer drinks. For pretty ice cubes, drop berries, small pieces of fruit, or edible flowers into the compartments of an ice cube tray, fill the tray with water or

juice and freeze. To make fun stirrers, put vegetable or fruit chunks on small skewers and serve on the edge of the glass. Having a big party? Use a children's swimming pool filled with ice as a large cooler. Set it alongside the buffet table to keep pitchers and cans of beverages well chilled. Or, if you have a large buffet table, put the ice filled pool on your table and nestle bowls of salads in the ice. No matter what type of summer gathering you are planning, take a moment to look around with a creative eye at the summertime offerings available. You will be amazed at what you can produce!

Café M. Bloomers is open Tuesday—Sunday, 11 am to 2 pm for lunch and 2 pm to 4 pm for desserts and drinks.

Same Day Call-Ahead Reservations. You can phone ahead for a group of 4 or less with your arrival time and we will give you a confirmation number, placing your name on our waiting list. We will do our best to seat you at the first available table. Please check in upon arrival. We only take advance reservations for groups of 13 or more.

For Same Day Call-Ahead or Banquet Reservations for groups of 13 or more, call *Café M. Bloomers* at (936) 870-3277.



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

Road-side Attraction Becomes Tabletop Décor...

We will soon be able to view our beloved Bluebonnet up close rather than from the roadside. Wayne Mackay, an environmental horticulturist at Texas A&M-Dallas, has worked with this wildflower for twelve years. His research has now paid off, and the Bluebonnet has been developed into a cut flower with a long vase life. To say that there is a niche for this unique flower is an understatement. Texans' pride in their state flower is known around the country. And since there are very few natural blue flowers, this Lupine is even more unusual. Wayne has worked with a West Texas family farm in growing bluebonnets for the floral trade. His

white and blue variety is already in production, and his latest endeavor is a pink one. Desirable qualities such as longer stem length, fragrance, and a vase-life of two weeks are sure to make this Lone Star attraction a national phenomenon. However, they are only available January through early May. Petals 'n Bloomers will be first in line January 2004!

July 4th...decorate this holiday event with flags and flowers!

Send a Smile Any Day!

Petals 'n Bloomers Florist

936 825-8577



Something's Cooking... at Martha's Bloomers!

You know about the beautiful plants, home and garden décor, floral design shop and tea room at Martha's Bloomers—but now you can join us at our new cooking classes! The first class—*Italian Food for Family and Friends—Fast and Fabulous!* was taught June 12 by Molly Fowler, well-known Houston culinary instructor. Molly makes the circuit through twelve Texas cities for *Central Market*, *The Cooking Depot*, *Sur la Table*, and other “foodie hotspots” from San Antonio to Austin and from Plano to Houston. Molly's passion for good wine, robust flavors, and zestful entertaining inspired the first-ever cooking class at Martha's Bloomers.

The first two and one-half hour class, delivered demonstration-style, provided a tasting of each dish and a complimentary recipe packet. The evening began with a delicious appetizer, Bruschetta with Herbed Goat cheese and Sun-Dried Tomato Tapenade. Next, Molly's Sensational Caesar Salad received rave reviews, as promised! Her entrée of Chicken with Prosciutto, Artichokes, and Capers in Linguini was fast and delectable. A

side dish of oven-roasted asparagus made a delightful plate! The dessert, Tiramisu Angel Torte was assembled from angel food cake with a tiramisu filling and frosting—a delicious and “do-able” treat!

Is your mouth watering? Are you sorry you missed the fun? Well, take heart! You have another opportunity to attend a class soon! Mark your calendars and reserve your place now for “Cool off the Kitchen—Recipes with Minimal Cooking!”, Thursday, July 10, at 6:30 pm. This summertime special will feature two main dish salads, a chilled soup, and a cool, refreshing lemon mousse for dessert. Suddenly, the summer heat is much more bearable! On Thursday, August 21, 6:30 pm, please join us for “Sizzling Southwestern”...Sangria, Green Chile Queso, “Killer” Fajitas, Black Bean Salad with Cumin Vinaigrette, and Strawberries Mexicano!

Limited seating of 40 persons. \$40 per person. Reservations confirmed by credit card are required. Call *Café M. Bloomers* at (936) 870-3277.



Plant of the Month... Gay Houston, Staff

Mexican firebush *Hamelia patens*

Get ready for the migrating hummingbirds in the Fall! This great shrubby plant will grow rapidly in the summer and be ready for both the resident and traveling hummers. It is sometimes called a hummingbird bush and is available in many sizes for planting. In

our area it will usually die back in the winter and re-sprout from the ground in the spring. Growing two to three feet tall, it will have coral-red flowers as well as red foliage. Mexican firebush loves full sun, and the colors will grow brighter in the fall.



The love of flowers is really the best teacher of how to grow and understand them...Max Schling



Irrigation... David Smith, Landscaping, L.I. 5730


Irrigating During Summer's Stress:

With temperatures in the 90's, it only takes a few days without rain to recognize the value of irrigation. This spring was unusually dry and the summer forecast is for more of the same. Thus, our subsoil that has stored our winter rains is quickly depleting. This has a detrimental impact on our landscapes, even affecting well-established trees, shrubs and lawns. Even the most drought tolerant plants have their limits, and irrigation becomes essential for survival.

Avoid battling extreme plant stress with extreme watering. Over-watering trees and other landscape plants forces oxygen out of the soil, thus drowning the plant. Interestingly, the general appearance of over-watered and drought-stressed plants looks much the same, especially for new plants. For example, the stems and leaves

yellow and the edges of the leaves turn brown. The surest way to determine if you are watering correctly is to take the "worm's eye view" into what lies beneath.

In lawns and shrub beds, the soil should be moist and cool to the touch to a depth of 4 to 6 inches which encompasses the major root zone. In heavy clay subsoil, water infiltrates very slowly. With trees, be careful not to over-water the area directly at the root ball. This area will tend to hold water and deprive the tree of much needed oxygen and nutrients. Many trees under these conditions will yellow, drop leaves and eventually die. Rather, water the area under and around the drip line of the tree. This will encourage roots to expand beyond the tree trunk, resulting in a more healthy and resilient tree.


This summer think "moderation" when watering. Your plants will thank you for it! 

Landscaping... Cardace Wingo, Landscape Designer

Summer is here! Enjoying the garden landscape in the summer is easier if you've planned ahead and prepared your beds properly. Proper bed preparation of organically enriched soil is the foundation for a successful and thriving landscape, which saves you time and money down the road. It is best to build raised beds so the excess water can drain quickly. And adding mulch after planting helps keep the soil cool, the weeds down, and the moisture in.

Working with our weather of drought or too much rain makes planning a little tricky. If you have areas in your landscape that hold

water after a rain, this would be the perfect place for plants that can take wet feet i.e., Louisiana Iris, Mexican Petunia, Umbrella Plant, Elephant Ears, Southern Wood Fern, Wax Myrtles, Weeping Willows, etc. So, when we do get several days of rain, these plants will do just fine in the areas that just won't drain quickly.

With our hot summers we have concerns during our drought times. Newly planted plants need to be kept evenly moist until they have established their root system. Once established, the following list of plants require minimal watering. 

TREES	SHRUBS	PERENNIALS	ANNUALS
Crape Myrtle	Abelia	Artemesias	Celosia
Golden Rain tree	Eleagnus	Butterfly weed	Gomphrena
Green Ash	Indian Hawthorne	Coreopsis	Periwinkle
Cedar	Buddleia	Holly Fern	Purslane
Mexican Redbud	Nandina	Lantana	Zinnia
Oak	Spirea	Liriope	Purple Fountain Grass
Vitex	Yaupon	Red Hot Poker	Verbena

Flowers in a city are like lipstick on a woman — it just makes you look better to have a little color...Lady Bird Johnson



Organic News... Sharon Murry, Staff

Grasshoppers, the bug we love to hate, are difficult to control. Grasshoppers lay their eggs on bare soil, so the most important thing to do is to eliminate the bare soil wherever possible. Apply a thick layer of mulch to all areas possible. Nolo Bait™ is a product

Grasshoppers are cannibalistic by nature

that can be applied by hand broadcasting to lawns, flower beds and gardens. It is a biological insecticide that contains the spore called *Nosema locustae* that infects the grasshopper. In a period of 3 to 4 weeks, up to 50% of the grasshoppers that have become infected will die. Since grasshoppers are cannibalistic by nature, uninfected grasshoppers will eat the infected ones and they in

turn will die. The females then pass the disease via the egg-laying process. It is not harmful to humans, livestock, birds, crops or water resources. For foliar protection, we use molasses and Diatomaceous Earth. Mix 2 ounces molasses, 4 ounces DE and a couple drops of liquid soap in a gallon of water. For extra potency, add 1 ounce of orange oil or garlic/pepper tea. Spray on your plants in the early morning or late afternoon, never in direct sunlight. However, if it rains, it will be washed off the leaves. Another natural control is birds. Most birds love grasshoppers, so encourage them, including purple martens, to your property with birdhouses and bird feeders.



Have a Beautiful Blooming Orchid All Year Long in Your Home or Office!

Join our new Premium Orchid Exchange Club. Your orchid selection is available from our Premium Private Stock Orchids, and you can exchange your orchid as many times as you like. Initial membership is \$85 plus \$20 monthly on your credit card. For more information or to register, call (936) 870-4111.

From the Hot House... David Albrecht, Horticulturist

Over the past several weeks we have noticed the algae bloom in the ponds has really picked up and become an eyesore. Unfortunately, there really is no way around it, and it will always be there to at least some degree. One of the best steps one can take is to adhere to the old adage of having 60 – 75% of the water surface covered by plant material. This will greatly reduce the amount of sunlight that reach down into the water where the algae resides, and therefore reduce the amount of algae bloom in your pond. The sunnier the location the more important it is to have the surface covered.

Setting water lilies out in your pond is probably the most economical way to accomplish this. A single lily at maturity can easily cover a 4' by 4' area and sometimes more. Of course, the size of your water lily will depend on the size of the pot, the frequency of fertilization, and the amount of sunlight it receives. While there are some lilies, such as 'Perry's Baby Red', that stay rather small, there are plenty to choose from that will attain the 16 square foot stature. One of these is 'Texas Shell Pink' which is also a night bloomer. Something many of us can really appreciate since it opens its flower at dusk and remains open till late the next morning.

With the addition of more lilies to your pond, you should really see a decrease in the amount of algae bloom in your pond, and their flowers are beautiful.



A flower is an educated weed... Luther Burbank



Corn and Tomato Salsa

Serve on beef, pork or corn chips.

1 cup fresh corn kernels (from 2 small ears) or frozen, thawed
1 large tomato, seeded, chopped
2/3 cup chopped red onion
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 to 1 jalapeno chili, seeded, minced
1 avocado, pitted, peeled, chopped
Fresh cilantro sprigs

Mix all ingredients together in a large bowl, cover and chill before serving.

Ask Martha & Bloomer

Dear Martha,

The United States Flag has three colors. Do you know what they are and what they represent?

Martha here...The colors are Red, White and Blue. Red stands for courage, White for truth and Blue for justice.

Dear Bloomer,

The United States Flag has stars and stripes. Do you know how many stripes and what they represent?

There are 13 stripes.
Each stripe represents one of the 13 original states

"Beds and Breakfast" Seminar is Saturday, July 12th.

Early seminar: 7:30 am; Lite Breakfast : 9:00 am; Second seminar: 10:00 am.
To Register; Call (936) 870-4044 or email us at; registration@MarthasBloomers.com

Join us for breakfast and a "cool" morning seminar as Millie Burrell of Texas A&M Horticultural Dept. guides you through the proper procedures of flowerbed planning and planting. As Ms. Burrell tours you through the landscape at Martha's Bloomers, you will see specimens of plants well adapted for our area.

Fruit Salsa

Serve on grilled fish or chicken.

- 1 cup chopped peeled pineapple
 - 1 cup chopped peeled mango
 - 1 cup chopped yellow or red bell pepper
 - 2/3 cup chopped peeled kiwi fruit
 - 1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
 - 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
 - 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
 - 1/2 teaspoon minced Serrano chili (with seeds)
 - Ground white pepper
- Combine all ingredients in medium bowl.
Season with white pepper and salt.
Can be made 3 hours ahead.
Makes about 4 cups.

Herb of the Month - Cilantro / Coriander

Where has all the cilantro gone?

That is a question we are often asked as the days grow longer. With summer days getting longer and hotter, cilantro goes into hiding. Although we crave it for salsas made with our own hot peppers and garden ripe tomatoes, it refuses to grow well in Texas heat. Even if growers could get it to grow to a decent size, it would immediately start to bolt and set seeds.

There are a few herbs that will add a bit of the familiar flavor. Papol, a Mexican herb that is attractive in the garden, and has a cilantro-like taste as does another herb called Mexican cilantro. They each have very different leaves and are often difficult to find. Therefore our choices are to buy fresh cilantro at the store, or perhaps just slice tomatoes and sprinkle them with basil and balsamic vinegar. Basil LOVES the heat! Watch for cilantro when the days began to get cooler.

"Papol, a Mexican herb, has a cilantro-like taste"



If well managed, nothing is more beautiful than a kitchen-garden... William Cobbett



July 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 4th of July Closed	5
6	7	8	9 "Silk Floral Designs— mechanics" - Tricia—11 am	10 Cooking Class— Molly Fowler— 6:30 pm—\$45	11	12 Beds & Breakfast 7:30 am & 10 am by Millie Burrell
13	14	15	16 "Silk Floral Designs— wreath"-Tricia— 11 am	17	18	19 Bog Garden Construction 11 am by David Albrecht
20	21	22	23 "Silk Floral Designs— arrangements"- Tricia—11 am	24	25	26 Bees & Butterflies 11 am By Laura Weaver
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Gardening w/ Nature 11 am by Karen Breneman
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Cooking Class— Molly Fowler— 6:30 pm—\$45	22	23 Veggies & Flowers for Fall Gardens 11 am by Bill Adams
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

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.



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