



May/June 2004 Volume 3, Issue 3

M. Bloomers

A Garden Journal

"Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date"...Shakespeare

New at Café M. Bloomers...Amy Keilers

As we celebrate our first anniversary at Café M. Bloomers, you will see a few changes. The Café has expanded its product lines and has set up shop in what was formerly the Texas Room. The entrance to the new room is located under the awning to the left of the Café's former entryway. In this room, you will find the hostess stand and a plethora of goodies, including must-have kitchen items and fresh baked goods.

Café M. Bloomers' Gourmet Shoppe selection of kitchen items is stocked and ready to help you sharpen your culinary crafting abilities. The Gourmet Shoppe carries a full line of Nordic Ware decorative pans and Silicone Zone muffin, bundt, loaf, quiche and tart pans. Gadget gurus can find the perfect Pedrini measuring, chopping, slicing and dicing utensils, including OXO measuring cups, Zyliss choppers and Wüstaff cutlery.

For those not quite up to tackling the culinary work, let Café M. Bloomers do it for you. The Café's new entry room houses an expanded line of its spiced tea, coffees and baked goods such as breads, fresh cookies, cookies in a jar, and other sweet treats. You can even

place a special order for baked goods or find a gift among the selection of tea sets.

Café M. Bloomers' lunch serving time has been extended, and we will now serve lunch Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm. Desserts and beverages will continue to be served from 3 pm to 4 pm.

A new pager system is also in place. If there is a waiting list, the hostess will give you a pager to alert you when your table is ready so that you are free to shop, browse or relax in the garden area. So, as you enjoy a leisurely day at Martha's Bloomers, be sure to visit Café M. Bloomers' new addition.

Remember our call-ahead reservations are easy and convenient for you. Just call within 30-minutes of your arrival time and we will add your name to our list. We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Café M. Bloomers

Lunch Tuesday—Sunday 11 am to 3 pm.

Desserts and Beverages until 4 pm.

(936) 870-3277



The Sound of Music...New to Martha's Bloomers is the "Sounds of Nature" music. From more than 30 selections, you can pick a variety of beautiful instrumental CDs to fill your soul with the sound of beautiful familiar melodies, accented by the relaxing sound of running water, chirping birds, and many other garden sounds.

Listen to excerpts of all of the recordings at our CD display center.

"What is so sweet and dear as a prosperous morn in May"...William Watson



From the Hot House... David Albrecht, Horticulturist

Lichens... There have been many questions lately concerning the blue-green or grayish growth on the trunks and limbs of trees. Specifically I am referring to the lichen. Lichens are actually two or sometimes three organisms living and working together as a single unit. These three organisms are fungi, algae, and cyanobacteria.

Fungi are the major component of lichens, but fungi do not have the ability to manufacture food for themselves. They therefore rely on the algae and/or cyanobacteria to manufacture food for them through photosynthesis. The fungus supplies the water and other essential minerals for the algae and/or cyanobacteria to use in the manufacture process. In some cases the cyanobacteria can capture nitrogen from the air and use it as well.

As long as lichens can receive light from the sun, they can grow on many things including rock, sand, metal, plastic, dead wood, and

living bark. When seen on living bark, it is often thought to be harmful or damaging to the plant. With few exceptions, Lichens are generally not considered to be harmful to the plant on which it resides.

Since lichens require sunlight, one usually sees heavy infestations on trunks and limbs of trees that are very open to sunlight, thus the tale of "moss on the North side of the tree". Many times these open spots exist because the plant is in poor health. Therefore, good plant health is the best defense against lichens. In fact, there are currently no pesticides registered for the control of lichens commonly found on trees.

If one was concerned about the cosmetic appearance of the tree, they could physically remove the lichens. Since lichens are very, very, very slow to grow, it would be quite a length of time before they would reappear.



Basilmania!... Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm

History tells us that the word basil connects this genus with an ancient mythical beast, the basilisk, the mythical king of serpents. Ironic, isn't it, that the link between basil and basilisk gave this now-favorite a long-lasting bad reputation in the past; in the Victorian language of flowers, basil even symbolized hatred!

As summer approaches, Basilmania strikes— causing herb lovers to behave in a most irrational manner! We all rush to Martha's Bloomers in search of this greatest of all culinary herbs as the warm temperatures arrive.

No matter — all in good time, for the earliest basil plants can be potted up in clay pots and kept indoors in sunny spots, taken outdoors when a warm day occurs, moved into the sunshine wherever it appears, and then planted in the garden when the time is right. And the time is right when nighttime temperatures stay between 55° and 60° F consistently. When nighttime temperatures stay above 65°, basil responds with "thunderous growth", according to Dr. Art Tucker, co-author of The Big

Book of Herbs. You've probably witnessed the phenomenon!

A member of the very large mint family, basil has the square stem and opposite leaves we associate with mint, but a more detailed general description is fraught with difficulty, because of the great variety of leaf size, plant size, colors, scents and flavors of the basil family. About 64 species comprise the genus *Ocimum*, and they are native to the tropics and subtropics of both the Old and New world, especially Africa. Cultivars of basil may smell and taste of anise, camphor, cinnamon, clove, eucalyptus-carnation, lemon, thyme, or other scents. The spicy odors of many cultivars, not usually considered culinary herbs, can add unusual flavors and fragrances to quite ordinary recipes.

Only one remedy for Basilmania has been found: plant them all and enjoy the beauty, the fragrance, and the many flavors they bring to the garden and the kitchen.



"May and June. Soft syllables, gentle names for the two best months in the garden year"... Peter Loewer



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

Home, Sweet Home becomes Hive, Sweet Hive...The last few years since 9/11 have seen our society "cocooning" - settling in, getting comfortable, and creating a safe place in our homes for our families. Just as in nature, cocoons are temporary, emerging into butterflies or moths.

Now, the trend to cocoon is morphing into a new phase. "Hiving" is the current buzz word that describes many American lifestyles. We are now ready to reach out and reconnect, says J. Walter Smith, president of Yankelovich Partners. His recent consumer tracking trend coined the "hiving" term.

Hiving is about inviting others into your home to enjoy it with you. And the necessary ingredient (according to this floral designer) is flowers, flowers and lots of flowers!

Nothing more than flowers generates the warmth and welcome we want to extend to our guests as they enter our homes. Try a wreath on the front door as it is the first im-

pression of your hospitality.

A bucket of cut herbs provides fragrance in the kitchen. An old china cream or sugar bowl with short-stemmed garden flowers in the bathroom indicates your attention to detail.

And, of course, flowers on the dining table in an antique pitcher or favorite heirloom piece completes the setting. You will find this informal display of flowers throughout your home will make you smile, whether you have company or not.

Remember:

Mother's Day -- Sunday, May 9th!

Prom—corsage and boutonniere orders.

Graduation—party floral arrangements.

Bridal shower/luncheon—centerpieces.

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mixture on the foliage of your plants weekly or use a watering can to drench the soil around your plants or trees.

For disease and insect control add: ¼ cup garlic or garlic/pepper tea or 1 oz. orange oil. For fire ant killer add: 2 oz. citrus/orange oil to a gallon of Garrett Juice. The basic Garrett Juice recipe plus garlic is very good at controlling black spot on roses. Spray your rose bushes weekly with the Garrett Juice.

If you do not feel up to making your own Garrett Juice, the ready made Garrett Juice may be purchased in a ready to use liquid.

Organics... Sharon Marry, Staff

Warm Weather Worries...As we get into the warmer weather, we also encounter more disease and insect problems on our plants, vegetables, shrubs and trees. Everything that has been hibernating over the winter seems to come alive. A good organic program all year long can help combat these warmer weather worries.

Starting now and through the summer months, try the Dirt Doctor's (Howard Garrett's) recipe for Garrett Juice for a foliar or soil fertilizer. Mix the following in a gallon of water: 1 cup of compost tea, 1 oz. liquid seaweed, 1 oz. blackstrap molasses and 1 oz. apple cider vinegar. Spray this

Email Update

Due to recent software changes, some of our email addresses were lost. 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.

"Like a welcome summer rain, humor may suddenly cleanse and cool the earth the air and you"...Langston Hughes



Landscapes... Tim Kiphart, Landscape Staff

What do horticulture, botany, gardening, and ecology all have in common? If you answered plants, you are correct. While each of these disciplines share plants as a common denominator, only ecology looks at the direct and indirect interactions...cause and effect. So, if you are interested in backyard wildlife, our charge is to become **ecological gardeners**.

Take a Walk on the Wild Side: Pointers for Backyard Wildlife...With over six million people now inhabiting the planet, there is an overwhelming amount of habitat loss and fragmentation occurring, especially for wildlife. We all pretty much understand habitat loss, but habitat fragmentation may be a tad grayer. Simply put, as an area is reduced, fewer plants and animals can be supported.

The bottom line to sustaining backyard wildlife—non-game species like butterflies, birds to include hummingbirds, toads, frogs, lizards—is providing food, shelter, habitat, and water. Food and water are self-explanatory. Shelter is where an individual species resides, while habitat is the neighborhood.

Most urban yards are too sparsely planted to support wildlife. There is little food, shelter, or habitat. In order to promote habitat and shelter, wide beds, 6-20 feet, need to be planted densely, with a greater variation in types and heights of plants. "Vertical layering" and plant diversity is key to providing for the greatest wildlife diversity; mix small trees, large shrubs, small shrubs, perennials, ornamental grasses, and groundcovers. Lizards and frogs will utilize rock walls.

Water is a backyard wildlife magnet. Research has shown that during migration, neo-tropical birds can hear the sound of running water from as far away as two city blocks away. Water quenches thirst, cools the body, and gives our feathered friends a place to groom and frolic. A pond provides habitat for the glorious dragonflies, and melodious toads and frogs.

At our house, we use a large 36" ceramic saucer. Believe me it gets plenty of use

from the resident bluebirds. We stand at the kitchen window and watch the family of 11 splashing and preening. Hummingbirds love the plastic misting systems that are sold for outdoor evaporative cooling. Butterflies need a place to "puddle". Remember, to be usable; the water needs to be clean and accessible. A common mistake is making the source too deep.

Feeders are an excellent way to augment the available food choices. Augment is the key word here. In no way should feeders be the ONLY source of food. All this does is make co-dependent wildlife. We want to supplement and provide for greater wildlife diversity. The more nut, berry, and seed producing plants in the landscape the better. Leave hummingbird feeders up in the winter, and monitor for activity. Due to habitat destruction in Mexico, Central and South America, many more species are over-wintering here. Most prepackaged hummingbird food contains red dye, which is toxic and not necessary to attract hummers. A 4 to 1 solution of water and sugar is standard fare.

Insects play a vital role as a major food source, and only a tiny minority are detrimental to man and plant. Work on being more tolerant of insects. Most backyard wildlife is extremely sensitive to chemical exposure. Discontinue the use of broad-spectrum chemicals and let nature come back into equilibrium. Spot treat if necessary. A healthy garden does not have major insect problems if the web of life is working properly.

One point warrants repeating...DIVERSITY. If we plant a diverse landscape, it will increase our backyard wildlife potential, while it decreases the affects of environmental extremes, insects, and diseases.

NOTE: For those interested in backyard wildlife, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has a certification program—Texas Wildscape. See their website <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wildscapes/>



For the landscape of your dreams,
call our Environmental Designer, Wanda Jones (936) 825-7777 ext. 104

"The month of May has come, when every lusty heart beginneth to blossom"...Sir Thomas Malory



Ask Martha & Bloomer....

Dear Martha: Some of my house plants have outgrown my house! What should I do?

Martha here... Move them outdoors and plant them in the ground.

Dear Bloomer: Whew, do I need a catnap!

Bloomer here... Be careful not to over do it these busy gardening days. Work steadily but know when to stop. Drink plenty of water and stop to smell the flowers!

What's Cooking at Café M. Bloomers...Amy Keibers

Summertime is quickly approaching, and that means it is time to dust off the grill and get ready for some outdoor entertaining. If you are tired of an average grilling repertoire, enroll in one of Café M. Bloomers' cooking schools taught by Molly Fowler to spice up your summer cuisine. Daytime cooking school demonstrations are 1½ hours long and each attendee will be served a sampler lunch plate of all recipes. Evening cooking schools are 2½ hours long and students will enjoy each item prepared throughout the evening.

Upcoming cooking schools include:

"Easy Patio Entertaining" - May 11, 10:30 am

"Outdoor Grilling" - May 18, 6:30 pm

"Cool off the Kitchen" - June 15, 10:30 am

"Mexican Fiesta" - June 29, 6:30 pm

For a complete list of cooking schools, dates and times, check the calendar in this newsletter. For more information call

Café M. Bloomers

Lunch Tuesday—Sunday 11 am to 3 pm.

Desserts and Beverages until 4 pm.

(936) 870-3277



Café M. Bloomers

Lunch served Tuesday—Sunday 11 am to 3 pm.
Desserts & Beverages until 4 pm.

Enjoy a glass of wine and lunch out on the patio.

*"A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay;
A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon"...Rhyme from England*



Calendar of Events.....

Perennials — Saturday, May 1 at 11 am. Presented by Raymond Blasingame, Treeseach Farms.

Orchids for Mom — Saturday, May 8 at 11 am. Presented by Dr. Rainer Fink.

Cooking Class—Easy Patio Entertaining —Tuesday, May 11 at 10:30 am. Presented by Chef Molly Fowler.

Building a Home Water Garden — Saturday, May 15 at 11 am. Presented by David Albrecht, Staff Horticulturist .

Cooking Class—Grilling —Tuesday, May 18 at 6:30 pm. Presented by Chef Molly Fowler.

Water Gardening with Nature - Saturday, June 5 at 11 am. Presented by Karen Breeman.

Mother/Daughter Tea Party Fare—Tuesday, June 8 at 10:30 am. Presented by Chef Molly Fowler.

Cooking Class—Cool off the Kitchen —Tuesday, June 15 at 10:30 am. Presented by Chef Molly Fowler.

Drip Irrigation - Saturday, June 19 at 11 am. Presented by David Smith, Licensed Irrigator.

Cooking Class—Spanish Tapas Make a Meal of Small Bites —Tuesday, June 29 at 6:30 pm. Presented by Chef Molly Fowler.

Cooking class registration confirmed by credit card required. Daytime Cooking Classes Cost \$25 per person and Evening Classes Cost \$40 per person. Limited Seating.

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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