



November/December 2005 Volume 4, Issue 5

# M. Bloomers

## A Garden Journal

*"Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring, happy bells"...Lord Alfred Tennyson*

### *Ring in the Holidays... Shirleen McDonald, Staff*

**The tree is up, the store aglow...our garden awaits.** We invite you, our valued customer, to join us on Friday, November 18 for our annual **Holiday in the Garden!** The evening's holiday festivities, refreshments and light hors d'oeuvres will be from 4 pm to 9 pm.

Every corner will be bursting with the sights and sounds of the holiday season.

Be inspired by the enchantment of **Holiday in the Garden.** Bring your holiday shopping list and receive free, festive gift-bag wrapping with each purchase.

Should you care to enjoy dinner during the evening, Café M. Bloomers will be serving a sumptuous holiday buffet from 4 pm to 8 pm. The buffet will cost \$15 per person.

A cash bar will be available during the evening's festivities.



And to ring in the New Year, enjoy a special evening at the Café...bring that special someone for a **New Year's Eve Candlelight Dinner** on Saturday, December 31. There will be two seatings, with the first seating at 5:30 pm and a second seating at 8:00 pm. The cost is \$27.95 per person. Beer and wine will be available.

For New Year's Eve Dinner reservations, call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277.

Make your reservations early!!!

# *Happy Holidays!*



*Please note that Café M. Bloomers will be closed for lunch on Friday, November 18 to prepare for our annual Holiday In The Garden Holiday Event.*

## *Cool Weather Landscaping... Vickie Deike, Landscape Designer*

**C'mon cool weather!** This year our tolerance for the hot, humid climate has definitely been pushed to the limits. Since summer seemed to last through October, we may have skipped fall entirely and be going into winter. With the cool weather here it's time to switch gardening gears. There are a few things that we can do to take advantage of the change in seasons.

While in our climate you can plant all year, right now is the best time to be planting or transplanting. This is especially true for larger plants or trees. Even though they are going dormant and not putting on leaves or branches, the roots will continue to grow throughout the winter. Plants "come out" in the spring from the energy stored in the root system during the winter. It gives them a head start on spring and will best prepare them to withstand the heat of the summer.

Fall planting for perennials is also ideal. Even though they will go dormant fairly soon after planting, their roots will continue to grow. Once spring rolls around these flowering plants will bush out bigger and have more blooms than if they had just been planted that spring.

Transplanting or relocating plants in your beds is always stressful to plants because so many roots have to be cut. Doing this in cooler weather when the transpiration rate is lower gives the reduced root system a better chance

of keeping the plant supplied with the nutrients it needs. Also, keeping your transplants moist will be a much easier task with the cool weather.

Because our winters are wet as well as cool there is almost no need for supplemental watering. Turn your irrigation system off and enjoy saving money on your water bill. If we are unusually dry, run the system manually on an as needed basis only. If you do have new plants or transplants, watering them by hand will make sure they get enough water without wasting water on other beds or lawn that does not need it.

It is always good to maintain a thick layer of mulch (3"-4") over all planting beds. It keeps in moisture, smothers weeds, prevents erosion, and provides a constant source of decomposing organic matter. In the winter you can use mulch as insulation. Cover any plants that are border line hardy for our climate with several extra inches of mulch. In case of severe freezing, covering with blankets is still a good idea, but if you are unable to do that, at least the mulch will offer the best protection.

As always, the Martha's Bloomers Landscaping Department is ready to assist you in all your gardening endeavors. Please call us for design work, estimates, or advice.

Contact Vickie at **(936) 870-6622** or  
vickie@marthasbloomers.com



### *Martha's Bloomers' Landscape Services*

#### *Custom Garden Design*

Unique designs created for specific needs and styles

#### *Landscape & Irrigation Installation*

Trust our expertise to put in your new landscape

#### *Water Gardens*

Backyard Ponds, Waterfalls, Streams, Disappearing Fountains

**Vickie Deike**

**(936) 870-6622**

*"The hardest arithmetic for us to master  
is that which enables us to count our blessings"...Eric Hoffer*



## *What's Cooking at the Café... Pamela Hays, Staff*

**Gift Baskets are Now Available...** Christmas is quickly approaching, and it's time to make your holiday preparations. This season Café M. Bloomers is offering a variety of gift baskets, including tea gift baskets featuring our signature orange spiced tea and demitasse cups and saucers. Coffee gift baskets feature the Café's line of flavored coffees. The

Café is also offering gift baskets filled with baked goods and packaged in edible peppermint bowls or on edible peppermint trays.

Come by the gourmet shop or tea room and order your gift baskets now to avoid the rush.

For more info call Pamela Hays at the Café.

(936) 870-3277



## *Tea Time at the Café*

**The taking of tea with friends is one of life's leisurely pleasures.** Confidences and quiet laughter flow as freely as the tea itself, while bonds of friendship form over plates of bite-sized sweets and savories. The tradition of afternoon tea, however, began as a solitary affair. Anna, the seventh Duchess of Bedford, and lady-in waiting to Queen Victoria, was troubled with a "sinking feeling" while suffering the long stretch between lunch and

dinner. Her cure? A daily dose of tea and cakes.

We invite you to join us for the last 2005 Sunday dose of sweets, savories, and friends. This "Silver Bells Tea" will be Sunday, December 4 from 2pm to 4 pm. Gather together your friends and family and enjoy this last quiet time before the holiday rush. All foods will be holiday themed and there will be plenty of them! Call the Café at (936) 870-3277 for your reservation confirmed by credit card.



## *The Perfect Holiday Party*

**The Party Season is Upon Us!!** The holiday event calendar is filling quickly, so make your holiday party reservations early. From an hors d'oeuvres or dessert party to a luncheon or dinner party, Café M. Bloomers has special menus to fit all of your holiday party

needs. While the Café does not offer offsite catering, party trays are available for pick up. For more information or to book a party, please contact Café M. Bloomers' Events Coordinator Bonnie Larsen at (936) 870-3277.



*Café M. Bloomers will be closed for the holidays on Saturday, December 24; Sunday, December 25, Monday, December 26 and on Sunday, January 1.*

## *Be a Winner... Shirleen McDonald, Staff*

Joyce Sampson is the second winner of our Be A Winner Contest! Joyce submitted her recipe for Pecan Delight Pie. She received a gift certificate for two for lunch at Café M. Bloomers! Thank you Joyce for sending us this delicious recipe!

### **Pecan Delight Pie**

1 cup crushed graham crackers  
1/2 cup chopped pecans                      1 cup sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla                                      1 tsp. baking power  
3 egg whites    8oz. whipped cream or cool whip  
1 can sliced peaches, pineapple or apricots

Combine graham crackers and pecans. Set aside. Beat together till stiff 3 egg whites, sugar, vanilla and baking powder. Fold in crumb-nut mixture. Bake in well buttered pie plate at 325° for 30 minutes. Cool and top with sweetened whipped cream or cool whip. Top with well drained canned peach slices, pineapple or apricots.

If you want to "Be a Winner" just send in your favorite recipe, garden tip or question to gardenjournal@marthasbloomers.com.

Please keep your recipes or garden tips coming and watch to see if you are our next "Winner"!



*"For man, Autumn is a time of harvest, a gathering together"... Edwin Way Teale*



## *Orange, Not Just for Autumn... Tricia Barksdale, Petals 'n Bloomers*

Often we see design themes that amount to only a fad. These ideas are the "hot" look for awhile, but then fade out. This is not the case with the Asian influence, according to Mary Liz Curtin, a noted trend forecaster. She says the Pacific Rim expression is not going away. The main backdrop for this Asian style is shifting from red to orange (like it or not!). If solid orange is not to your fancy, you may try poppy cinnamon or tangerine colors. Any variation of orange is a "happy" color and sets the tone for the room. To accessorize with fresh

flowers you may want to explore these varieties that range from peach to full-blown orange:

Gerbera Daisy	Mini Calla Lily
"Milva" Rose	Ranunculus
Iceland Poppy	Alstromeria
Hypericum berries	Gloriosa Lily
Godetia.	

**Petals 'n Bloomers — (936) 825-8577**

## *Poison Ivy...A Personal Look... Gay Houston, Staff*

Uncleared woods hold a fascination for anyone interested in plants. Two years ago, I happened upon a few acres that seemed to have it all—two streams, old tall trees with undergrowth of many varieties, rocky open spaces with myriad wildflowers, shrubs, and thickets. So they became mine (and my bank's). Now with a simple little house full of windows, I enjoy my domain.

Yet, as I walk the open spaces and cleared paths, I realize I often dwell on the irritants—poison ivy, greenbrier, fire ants, and bull nettle. One beautiful fall evening I stopped to

think about how often I fret over the few "noxious" vines among the beauty. They are there, but above and among them are the wonderful other natives that peacefully co-exist. The many varieties of trees that I count overwhelm me. Seeing the brilliant blooms of the red buckeye, the surprise of a blooming false foxglove, and the flash of a cardinal—these are the things I look for. Overlook the poison ivy; it is there just as other unpleasant elements of life are present for all of us. Beauty and calm are ever-present and far more important.

## *Fertilizing Naturally... Sharon Murry, Staff*

Fall is an ideal time for planting many different types of perennials, cool season annuals, bulbs, shrubs, trees and numerous herbs and vegetables. Planting them in an organically rich, well draining soil will help establish the roots during its winter growth.

A very good all around natural fertilizer to use, especially for bulbs, is natural Bone Meal. Bone meal helps develop sturdy root systems, hastens maturity and stimulates the plants growth. When planting your bulbs, apply a ½ to 2 teaspoons, depending on the bulb size, in the soil approximately 2 inches below the bulb. The N-P-K ratio of most Bone meal is 0-10-0.

For lush green growth, many bulb enthusiasts also use Blood Meal. It is a high nitro-

gen, natural food used for luxuriant deep green foliage. Sprinkle lightly on the soil surface around the plant. Work it in and water gently. Be sure to wash off any blood meal that gets on the plant leaves as blood meal is capable of burning the leaves. It has an N-P-K ratio of approximately 12-0-0.

Bone and Blood meal can also be purchased as a mixture for applying a natural supply of Nitrogen and Phosphate in one application. The combination meal has an N-P-K ratio of approximately 6-7-0.

Bone and Blood meal, either by itself or a combination of the two is ideal for roses, pansies, violets, gladiolus, mums, shrubs and vegetables.

*"Thanksgiving...Not a good day to be my pants"... Kevin James*





## *Bulbine... David Albrecht, Horticulturist*

**How about a fast and easy to grow, drought-resistant, low-maintenance, evergreen plant that blooms almost non-stop all year round?** This is not a new plant at Martha's Bloomers, but one that is very under utilized and deserves more attention.

Bulbine, *bulbine frutescens*, also referred to as a bulbinella, snake flower, cat's tail, and burn jelly plant is a member of the lily family. It is a cousin to aloe, hence the name burn jelly plant. The sap from the leaves of this plant can be used just like aloe vera for the treatment of such things as burns, scrapes, rashes and insect bites since the sap contains glycol-proteins that possess anti-bacterial properties.

The genus *Bulbine*, gets its name from the Latin word *bulbus*, meaning bulb or onion. However, there really are not bulbs at all in the genus *Bulbine*. Bulbine's origins are the dry grasslands along the Southern coast of Africa.

The leaves of bulbine are tall and cylindrical,

similar to onions. But, unlike onions, the stems continually branch and grow taller until they fall over making a larger and fuller clump to two feet.

The flowers are either orange or yellow, depending on which plant you have, and are held on spikes about one foot above the plant foliage. Bulbine blooms heaviest during the warmest months of the year, and an occasional bloom may appear during the cooler months of the year if it is in a particularly warm, protected, and sunny location.

Bulbine prefers full sun and a well drained bed, since it originates from a dry region. Over watering or a soggy soil tends to make it rot. Bulbine will tolerate a limited amount of shade, but will get leggy and cease blooming if subjected to too much shade.

One of bulbine's most appealing characteristics is its cold hardiness. In fact, *Bulbine frutescens* is the only one in the genus what will survive freezing temperatures.

Here, at Martha's Bloomers, bulbine has remained evergreen in a bed located on the southwest side of our store during a hard freeze of 16°F.



## *Invest in Spring... Gay Houston, Staff*

**The narcissus is a flower that doesn't deserve association with the self-centered young Greek, Narcissus.** We can read the classical myth, but plant the beautiful flower that has such a rich history and has been passed down for hundreds of years.

The daffodil, jonquil, narcissus (paper white) are all members of the same species. It originated in the Mediterranean area and has been planted by gardeners all over the world for many centuries. The naturalized species found throughout the United States were brought over by early colonists and traveled West as our country was settled.

Certain varieties do better in our area. *Narcissus tazetta* in several versions is often found naturalized in our area. The late blooming

varieties do best for us and are worth planting in areas that do not get frequent early mowing. Try some along fencerows where the foliage can be allowed to grow until they naturally die back in hot weather. They usually bloom in late February or March, but must be left alone until the wide, flat green foliage makes and stores enough food for bloom next spring.

After they have gone dormant (usually when the weather turns really warm) they do not require much water. They really do best when dry during this dormant time, so plant in areas that are not over watered and have good drainage.

Martha's Bloomers carries the best types of narcissus for beds or lawns, and they are a great addition to your perennial flowers.



### *Grimes County Master Gardeners 2006 Class*

Master Gardeners Class will take place each Tuesday, January 24 thru April 18, 2006 from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Classes will be held at the Navasota Center and the cost will once again be \$100 per person. Applications will be ready soon! If you have any questions, please contact Alvie Vesperman at (936) 894-3274.

*"Holly and mistletoe, candles and bells, I know the message that each of you tells..."* Leland B. Jacobs



## *Calendar of Events...*

**Saturday Seminars** - and they are Free!

**“Giving or Getting...Holiday Orchid Care”** - Saturday, December 10 at 11 am. Presented by Dr. Rainer Fink, Orchid Specialist.

**“Growing Fruit-Bearing Trees and Shrubs for Southeast Texas”** - Saturday, January 21 at 11 am. Presented by Gary Price, Trees USA.

**“How to Make Hypertufa Pots”** - Saturday, February 11 at 11 am. Presented by Helen Quinn.

**“Colorful Gardens for Sun or Shade”** - Saturday, March 25 at 11 am. Presented by Dr. Bill Welch.

### **Please Join Us for Our Annual Holiday Reception -**

**“Holiday in the Garden” Wine & Cheese Reception -**

Friday, November 18 from 4 pm to 9 pm.

*Everyone Welcome!*

Holiday Buffet 4 pm to 8 pm. Buffet \$15 pp.

Shopping until 9 pm. Complimentary festive holiday gift bags!

**Teas, Luncheons & Dinners** - Call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277 for your reservations confirmed by credit card.

**“Silver Bells” Tea** - Sunday, December 4 from 2 pm to 4pm. \$15 pp.

**“New Year’s Eve Candlelight” Dinner** - Saturday, December 31 - Two seatings: 5:30 pm and 8:00 pm. \$27.95 pp. Beer & Wine available. Make your reservations early!!!

**“British Gardens” Tea & Demonstration** - Sunday, February 12 from 2 pm to 4 pm. \$15pp. Presented by Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm.

**“Celebration of Lavender” Luncheon and Seminar** - Saturday, March 4 from 11 am to 3 pm. \$25pp. Presented by Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm and Tricia Barksdale, Petals ‘n Bloomers.

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

To Register for Free Saturday Seminars: Call (936) 870-4044 or  
email: [registration@Marthasbloomers.com](mailto:registration@Marthasbloomers.com).

We welcome your suggestions for future seminars.  
Please email to: [suggestions@MarthasBloomers.com](mailto:suggestions@MarthasBloomers.com)

For Cooking Classes, Teas and Luncheon Reservations confirmed by credit card,  
please call Café M. Bloomers at (936) 870-3277.



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**Store Hours** Mon-Sat 9 - 6 Sun 11 - 5 **Martha's Bloomers** (936) 870-4111  
**Tea Room Serving** Tues-Sun 11 - 4 **Café M. Bloomers** (936) 870-3277

