

Big Country Master Gardener Association

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Location: Taylor County Extension Office

Meeting Called to Order: 7:30 p.m.

Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

Prepared by: Dawn Graham

In attendance: Dawn Graham, Donna Gutierrez, Ellen Call, Chrystal McCutchen, Cindy Torres, Barbara Owens, Carrie Wright, Julie Tillman, John & Lucy Geib, Jacque Klock, Cathy Page, Stephanie & Pleas McKee, Ann Butler, Mysti & Gaylon Merritt, Jean Seymore, Jackie Sledge, Holly & Thomas White, Susan Perry, Grace Broyles, Ann Clark, Kathy Turner, Rachel Perkins, Barbara Neuman, Donna Wolfer, Jocelyn Furr, Anne Pierce, Rebekah Oakley, Jo Rake, Ellen Presley, and Dawnyel Luckie (Extension)

Call to Order (7:30)

- Meeting called to order by the presiding officer at 7:30 p.m.
 - Minutes of the previous meeting were available on the BCMGA website (password: BCMGA, all caps).
 - Motion to approve minutes as written: **Anna Clark**; seconded by **Ellen Call**; motion carried.
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Treasurer's Report (7:35)

- Presented by **Kathy Turner**.
- Summary of account balances:
 - **Base Shares (Savings):** \$1,015.46
 - **Special Shares (Dues/Events):** \$419.29 (for parties/picnics)
 - **Pike Fund:** \$10.74
 - **Checking Account:** Beginning \$3,627.52 → Withdrawals \$2,669.75 → Ending \$957.77
 - **Money Market:** Beginning \$70,005.20 → Interest \$50.58 → Ending \$70,010.26
 - **Total Assets:** \$76,105.86

- Notable expenses:
 - Hanging baskets for zoo planters (some reimbursed).
 - Broad fork purchased for Maple Street project.
 - Water bill: \$222.20.
 - Planting mixture for plots (\$295.20).
 - Rain tank gutter repair from rodeo incident.
 - No questions raised; motion accepted as presented.
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Budget & Finance – Maple Street Project (7:45) Kathy Turner.

- **Overview:** Maple Street site chosen for ongoing “EarthKind” demonstration project.
- Incorporates compost, expanded shale, and mulch (3” layers each).
- Several members attended training and are conducting related projects.
- **Original Budget:** \$11,255; **Spent:** \$7,343.09; **Remaining:** \$3,911.91.
- **Request:** Increase budget to **\$29,005** (↑ \$17,750) to finish greenhouse area and soil improvement.
- Adjustments proposed:
 - Storage/gutters/pergola: \$2,500 → \$7,500.
 - Hardscape/raised beds: \$1,500 → \$8,000.
 - Additional plants: +\$1,000.
 - Miscellaneous: +\$5,000.
- Approved after motion by **Thomas White** and second by **Ellen Call**; motion carried.
- Discussion included:
 - Greenhouse at Maple Street not heated/cooled; considering solar setup.
 - Irrigation improvements planned (possible drip system).
 - Texas Sage research trial to compare seven varieties (Rio Bravo, Green Cloud, Laredo, Purple Rain, etc.).
 - Documenting growth for educational/research awards.

Plant Sale Committee (8:00) Kathy Turner.

- **Fall Plant Sale:** October 6–10 at the Taylor County Expo Center.
- Online sales: **October 8 (Wed 8 a.m.) – Oct 10 (Fri noon).**
- In-person sale: **Saturday, Oct 11, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.**
- Pickup window: **Friday, 2–6 p.m.** (to comply with 24-hour tax exemption).
- Notes:
 - Volunteers needed for hauling trips to Austin, Seagoville, and Weatherford.
 - Larger trees and perennials to be included (Desert Willow, Texas Sage, Golden Lead Ball, etc.).
 - Warehouse-style SKU system to streamline labeling and pulling plants.
 - Lunch coordination handled by **Nelda Lawrence**—members to sign up for entrees, salads, sides, and desserts.

Membership & Volunteer Hours (8:10)

- **Report by Jackie Sledge:**
 - **409.5** volunteer hours logged in August.
 - **127.75** continuing education hours.
 - Total: **537.25 hours by 52 members and interns.**
 - **107** contacts recorded (some missing data to be corrected later).

Project Updates (8:15) Jackie Sledge.

- **Modern Living:** Needs cleanup post-fair; debris and planters to be refreshed.
- **Demo Beds:** Watering continues Wednesdays and Fridays; still struggling under oak shade.
- **Hope Garden:** Progressing well.
- **Greenhouse:** Recently cleaned and nearly empty—ready for propagation.

- **Maple Street:** Active with multiple projects underway.
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Community & Educational Programs (8:20) Jackie Sledge.

- **Abilene State Park Pollinator Project:** Two-acre pollinator bed funded by grant; BCMGA providing plant sourcing and guidance.
 - **NCCIL Children’s Museum (Oct. 4):** Gardening-themed family day, bilingual presentation by **Jocelyn Fur**.
 - **Haunted Abilene (Oct. 24–25):** BCMGA to host children’s garden activity area (“Pirate” theme).
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Awards (8:25) Ann Clark.

- **Busy Bee Award:** Grace Boyles — for fruit and pecan tree research, library presentations, and article contributions.
 - **You Rock Award:** Doris Oltmann — for leadership in event planning and consistent volunteer service.
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Special Events (8:27) Stephanie McKee.

- **Soup & Stew Party:** October 18, 5 p.m., at Donna Wolfer’s home (with plant swap).
 - Sign-up sheet for soups, stews, breads, crackers, and desserts.
 - **Christmas Party:** December 9, 6 p.m., theme “Feliz Navidad”.
 - Catered by Rosa’s Café; decorations by Kulani McDermott.
 - Collecting décor (sombreros, blankets, etc.).
 - Charity recipient TBD.
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Elections (8:28) Kathy Turner.

- **Nominations Announced:**
 - Vice President: Kathy Turner

- Secretary: Pleas McKee
 - No additional nominations. Voting scheduled for **October meeting**.
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Extension & Marketing Updates (8:30) Dawnyel Luckie.

- Website updates: new “Members Only” section (password: BCMGA).
 - Added sign-up sheet and minutes pages, updated newsletter archive.
 - Demo bed and project pages in development with photos.
 - Working with County to improve demo bed water supply and explore adding electricity.
 - **Beekeeping 101 Program:** October 3 at Sadie Grace Farms (9 a.m.–1 p.m.); certification testing 1–5 p.m.
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Announcements & Adjournment (8:31)

- Next herb team meeting: Saturday, Sept. 20, 9 a.m. at Mezamiz Coffee House.
- Motion to adjourn by **Kathy Turner**, second by **John Geib**; meeting adjourned at **8:33 p.m.**
- Thanks was extended to all members who brought food.