



# Horti-Bull

## HORTICULTURAL BULLETIN

Published Monthly by the SAN ANTONIO MEN'S GARDEN CLUB  
A club for Men and WOMEN interested in all aspects of gardening

[WEBSITE: mensgardenclubofsa.org](http://www.mensgardenclubofsa.org)



Volume 2025

January

Number 01



**Alberto Del Rio**

### THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Thanks so much for your support. It was such a pleasure to attend our 55th Annual Christmas Dinner. So many of our members working together created a festive event and the company was magnificent. It was a real joy to see so many of our membership. We were even further blessed to have a group of allied military

officers present who are students at the US Air Force Language School at Lackland AFB. A very special night indeed!

This time of the year I reflect on the many blessings in my life. One big blessing is being part of the Men's Garden Club of San Antonio. I love the continuous learning, making new friends, the camaraderie with others who appreciate Nature, being outside in the natural world, and working with other good gardeners who are trying to leave the world a better place. I'm grateful to be a part of the MGCSA. It feels like an extended family.

As I reflect on the New Year, you might agree, gardens can change the world. You might have only a simple garden, but this simple garden can profoundly affect everyone who joins you for an evening on the patio, or a late-night fireside chat.

As gardeners, we especially appreciate the transition from Fall to Winter. We enjoy the screaming red foliage of our Big-Tooth Maple trees, and crepe myrtles, cutting back perennials like Lantana and Salvia, mulching beds and removing summer annuals. As you are cleaning your garden, and digging up old plants, pot them up now for our early Spring plant sales, or to share with others. You might also bring unwanted calendars, and catalogs, and even seed packets to our meetings.

Thankfully, winter passes quickly here in San Antonio. Now is the time to plant more Oxblood/Schoolhouse lilies, Byzantine gladiolus, and bullet-proof Crinum. They are all care-free, drought resistant, and stop-traffic beautiful when in bloom.

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season with friends and family, and lots of delicious holiday goodies.

Hope to see you at our January meeting.

**January 2025 Meeting**  
At the  
**HOME AND GARDEN CENTER**  
**6:30 pm For Fellowship**  
**Meeting starts at 7PM**

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**Our first speaker for the New Year**  
will be **ANDREW WARING**  
See page 4 for more information

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Men's Garden Club of San Antonio  
Monthly Meeting  
January 2, 2025  
**Cold Protection Plan**

**Refreshments for January**  
**A thru L**

**ITS YOUR TURN.** A thru L's, we encourage you to stay after the meeting to help clean and straighten up so everyone can leave as soon as possible.



## Horti-Bull Gardening Calendar for January 2025

From Dr. Calvin Finch

The most important issue for the month of January is usually cold protection. All the subtropical plants including Porter weed, bougainvillea, tropical hibiscus, and plumeria should be in a shelter where they escape the daily temperatures that are 40 degrees or less. In the flower beds cover cyclamen and primula with an agricultural fiber that is available in most nurseries when the temperature is forecast to fall below 30 degrees.

To protect the citrus such as lemon and limes that are in containers roll them into the greenhouse or put them under a tent like cover mounted on a frame of plastic pipe. Overlap the edges of all the covers far enough that you can weigh them down with bricks or rocks to resist the winds that usually accompany freezing temperatures. If temperatures fall below 26 degrees, provide a heat source from poultry lamps or mechanic's lights. Make sure the bulbs used for a heat source are not LED technology.

Pansies and violas and most of the vegetables except tomatoes and peppers will tolerate freezing temperatures. Harvest all the full-size fruit from the tomatoes and peppers and let it ripen in the house if a freeze is predicted. Most of the winter flowers will survive, but most, especially snapdragons and stocks will stop blooming until the spring after a substantial freeze. If you still have begonias and pentas surviving from the summer expect all but the most sheltered to freeze in January.

Poinsettias are a favorite holiday plant for inside the house. If they are treated right, they can remain showy for over a year. Keep them out of direct blasts of sunlight from a window or from the cold in front of a door to the outside. Heat from a radiator can also end their attractiveness but the usual problem results when they are not watered adequately. Poinsettia are not xeriscape plants, Water them every other day if possible. It also works to place ice cubes in the container twice per week and then soak them in the sink once/week.

There is still the opportunity to plant winter flowers and vegetables in January. Soak sweet pea seed overnight and then plant the seed against a trellis formed by the unused tomato cages. Transplants of cyclamen, primula, snapdragons, stocks, calendula, alyssum, pansies, violas, and dianthus can still be planted in January.

English peas can also still be planted in the vegetable garden. Sugar peas work especially well because they mature so quickly. Plant onion transplants every 4 inches in the vegetable garden and then harvest the second and third plants as green onions. There are lots of choices of yellow, red, and white short-day onions that will produce full sized bulbs by June 1. 1015Y and red creole are my favorites. Plant spinach and broccoli transplants and you should still be able to harvest a crop of radish, carrots, beets, leaf lettuce and turnips planted by seed.

At the end of the month plant potatoes. Your favorite nursery or feed store should have red and white seed potatoes. Cut them so each piece has at least one eye and plant them every 3 feet in a trench 18 inches deep in the garden. If your garden is not 18 inches deep achieve the recommended soil depth by mounding over the planted seed. Add soil over the potatoes in the trench as the plants emerge from the soil. Make your first dig to harvest potatoes when the plants bloom. Harvest the balance of the potatoes when the plant tops brown.

San Antonio is a marvelous place to observe birds, and the winter visitors are especially rewarding to observe if you provide suet, water, and seeds in addition to having a wide variety of plants that provide food, cover and nesting sites. Now is a good time to plant the shrubs and trees that provide the food, cover, and nesting sites.

### MGCSA Officers for 2024

<b>President</b>	Alberto Del Rio	210-518-5097
<b>1st V.P</b>	John Opiela	210-532-5963
<b>2nd V.P.</b>	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466
<b>3rd V.P</b>	Vacant	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Paul Huegel	210-385-9072
<b>Secretary</b>	Jeff Brown	210-387-5092
<b>Chaplain</b>	Vallerie Hartfield	210-240-1466

#### Directors

##### 2023-2025

Barbara Lamm	210-648-8001
Leonard Martinez	210-514-0584

##### 2024-2026

David Badorski	815-436-3970
Ken Wolfram	210-788-0177

##### 2025-2027

Gary Ross	210-836-4952
Andrew Waring	210-307-9704

#### Other

<b>EX Officio</b>	Elena Schriener	210-218-4155
<b>HB Advertising</b>	Paul Huegel	
<b>Historian</b>	Paul Huegel	
<b>Webmaster</b>	Ivan Roman	
<b>HB Editor</b>	Larry Cromer	210-521-5350

### MEMBERSHIP

Attendance: December 6, annual Installation of Officers and Christmas Pot Luck Dinner: 70

We welcome all new members and guests.

If needed, contact Paul Huegel to update your membership and to pay your dues.

Happy Birthday to all January births.

Healing and recovery to all who are sick.

Strength, comfort, peace, and love to all who are coping with losses.

*HAPPY  
NEW YEAR*

## The Installation of Officers and Christmas Pot Luck Dinner by Paul D Huegel

The MGCSA 55th Annual Christmas Party and Officer Installation took place on Friday December 6, 2024 at the Oblate Grotto St Eugene Hall. This event was well attended with 70 members and guests. Our Coordinator and Committee Chairman, Ida Santiago-Maldonado did an excellent job of managing this successful event. It took many hands to make the 2024 Christmas Celebration the great event that we enjoyed. Special thanks to Darlene Badorski for her guidance and assistance in preparation for the event and assisting with setup and decorations. John and Betty Opiela were key volunteers in setting up tables and moving poinsettia plants from the greenhouse. Paul Huegel set up his renowned International Wine Bar, which did not disappoint. In addition to the wine bar Paul volunteered to be the grill master for all meats the club provided, which included brisket, pork spare ribs and loin, chicken drumettes and carved ham. Larry Cromer designed and printed the program and took photos at the festivities. Thanks also to all the members that brought their delicious side dishes to enhance our fine meal. A special Thanks to Fr. Richard Hall, for the use of the venue. Thanks also to Jeff Brown as the music chairman. Thanks also to Joe Shinnars who did his usual great and humorous job installing the incoming officers and board. And of course, to our President Elena Schrinier who welcomed everyone at the beginning and served as our mistress of ceremony throughout the night. This year we had some special guests from the Language

School at Lackland Air Force Base at the invitation of their hosts and garden club members, Thomas and Nichiyo Sako. The attendees got to mingle and talk with seven military junior officers from the Japanese Army, Navy and Air Force who got to learn our Christmas party and installations traditions, practice their English and enjoy a barbecue pot luck dinner. They also participated in the 38 raffled Christmas gifts donated by our chairperson Ida Santiago-Maldonado and the traditional poinsettia table centerpiece raffle. Other special guest were Dr Calvin Finch who has supported the club with his monthly Horti-Bull articles for over 35 years in addition to promoting the club at various times on his weekly radio show at Milbergers Nursery.

The formal Installation of officers at this year's Christmas celebration is where we honored our incoming officers and board for the year 2025. Congratulations to our incoming officers: Alberto Del Rio, president, John Opiela, first vice president, Vallerie Hartfield, second vice president, Jeffry Brown, secretary, and Paul Huegel, treasurer; and Ken Wolfgram and Andrew Waring, directors. The installation ceremony was conducted by Joe Shinnars, who added a touch of humor to the swearing in of each of the officers. The presentation of the President's Award Trophy went to two of our most deserving members, Charles Bartlett and Alberto Del Rio. We all benefit each meeting from their volunteerism and many plant and monetary donations as well as their years of horticultural expertise they share with the membership. While many members and friends helped with the many tasks associated with putting on this event, we hope more members will rise to the occasion and help next year. We can always use your help at all our events.



**Our Officers for 2025**  
From left to right: Alberto Del Rio, President; Vallerie Hartfield, 2nd Vice President; Paul Huegel, Treasurer; Jeff Brown, Secretary; Joe Shinnars, Installer; John Opiela, 1st Vice President; Gary Ross, Board of Directors, Ken Wolfgram, Board of Directors



## THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD TROPHY



Alberto Del Rio and Charles Bartlett show off their 2024 President's Award Trophy, while Paul Huegel smiles agreeingly. Alberto and Charles work closely together in their horticultural endeavors and have generously shared their knowledge and the fruits of their labor with the garden club.

January Speaker  
Mr. Andrew Waring



Our speaker on January 2, 2025 will be no stranger to you. He is a Men's Garden Club member and director Andrew Waring. He sez: My presentation is titled "Cold Protection Plan". I will review some basic tips and techniques on how to develop a plan. The presentation is expected to review planning techniques for the Bexar County area and include a quick review of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map updates.

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## COMMENTS ON THE HORTI-BULL

We want to hear  
from you!  
What do you like?  
What do you dis-  
like?

January 2025



## BLUEBONNETS

By Charles Bartlett

The stately and spectacular Texas bluebonnet is one of our most beloved native plants, and one that has undergone some amazing improvements in the recent past.

For years, as you've driven along our highways or along country roads, you've probably seen that one-in-a-million white bluebonnet in the midst of thousands of Texas bluebonnets. Traditionally of a beautiful blue color, now, through the work of a number of hybridizers and plant scientists, we now have them in blue, white, pink, red, and maroon. Will orange bluebonnets soon be on the horticultural horizon?

It's taken a lot of work on the part of horticulturists investigating genetics, hybridization, culture, and germination techniques. Our own Dr. Jerry Parsons, working with his group of dedicated volunteers, greatly advanced the search for various colored bluebonnets. His years of research provided detailed information on bluebonnet seed germination techniques and large-scale growing procedures and made bluebonnet plants abundantly available in the green industry for the first time.

For years, many native plant enthusiasts have thought that native plants need little or no care and no fertilization. And, although it is true that native plants can grow in the shadow of other weeds and Johnson grass, in dry ditches, and in dense shade, it's been shown that many native plants can respond greatly to special care and fertilizer. Thus, it's true, as shown by Dr. Parsons, bluebonnets are greatly improved by early and continuous fertilization. Some years ago, when the Men's Garden Club member-

ship was providing the majority of the native plants for landscaping the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, we planted a large number of bluebonnets. As part of our citizen science approach, we fertilized a large number of bluebonnets and left an equal number unfertilized. The difference was enormous! The fertilized plants were much larger and had 2 or 3 times more flower stalks.

We know that nitrogen-fixing bacteria are microorganisms that are capable of transforming nitrogen gas from the atmosphere into 'fixed nitrogen' inorganic compounds usable by plants, such as ammonia. Some nitrogen-fixing bacteria (e.g. Rhizobium) have a symbiotic relationship with plants, especially legumes, mosses, and even aquatic ferns such as Azolla. And...bluebonnet plant roots may contain these nitrogen-fixing bacteria, but the presence in the soil, of this particular bacteria, is a hit-or-miss proposition. Supplying some nitrogen rich fertilizer, such as 19-5-9, or a water-soluble fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro 'Bloom Booster' 15-30-15 can make a huge difference. Try an experiment this Winter and Spring in your own garden.

If you were lucky enough to have had your bluebonnets go to seed in your garden last year, you probably now have an abundance of blue bonnet seedlings growing everywhere. Be sure to thin them out slightly, so the plants have some room to develop, begin to fertilize, and prepare for the best bluebonnet show in your neighborhood.



Mary Martinez and the Bluebonnets on Willow City Loop, off Hwy 16 between Fredericksburg and Llano. Worth the trip.

## The Legend of the Pink Bluebonnet

By [Sonia de la Rosa](#) | March 11, 2016

The legend begins with a young brother and sister making their way through a field, on their way to give their Lenten offerings at a nearby church. Their elderly grandmother follows slowly behind. When the girl notices a white flower in a field of blue, she points it out to her grandmother. Her grandma explains that these flowers are bluebonnets and that sometimes a rare white one grows among them. She explains how some even say the Lone Star flag was fashioned after a spot of white flowers surrounded by blue ones.

The boy then sees a pink one and excitedly calls them over. The grandmother is silent for a moment as they all look down at the beauty of this wildflower. "If the white ones are special, then the pink ones mean even more," she says. She then begins to tell them a story her grandmother told her when she was a little girl, about how the rare pink flowers only grow downstream from the mission ever since the battle that was fought there so many years ago.



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January 2025



Please use this form to renew your club membership for 2025. If you have any question about your membership, call our Treasurer Paul Huegel, whose phone number is on page 2 of the Horti-Bull. If you can't print out this form, put all the information on paper and mail it, with your check, to Paul. **And please write legibly.**

**Men's Garden Club of San Antonio (MGCSA)**

Open to men and women **2025 Membership Application**

Rates will remain effective until January 1, 2026

CK # \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \_\_\_\_\_



Annual Membership	3-year Membership	Life Membership
\$20 Individual	\$50 Individual	\$200 Individual
\$25 Joint*	\$60 Joint*	\$250 Joint*

\*Joint membership is one additional member residing in the same household. Both members may enjoy all the member benefits of the MGCSA, but only one receives the club newsletter, the Horti-Bull.

Please circle above the type of membership. Use one form for each membership or joint membership. **Please print or write legibly.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ TX 78 \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Best way and time to connect \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ New Member

Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Make checks payable to MGCSA; Address:  
Paul Huegel, 15619 Cloud Top, SA, TX 78248

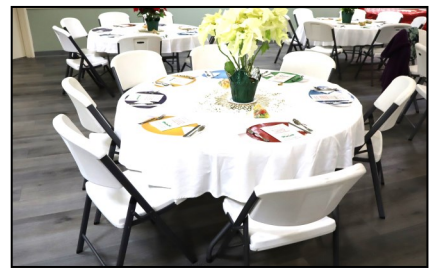




It was a pleasure to have seven Japanese Military personnel who are TDY at Lackland AFB for Language and other specialized training at our annual Christmas Event.  
 Standing: Army LT. Akira Miyazawa, Navy LT Itokal Endo, Our Dr. Thomas Sako, Naomi and Gary Maulden, AirForce Cpt Noryoshi Kato  
 Kneeling: Army Lt Kazutoshi Suzuki, Army Lt Doppo Sango, Army Maj Hajime Hasegawa, Army Lt Takumi Yamauchi

長谷川 肇 Hasegawa Hajime.  
 宮澤 彰 Miyazawa Akira  
 鈴木 一寿 Suzuki Kazutoshi  
 加藤 徳恵 Kato Noriyoshi  
 山内 拓弥 Takumi Yamauchi  
 三五 独歩 Sango Doppo  
 遠藤 亮 Endo Ryo

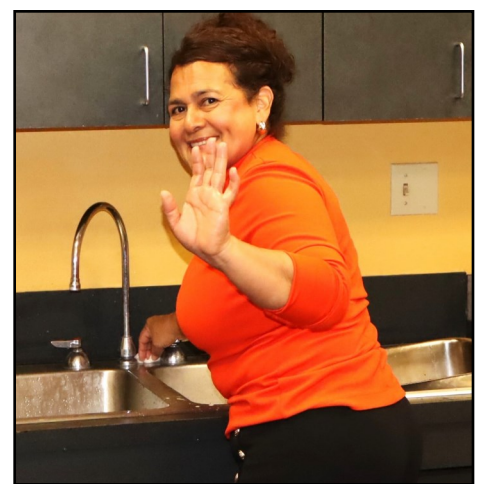
**In their own words**



**What a welcoming sight! Thank you, Volunteers.**







Clockwise from upper left: 1. Door Prize winner, Ed Elbel checks his prize as Ida Santiago and Elena Schriener look on. 2. Vallerie Hartfield greets our party guest at the Oblate Grotto's St Eugene Hall. 3. Paul Huegel capably Bartends at the Renowned International Wine Bar. 4. Isabel Roman sez, 'Please! No more dirty pots and pans'. 5. Dappoo Sango happily shows off his Door Prize as Ida and Elena smiles in approval. 6. Adrienne Hacker greets Mike and Lidia Stepp as they make their meat selection in the serving line. Adrienne also assisted with setup and clean up.



*A Happy and Healthy 2025  
To you all*