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The Green Thumb is a  
publication of the  
Arlington Organic Garden Club  
[www.aogc.org](http://www.aogc.org)

### **AOGC Board:**

Dave & Cheryn Barnett  
Angie & Doug Brown  
Esther Chambliss  
Penny Coder  
Susan Horn  
Teresa Saldana



## March Meeting: Urban Beekeeping

The Arlington Organic Garden Club is pleased to welcome Sam Perez as our March speaker. Many of you have heard Sam speak about vegetable gardening and tomatoes (I'm sure he could be persuaded to answer a few questions if his arm were twisted!), but did you know that he used to keep bees?

Sam's program will be about keeping bees in an urban environment. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:30. See you there!!

## The Secret Gardens of Ryan Place Garden Tour

On May 17, Fort Worth's premier residential historic district presents a tour of noteworthy gardens called The Secret Gardens of Ryan Place. Developed in the early 1900s, many Ryan Place homes fell into disrepair during the Great Depression and continued to deteriorate well into the 1960s. In 1969, though, residents organized to restore the vitality of their neighborhood.

Today, the rejuvenated neighborhood features homes representative of myriad architectural styles, including Italianate, Tudor, Spanish, Craftsman, and Bungalow. The tour focuses on five private gardens, landscaped with mature trees, heirloom plantings, and perennial and annual blooms with a Tea Garden at the former residence of the neighborhood founder, John C Ryan....for additional information please go to [www.historicryanplace.org](http://www.historicryanplace.org).

## Natural Urban Living Garden Show Plant Sale

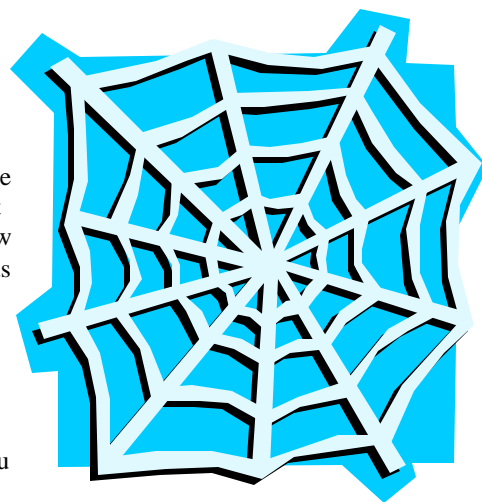
Don't forget our plant sale coming up at the June 21<sup>st</sup> show. If you plan on donating any plants, now is the time to be getting them in shape. Please coordinate with David Barnett (817-483-7746, [cheryn1@mindspring.com](mailto:cheryn1@mindspring.com)) if you would like to participate, or if you have room to baby-sit some of the plants that are taking over his back yard. Dave also needs clean 6" pots to transplant some of the goodies he's collected for the sale: bring them to the next meeting or make arrangements with Dave.

## It's a Web Party!!

We're planning a party to work on our website, [www.aogc.org](http://www.aogc.org), Sunday, April 13 at 2:00 p.m. You don't have to know how to program, and you don't have to be a terrific writer: *it's your site* and we want your input. We'll brainstorm ideas for new content, and put some things up online as a group. Bring your ideas and any information, pictures, and/or questions you'd like to see posted.

The party will be at the home of Doug and Angie Brown – any interested members are welcome. Don't worry: if you attend we won't try to stick you on a committee or anything! ☺

Please RSVP by phone (817-795-3300) or by email ([angie@aogc.org](mailto:angie@aogc.org)) by April 5 (parking is tight so we'd like an idea of how many people to expect) – we'll send you directions to our house and instructions on where to park.



## Dortmund rose to good home

For the price of digging it up you can have a beautiful Dortmund rose. This rose has single, crimson flowers with an almost white eye. The flowers are in clusters on a thorny plant. The foliage is a beautiful glossy, dark green. This is a climber 8' to 6'. See me at the meeting or contact me at: [ttsaldana@hotmail.com](mailto:ttsaldana@hotmail.com), 972-660-1346 (day) or 972-642-6346 (after 6pm).

-- Teresa Saldana

## Watch for the Butterflies!

Even though spring is officially here, you might want to wait a few weeks before clearing away last autumn's leaves, yanking up the "weeds," and pruning your trees: you may be depriving your garden of butterflies! These soon-to-be-beautiful creatures may be hiding in the less-manicured areas of your yard, waiting for the days to be consistently warm. Here are some favorite hiding places.



*Hackberry trees:* mourning cloak, hackberry emperor, tawny emperor, question mark, and

*Miscellaneous leaf piles:* dusky-blue groundstreak, red-banded hairstreak

*Dead trees:* mourning cloak, question mark butterflies

*White clover, dandelions:* orange sulphur and other early spring butterflies

-- Source: Ft. Worth Star Telegram, 03/07/2003

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## Ladybug Book Corner

To bee or not to bee is the question? Is a wasp or a whitefly parasite a beneficial or a harmful insect? Yes, that is a question many of us want to know. In our library we have the following books which may help you find out the answers:

- The Organic Manual (2002 Edition) by Howard Garrett
- The Garden-Ville Method: Lessons In Nature by Malcolm Beck
- The Texas Bug Book by Howard Garrett and Malcolm Beck

Would the person(s) who checked out the following books please return them at this meeting:

- The Texas Bug Book by Howard Garrett and Malcolm Beck
- Plants of the Metroplex by Howard Garrett

Due to the excitement of the January meeting, we did not get a chance to properly check these out. Since the weather was bad at the February meeting, please bring the books back at the March meeting or contact Esther Chambliss to make arrangements if you can't make it.

There have been some changes when checking out books from the library. Please locate the title card in either the front or the back of the book, print your name and phone number on the card, and drop the card into the flower pot near the library books. Hopefully this will make it easier and eliminate and future issues checking out books!

-- Esther Chambliss

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## Herb of the Month: LEMON BALM (*Melissa Officinalis*)

Common Names: bee balm, sweet balm, sweet Melissa

Lemon balm was grown as a bee plant which gave us its name from the Greek word Melissa – for honey bee.

This herb belongs to the Labiatae (mint) family and is a perennial. It likes the shade (but can be an aggressive grower); its leaves will turn yellow-green in full sun. Lemon balm enjoys rich soil and will



tolerate poor rocky soil along with clay types, has more drought resistance and requires less water than other mints. This plant grows 13-32” in height and has been known to grow around 18” in height in the South. The leaves of lemon balm are ovate, toothed shape and can be 1¼ to 3” long on a 4” angled stem and will spread 12-18”. The leaves give off a lemon-scented volatile oil when crushed.

To propagate lemon balm you can grow seeds in the greenhouse in mid-winter, then plant seedlings after the last frost. The seeds are slow to germinate so you will need to soak overnight before planting. If seedlings are grown in a

too-wet and too-shady place, a fungus-virus may give you trouble. You can also propagate the herb by dividing the large clumps in late spring thinning or transplanting the herb to 2 ft. apart; or by taking stem cuttings in spring or even in autumn, where they can be grown in small pots indoors. Lemon balm will die back in winter and return the next spring. Its second year will yield the most leaves.

Harvest the leaves just as the plant comes into bloom and at intervals of 6 weeks during the summer, cutting back 1/3 of the plant each time you harvest. You can harvest at any time, but to get the most of the plant’s oils harvest during flowering. During periods of high stress you might want to cut it down close to the ground; it will recover quickly. If you let lemon balm go to seed it will spread everywhere.

Culinary uses: Use of leaves in herbal teas has a pleasant flavor and a calming effect. Paracelsus (1493-1541) called lemon balm “the elixir of life.” John Evelyn (1620-1706) described it as “sovereign for the brain, strengthening the memory.” Along with teas, the leaves are used as flavoring for veal, poultry, stuffing, salads, sandwich spreads, etc. In colonial kitchens it was used for its edible flower and in medieval times it was a stewing herb, and was placed on the floors under rugs to help eliminate foul odors, and as they dined they drank their wine with balm in it to drive away the melancholy. It was also known as the herb of sympathy. I wonder could it be from the drinking of wine, or even something else my friends . . . ?

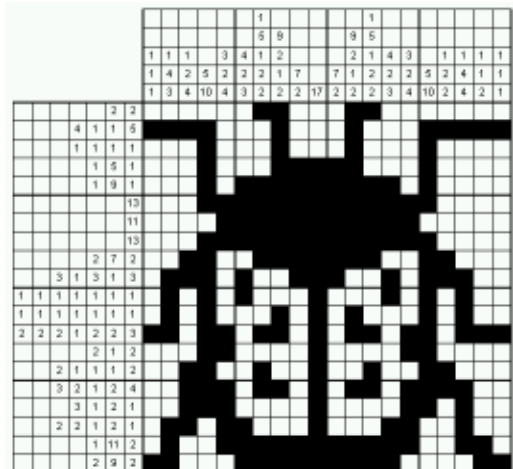
Medicinal uses: Contains vitamin C; good for digestion, headaches, nervousness, exhaustion during hot weather, for cold/fever, and aromatherapy.

Craft uses: Potpourris, scented pillows, nosegay and flower arrangements, and even as a facial toner for your face.

Lemon balm can also be used as a furniture polish, and a mother nature’s own insect and fly repellent.

– *Esther Chambliss*

### Answer to last month’s puzzle:



## The Creature Feature -- Ladybugs

Ladybug, Ladybug, Fly Away Home! Well, you know the rest. Everyone has bought ladybugs to release at some point in their life only to have them all fly home to California!

Since this little insect is our club mascot, it seems only fitting to have it spotlighted in our new column: *The Creature Feature* (what else?). Most of the following information has been drawn from *The Organic Manual* by Howard Garrett:

The larvae and adult Ladybird Beetles, the proper name of the Ladybug, eat large quantities of aphids, scale, thrip, mealy bugs, and other pests. The adult may eat up to 200 aphids per day while a larva may eat half that. They should be released after aphids are visible and at night after the foliage has been sprinkled with water. Release a few at a time and see if they linger and feed. If they fly off, put the remainder in the refrigerator and try again the next day after they've exhausted their stored food. Ladybugs will store in the refrigerator for a few days at the optimal temperature of 35-45 degrees Fahrenheit.

They will remain alive but dormant in these cool temperatures although storage tends to dry them out and a few will die. They are very sensitive to chemical use and may stay if the food supply is good and chemicals are not used.

For Ladybugs to mature and lay eggs they need nectar and a pollen source. Some of the following plants are excellent sources of pollen: legumes, peas, beans, clover and alfalfa.

To make artificial food, dilute a little honey with a small amount of water, mix in brewer's yeast or bee pollen. Streak tiny amounts of the mixture on small pieces of wax paper and fasten to the plants. Keep any extra food refrigerated between feedings.

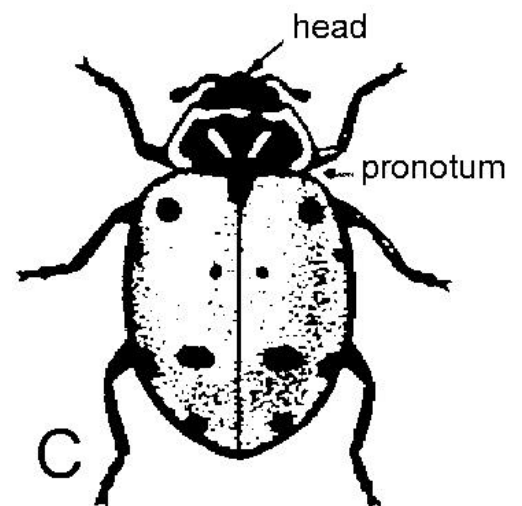
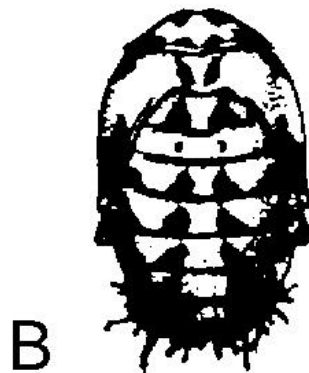
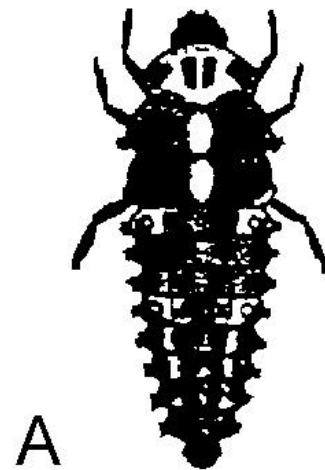
Yellow Ladybugs are visible in winter and early spring in clusters on the backs of leaves and the trunks of trees.

From Malcolm Beck's book *Lessons in Nature* we learn that there are over 350 species of our little Lady and that the young unmated males hibernate through winter. These are the ones you typically get when purchasing them at the garden center.

Many Ladybugs are destroyed in the larval stage because most people do not recognize them. Unfortunately, this is when their appetites are the greatest.

There are many variations in their coloration ranging from solid colors: orange, white, black and red to spotted versions of the same colors. The number of spots can vary as well from no spots to as many as twelve!

To the right are pictures of the Ladybug in its three stages: larva, pupa, and adult.



-- Esther Chambliss

## Computer Disposal

Have an old computer, printer, or monitor that even the thrift stores don't want but you don't know what to do with it? What do you do with that old computer or printer that no one wants? Don't want to just throw it away because of the 8 pounds lead and cadmium in the monitor or the PCBs in the printed circuit boards? Do you think there is a better option? There is!

If you are an Arlington resident, you can take it to the City of Arlington landfill where you can drop it off for FREE!

You can get to the City landfill by taking Collins north of I-30, across the river, and just before you start up the hill into Fort Worth, turn left on Mosier Valley. If you go under the Trinity Railway Express rail line, you've gone too far! The City landfill is on the left (south) side of Mosier Valley just a few hundred feet from Collins/157.

The address of the landfill is: 800 Mosier Valley Road and is open from 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Saturday, weather permitting.

The procedure is: follow the paved road to the first building on your right. Stop in and go into the office. You'll need to show the person proof that you're an Arlington resident (driver's license, water bill, etc). The person will direct you to the building adjacent where the computer equipment can be dropped off. All the roads are either paved or concrete so you don't need to worry about your car.

In addition to computers and the standard items that are picked up for recycling at your house, you can dispose of concrete and scrap metal for free. Other items have a charge. For more information you can call: 817-283-0632 for rates and information or visit the following web site:

[http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/environment/recycling\\_landfill.html](http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/environment/recycling_landfill.html)

-- Doug Brown

## What's in Your Computer

While using a computer is not an environmental disaster, disposing of one improperly may be. Your computer contains many hazardous materials that should be kept away from the environment:

**Lead** – damaging to central nervous system, blood system, and kidneys. Found in CRT and printed circuit boards.

**Cadmium** – harms the human body, especially the kidneys. Found in SMD chip resistors, infrared detectors, semiconductors, and older CRTs.

**Mercury** – spreads out in water, and travels through the food chain via fish; causes chronic brain damage. Found in circuit boards, batteries, switches, and printed wiring boards.

**Hexavalent Chromium** – Various toxic effects within humans and the environment. Found in coating for corrosion protection of untreated and galvanized steel plates.

**Brominated Retardant** – May act as endocrine disrupter; increased cancer risk in digestive and lymph systems; damaging to developing fetuses. Found in printed circuit boards, connectors, plastic covers, and cables.

Please dispose of them properly!!

Source: *The Columbia Missourian*, 03/07/2003



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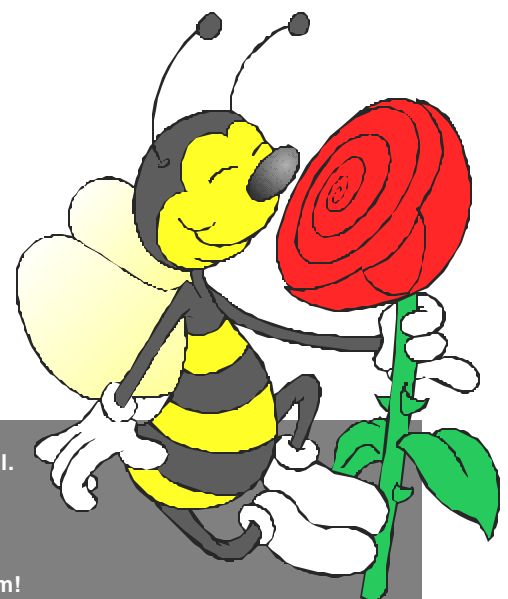
*Next meeting. . .*

**Thursday, March 27**

**Speaker: Sam Perez**

**Subject: Urban Beekeeping**

Hospitality volunteers for March are Marsha Perrine, Patsy Rosen, and Donna Ressler. Thank you very much for feeding all of us hungry gardeners!



**Club Information**

Membership dues: \$20/year (individual or family) – membership year begins in April.

Join/renew at any meeting, or send check to return address above.

Meetings are last Thursday of the month (January – October)

- Doors open at 7 p.m. for refreshments, meeting begins at 7:30
- Open to the public unless meeting is designated “members only”
- Awesome raffle prizes are donated by Redenta’s Garden and by Rabbit Hill Farm!
- Meeting Location: The Garden Room, Bob Duncan Community Center, 2800 South Center Street (Vandergriff Park)

If you would like to serve on the AOGC board, please contact any of the current board members, or send email to [board@aogc.org](mailto:board@aogc.org)

Newsletter deadline: Third Thursday of each month

Please send newsletter submissions to Angie Brown, [angie@aogc.org](mailto:angie@aogc.org), (817) 795-3300.

*When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.*

*- John Muir, Naturalist -*