



The fall season brings a much-needed lull after the frantic planting of springtime and the exhausting efforts to keep plants alive during the intense heat and drought conditions of the summer season. Fall is the time to sit back and enjoy the cooler temperatures, the renewing rains, and the burst of radiance that nature puts on before ceding dominance to the long, cool months of winter. **AnnMarie Pease**, our **Master Gardener for the Fall Season**, has now reached that fall time in her life, when she is putting aside some of the many responsibilities that she has had in life in favor of spending more time with her husband, traveling to distant gardens to take in their tranquil beauty, and renewing her spirit.

AnnMarie has indeed been a powerhouse of activity for the BCMG, volunteering at Home Shows, Backyard Basics Expo, as Rodeo Shuttle Driver, etc., and serving on the Board of Directors as Member-at-Large, and then Secretary (2016-2018). But her long-term contributions have been made in the field of BCMG communications. When she first became involved with the organization after graduating as part of Class 33 in 2001, she began working on the *Scion Newsletter*, which at that time existed only in paper form. AnnMarie realized that the Master Gardeners needed to change from the outmoded 20<sup>th</sup> century means of communication to the digitized format of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leadership agreed. Ann Marie worked on the early eBlasts and with content management of the BCMG website through three iterations: one built by a fellow Master Gardener, one designed by a contractor, and finally the refreshed BCMG website created by Lynn Cox and her husband Billy. AnnMarie has been one of the prime innovators in bringing this communication highway to its present state of excellence. One of her efforts was to work with the Board to organize the BCMG Communications Team, which includes the Calendar Manager, Facebook Group Administer, “Leaflet” Editor and MailChimp Manager, Media/Public Affairs Coordinator, Publicity Volunteer, *Scion Newsletter* Editor, Website Content Manager, Website Online Sales and Registration Manager, and the VMS Volunteer Administrator. Using a group email address (commteam@bexarmg.org) for all communications allows messages to be sent to all members of the Comm Team, assisting event coordinators and chairpersons. AnnMarie is currently “Leaflet” Editor and MailChimp Manager, and has in the past served as co-editor of the Scion with Ann Vargas, Publicity Volunteer, and Website Content Manager. As you can see from the overall list, the BCMG communications system has evolved from the paper-age days into a streamlined tool that puts information out for its members (and the public) to access with a click of a finger. Thanks to AnnMarie

and other volunteers, the new communications organization has vastly aided BCMG’s goals of disseminating news about gardening-related events and of educating the public on all types of gardening information. Her recent innovation which established a free email service, MailChimp, led to the publication of our weekly Leaflet (eBlast) in its current form. In April 2019, BCMG won an award for the excellence of the Leaflet in the 2018 TMGA Written Education category.

After all of her flurry of activities, AnnMarie now hopes others will step in to take over some of her responsibilities so that she has more time to enjoy of the beauties of nature by visiting the gardens of the world, an endeavor she has already begun. This past spring AnnMarie and her husband traveled to the Big Bend region to view the bluebonnets, which, to her surprise and delight, grow to 3 or 4 feet tall in that area. She also visited the Calloway Gardens just south of Atlanta, where she was treated to the visual splendor of azaleas in full bloom. Previously, AnnMarie has visited other spectacular gardens in other parts of the world. At the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney, Australia, she became acquainted with the native plants of that region, such as the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*), which is the national floral emblem. At Parque Terra Nostra on São Miguel Island in the Azores, which is located in a 200-year-old crater of a long-extinct volcano, AnnMarie traveled the network of pathways up and down the crater to see plants in very different phases of growth, from one-hundred-year-old *Metrosideros* (New Zealand Christmas Tree) to huge rhododendrons, magnolias, hydrangeas and camellias, plants which are not found in abundance in our region. AnnMarie has also visited the Botanic Gardens of Belfast and the Powerscourt Gardens in County Wicklow, Ireland. The latter has been voted No. 3 of the World’s Top Ten Gardens by National Geographic. She refers to these visits as lasting memories for the senses!



BIG BEND



PARQUE TERRA NOSTRA



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS-SYDNEY



BOTANIC GARDENS OF BELFAST



POWERSCOURT GARDENS

All these excursions to gardens in different regions of the world have wetted AnnMarie's appetite to experience more of the diversity of the plant life on our planet. Although she may not be able to speak the languages of all the places she hopes to visit, she can understand and share with the native population the universal language of man's thirst for beauty. Our natural world beckons us to forget the ugliness of the daily news and all the things that divide us from others and, instead, to find unity, peace, and harmony in nature. Whether it is our own garden or a public garden, we need to follow the example of our Master Gardener for the Fall Season, AnnMarie Pease, and put aside our activities for a time while we settle ourselves down to look with wonder at the natural setting around us. We need to allow our starved spirits to be uplifted and soothed by the beauty that abounds in our shared natural world. That is the enticing call of our fall season.