Bell County Master Gardener  
Tip of the Week  
By Mary Lew Quesinberry  
“Drought Tolerant Plants”

It is very hot and the plants are suffering. When nighttime temperatures range around 80 degrees the heat adversely affects the plants and they will almost go dormant in order to survive. Some call this second winter. Bell County plants have to cope with elevated evening temperatures, a rain deficit of 7 inches, and water rationing.

To protect your plants during these stressful conditions use 2-3 inches of mulch and try to water when necessary. Drip irrigation is recommended as the most efficient method of applying moisture. There are many native plants that do well in Central Texas that survive with 8 inches of rain in the wild.

Orange Globe Mallow (Sphaeralcea incana) is an evergreen perennial that blooms from May to frost. It is available in colors from red to pink. Scarlet Guara (Gaura coccinea) is in the Evening Primrose Family. It blooms from April to frost. The flowers vary in color from white in the evening to darker pink to reddish in the morning. Blackfoot Daisy (Melampodium leucanthum) is evergreen and blooms most of the year. It is at home in dry, limestone soil. Esperanza/Yellow bells (Tecoma stans) is a tall, showy plant that blooms from May to frost. Skeletonleaf Goldeneye (Viguiera stenoloba) is evergreen and grows to 4-5 feet in height. It blooms from June to frost and has yellow daisy-like flowers.

Consider also, Wright’s Bee Brush (Aloysia wrightii), a graceful deciduous shrub with spikes of small fragrant white flowers. It is a nectar source for bees. It grows 5-7 feet tall and loves hot, sunny conditions. Desert Willow Tree (Chilopsis linearis) has long narrow leaves that resemble those of willow trees, but it is not a willow. It blooms from May through June and after heavy rains. Its blooms, varying from white to purple, are an excellent food source for hummingbirds.

When choosing plants that can withstand adverse conditions
you will find that native plants, once established, will survive and perform well in your landscape.
Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact ask bcmga@gmail.com

In the photo: Orange Globe Mallow has colors that range from red to pink and blooms from May to frost. It is an evergreen perennial and native to dry, limestone soils with annual rainfall up to 8 inches. It is a plant to consider for dry, hot conditions.