

September 2011
Volume 9, Issue 9

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Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas are cooperating.

Backyard Orchard Culture

**1:00 pm, September 7th
Kerr County AgriLife Extension
Office**

Speaker: Lee Ann Barton



Commercial citrus orchards will probably never be part of our Hill Country culture, but who among us wouldn't love to have fruit from our very own citrus tree?

Lee Ann Barton will be our speaker on September 7th, who will speak on "*What Is Backyard Orchard Culture?*". She is a regional representative from the Dave Wilson Nursery in Hickman, California. Her home base in Oklahoma positions her to travel to the Hill Country to educate us on this technique for growing citrus and to learn some of the growing challenges she has experienced in her own backyard.

This is an interesting, creative and detailed approach to citrus growing that I think will surprise you and greatly add to your gardening skills. Lee Ann is a knowledgeable speaker who not only will hold your attention with this fascinating topic, but will answer any questions you might have.

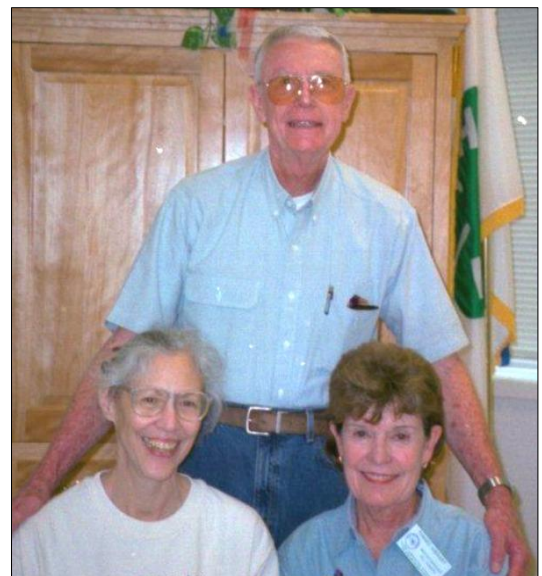
Come prepared to be amazed and take advantage of this unique experience.

Our Founders

Did you ever wonder who started the HCMG 10 years ago?

Well, here they are:

John Coleman,
Loren Hutchinson
(with glasses) and
Tommie Airhart



Thanks to Dusty Gilliam
for this photo



President's Message -
Chris Seifert

I'm here to tell you that there is hope! Wayne and I recently enjoyed a week in Ruidoso, New Mexico. We saw fire-ravaged forests sporting wildflowers and lush grass. Many trees were dead, but others bravely sprouted fresh life.

West of Junction, Texas, it has been so dry that even the cedars are dying. But as we drove home through Pecos, torrents of rain pelted the near desert landscape (also our suitcases in the back of the pickup). There is hope!

In the meantime, here at home, several HCMG projects have gone as dormant as native plants. Work at the Kerr County jail garden, the grasses section of our Demonstration Garden, Hill Country CARES gardens, and Harvest Partners gardens at Dietert and Habitat for Humanity are all temporarily suspended. I'm sure other projects that I'm not aware of are also "droughted out".

This is a good time to close our greenhouse to repair the pump, the roof and other serious wear related defects. Thank you **Anne Brown, David Buchen, Ron Richerson, Vickie Killeen** and others for applying your expertise and energy.

China Long has been industrious too. Well done,

China, for completing your HCMG certification! Certification and her proven experience qualifies China to officially become our Public Relations Chairwoman. Of course, we are already dependent on and grateful for China's professional public relations efforts on our behalf.

If you are still an HCMG intern, please mark our monthly HCMG meetings at 1:00 PM each first Wednesday on your calendar. *You are more than welcome; you are anticipated!* We want to get to know you! You'll hear about projects and news. You'll enjoy our speakers, our occasional plant sales or exchanges and parties. *Yes, you can count one hour of meeting as volunteer time.* The speaker's presentation counts for continuing education credit, but interns don't need that until next year. Ya'll come!

Did you know that HCMG is helping support the Riverside Nature Center? We're donating a beautiful gift basket to be auctioned along with many other intriguing items at their *Under the Harvest Moon* event, October 13. Thank you, **Dusty Gilliam**, for creating our basket donation.

The next three months are my last as your president. Alas, the bylaws decree this change. Yes, I'm looking forward to having more time to get involved with a wider variety of MG activities. I'm looking forward to the keen ideas new leadership always brings. Yes, I have lots of hope for the vision and initiative of Hill Country Master Gardeners. You're the best!

Hill Country Master Gardeners Class of 2012: We began accepting applications on August 1, 2011. Applications must be received by October 31, 2011. Class size is limited.

Download an application at http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org/training_certification.htm and share with friends and neighbors who might be interested in becoming a member.



Stalwarts in the drought . . . the Firecracker plant (*Russelia equisetiformis*) (right) self-sows, but in a crack in the rock steps in the middle of a drought?

This white phlox (*Phlox paniculata* 'David') has been in my flower garden for years, but never has it bloomed so profusely and for such an extended time.

Photos by Carol Brinkman



Texas Wildscapes Workshop for Hill Country Master Gardeners Oct. 27, 2011 - 10 AM- 3 PM Kerr County Agrilife Extension Meeting Room

Texas Wildscapes was developed by Texas Parks and Wildlife in 1995 to assist Texans in creating landscapes that are both visually appealing and attractive to appropriate wildlife. Our speaker, Kelly Bender will present this program that emphasizes using native plants in



landscaped beds to provide critical components of habitat: food and shelter. By providing the elements of habitat (food, shelter, and water) in their gardens, we can attract an exciting variety of birds,

butterflies, frogs, and lizards and bring the beauty and vitality of nature home. We will examine the elements of a habitat appropriate for a Wildscape, see examples of garden-hardy native plants, and hear tips for creating a successful Wildscape.

Kelly has been with Texas Parks and Wildlife for 15 yrs and now serves as the Urban Wildlife Biologist for Central Texas. She is author of [Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife](#), and has developed an electronic version of that publication. Previously, Kelly has been the Texas Wildscapes Backyard Wildlife Habitat program administrator.

This workshop is free to Hill Country Master Gardeners. You are asked to register for the workshop by sending an email to Deborah Russell russhill@beecreek.net before Oct. 20, 2011. Space is limited so please **don't hesitate to sign up for the waiting list**. This will count as 4 CEU hrs.

There will be an hour lunch break and it is suggested that you bring your lunch. We will have coffee and simple refreshments for our morning and afternoon break.

Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife

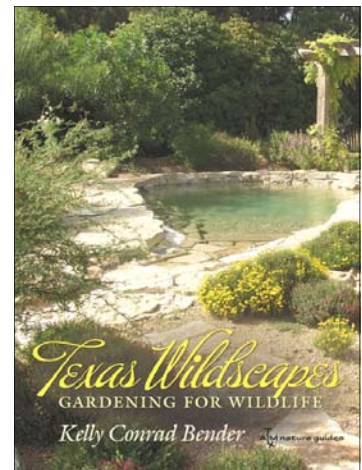
by Kelly Conrad Bender

Has this drought worn you down? If you are looking for a way to garden that will survive the heat and the drought, then this is the book for you. Kelly Bender has laid out a step by step guide on planning and planting a landscape of Texas native plants. It is full of plant and animal lists, tables, pictures and much more. A DVD accompanies her book to aid in customizing your backyard.

Chapter 2 is a valuable part to this book. It breaks down Texas into regions and addresses what plants and animals are common to these regions. Kelly discusses using native plants and how they attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife. She also talks about wildlife that can destroy a wildlife habitat and how to control the destruction when possible.

If you are working to have your backyard habitat recognized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, this is a good book to read and have in your library. You can have a lovely pleasing landscape that can survive the heat and drought and will bring the birds and butterflies and other wildlife into your yard.

Texas A&M University Press, www.tamupress.com \$24.95





Calendar of Events - Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional; events are listed for those wishing to attend other educational offerings. Be sure to call and confirm event.

by Betty West

August 30 – Fredericksburg NPSOT meets at 7 pm at the Gillespie County Historical Society Bldg., 312 W. San Antonio St. Elizabeth McGreevey (The Cedar Lady, from Austin) talks on “Cedar and its Myths.” Visitors welcome.

September 7 – Our HCMG monthly meeting is at 1:00 pm at Kerr County AgriLife Extension Office. Lee Ann Barton will present "Backyard Orchard Culture."

September 9/11 – Wildseed Farms, near Fredericksburg, hosts “Fall Planting Days.” Free seminars on planting wildflowers. John R. Thomas (founder) will speak from 2 – 4 pm each day.
http://www.wildseedfarms.com/fall_planting_days.htm

September 10 - Fredericksburg NPSOT hosts their annual Wildscapes Workshop. This year's topic is "Native Grasses - Not Just for Mowing." For information, fees & registration
<http://www.npsot.org/Fredericksburg/workshop.html>

September 13 - Kerrville NPSOT meets at Riverside Nature Center at 5 pm. Light refreshments served at 4:30 pm. Cary Burgess, well-known meteorologist, will present a look at climate patterns that may "Redefine the Concept of What's a Native Plant?" Visitors welcome.

September 16/17 – 5th Annual Gourmet Chili Pepper & Salsa Festival at Wildseed Farms near Fredericksburg. For more information about hours, ticket costs and entertainment,
<http://www.tex-fest.com/gcp/> No CEUs for this - strictly fun.

September 17 - Gillespie County Land Use Expo 8 am - 4 pm at Hangar Hotel Conference Center in Fredericksburg. Must be pre-registered to attend. For information/registration
<http://www.texasconservation.org/page.php?page=workshop>

September 20 - Hunt Garden Club meets at the Hunt United Methodist Church's Activity Hall. Brunch is served at 9:30 am followed by the program at 10:00. Cary Burgess (Dr. Doppler) will discuss "Weather Patterns Affecting Gardening". Visitors welcome.

Sept. 23 - Cibolo Nature Center hosts a "Fall Grasses Workshop" from 9 - 11 am. Pre-registration required. Fees & information <http://www.cibolo.org/calendar/event/fall-grasses-workshop-2>

Green Step



GREEN TEA FOR DENTAL HEALTH

We have all heard that green tea, hot or iced, is loaded with antioxidants. The antioxidants kill the bacteria that lead to gingivitis, and you get a bonus: green tea wipes out the germs that cause bad breath!

Bernadell Larson



SEPTEMBER GARDENING TIPS

by Kathie Marlow

According to our August HCMG speaker Robbi Will (Manager of *The Antique Rose Emporium* in San Antonio), now is the time to be spreading compost in your flowerbeds and lawns.

Make use of compost because it goes a long way towards drought-proofing your garden. Use it as an amendment and mulch to help the soil retain moisture, ensuring that your plants will receive maximum benefit from watering and precipitation. Spread a layer about 2 inches deep over beds and dig it into the soil 12 to 18 inches before planting; add another layer as mulch afterward. To protect lawns, scatter compost over the top – about ¼ inch deep – and rake it in.

When watering is restricted, use “gray water” from the dishpan to irrigate your plants. Many ornamentals in particular thrive on the phosphates in detergents, which provide potash. The soap also acts as an insecticide. Just make sure that the detergent you used *does not* contain bleach,

boron, or other toxic substances. Pour the soapy water gently over the plants, applying it to each spot no more than once a week. Alternate the applications with fresh water so that soaps will not build up in the soil. No-no’s for gray water are vegetables and other edible plants, ferns and similar shade loving plants and acid loving plants like azaleas, rhododendrons, and violets.

Let your lawn go dormant. Dormancy is grass’s natural defense against drought. When it appears that a drought is going to drag on for a while, stop watering your lawn. Once the grass goes dormant – usually in 1 to 2 weeks – give it only ½ inch of water every 2 weeks. The roots and buds will stay alive without resuming growth.

Don’t give up your flowers. Keep color in the yard by planting drought-tolerant flowers. Annuals that withstand dry conditions include Gerber daisies, sunflowers, portulacas, marigolds, and zinnias. Keep it cool. Stave off the effects of drought by mulching plants in hot, dry weather. The insulation provided by mulch makes plant roots less vulnerable; a 3 – inch layer of shredded leaves will keep the soil as much as 18 degrees cooler than any nearby beds that remain unprotected.

Starting Over!

by Betty West

Hill Country Master Gardeners is probably one of the premiere chapters when it comes to landscaping in drought conditions. We've always recognized the need to utilize drought-tolerant plants but our recent weather pattern tested that to the "max." Some of the recommended plants hadn't yet met a Texas-style, extended drought.

Maybe we need to make a new category of "extreme" drought-tolerant plants? If you'll be replacing plants in your landscape, what will you use? Have any of the recommended plants been disappointing?

This is also the perfect time to rethink our landscape designs. I've always loved English gardens but discovered they require a lot of watering to keep them looking good. I'm tired of dragging watering cans all over our rocky hillside.

One plant that has impressed me is Esperanza. Even in our deer-infested, rural subdivision, the foliage is still a gorgeous green and lots of yellow blooms. That's one plant that will be featured in my new landscape design.



Esperanza Golden Bells

Another plant that will be used extensively is the Crepe Myrtle. I hadn't realized just how tough this shrub/tree is when faced with a prolonged drought. Our problem is keeping the deer away from it. I'm not a fan of wire cages but this year has required caging all of them.

Our Webmaster is always in search of new gardening photos for "**Members' Gardens**" and now is definitely the time to take the "*before*" photos. Many of us will be refurbishing our landscapes with fewer but much more drought-tolerant plants. Hopefully we'll have some rain in the spring and can take our "*after*" photos to be featured on our website.



LIGHT POLLUTION

by Burnadell Larson

Ever want to sit outside in your garden and gaze at the stars, the Milky Way and other galaxies, watch shooting stars, or satellites on the horizon?

People are losing the option because we are losing the darkness in our night sky. The problem is more pronounced in urban areas; but, as rural populations increase, we are seeing light pollution there also.

Artificial lighting does not necessarily produce light pollution. *Light pollution* is the term for artificial light that is excessive or intrudes where it is not wanted. There are two types of light pollution: Over Illumination and Sky Glow. Over Illumination refers to using more lighting than what is needed, and Sky Glow refers to light that escapes into the night sky. Over illumination is corrected by using lower wattage bulbs or eliminating the light. Sky glow is corrected by using "Dark Sky" approved lighting fixtures. These fixtures completely shield the bulb when an imaginary horizontal line is drawn at the bottom of the fixture.

Energy is wasted when light spills up, is used when not needed, or if the light uses more wattage than needed. Wasted light is wasted energy; it has been estimated that over \$1 billion dollars per year are wasted lighting up the night sky instead of directing the light downward where it is needed. In addition, safety and security are compromised when glaring light causes dark shadows and our eyes do not accommodate to the background darkness. Glare is blinding and objects become invisible. Drive past a bright gas station at night and see how too much light actually blinds drivers and makes driving unsafe.

Humans, animals, insects, and plants to a certain extent, are supposed to sleep when it gets dark. As we turn night into day, the normal biological cycles of reproduction, migration and sleep are disrupted, causing harm to health and well being. The American Medical Association officially supports light pollution reduction.

The International Dark Sky Association is one of the organizations dedicated to educating the public and developing partnerships to improve nighttime lighting on six continents. They have championed the establishment of Dark Sky Communities, Dark Sky Parks, and Dark Sky Preserves. In 2001, Flagstaff, Arizona became the world's first Dark Sky Community. A DSC is defined as "a town, city, municipality, or other legally organized community

that has shown exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky through the implementation and enforcement of quality lighting codes, dark sky education, and citizen support of dark skies". Dark Sky Parks and Preserves are defined as " a park or other public land possessing exceptional starry skies and natural nocturnal habitat where light pollution is mitigated and natural darkness is valuable as an important educational, cultural, scenic, and natural resource." *Natural Bridges National Monument in Utah is the world's first Dark Sky Park.*



Canopy lighting in Flagstaff, Arizona. The World's first IDSC. Courtesy of Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition

Natural Bridges National Monument - night sky park



Left: Poorly-designed light. The light from this fixture shoots in all direction (including up).

Right: A well-designed full cut-off light. All light is directed down toward the ground.



What are some solutions to Light Pollution?

1. Use lights only when and where necessary.
 2. Shield or recess the bulbs so no glare is visible.
- According to the National Park Service, 50% of light from a typical unshielded fixture is wasted, shining upward where it is not needed.

HILL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS MINUTES August 3, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President **Barbara Elmore** at 2:20 p.m. Aug. 3 after the conclusion of the presentation by Robbie Will of the Antique Rose Emporium. There were 46 members in attendance.

Members unanimously approved minutes from the July meeting as written.

Treasurer's report: **Roy Eliff** was not able to attend. However, he reported that there is \$16,745 in the general fund and about \$68,000 in the scholarship fund. Three scholarships were funded last month.

Announcements by Barbara Elmore:

Congratulations to **China Long** for completing her certification requirements. Now that China is certified she will take over as public relations chair.

There are four committee chair vacancies: Market Days coordinator, *demonstration garden*, *greenhouse*, and *volunteer coordinator*. Any person or team wishing to volunteer, please contact an officer.

The October plant sale has been cancelled due to water restrictions and drought conditions.

Whenever the AgriLife logo is used, members must also use a nondiscrimination statement. The statement is posted in our office.

Two area AgriLife Extensive Service Agents have retired, Warren Thigpen in Bandera County and Decky Spiller in Gillespie County, and President Chris Seifert brought cards for members to sign.

The Riverside Nature Center has requested that HCMG donate a basket of gardening items for RNC's Harvest Moon fundraiser in October. A budget will be provided. We are seeking a design-minded volunteer to put an attractive basket together. Please contact President **Chris Seifert** if you would like to volunteer.

Other announcements:

Anne Brown announced that six rain barrels were sold at the July Market Days. She also said the greenhouse was in need of several repairs and that she would see that they are completed. A "dollar per pot" plant sale would be conducted after the meeting. Volunteers are needed to water in August and she passed around a sign-up sheet.

Anne Brown reported that the HCMG library was missing some books and asked that anyone who borrowed them to please bring them back for the intern's use.

Joyce Studer announced the NPSOT-Fredericksburg Chapter will be hosting the sixth Annual Wildscapes Workshop 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 10. This year's theme is *Native Grasses – Not Just for Mowing*.

Debbie Russell announced an Oct. 27th *Wildscapes Workshop for HCMG*, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., presented by Kelly Bender at the AgriLife Extension classroom. Four continuing education hours will be allowed. The workshop is free to HCMG but registration is mandatory as there is a maximum of 45 spaces available. Contact Debbie to register.

Kathy Lewis announced that HCMG will have a booth at the Gillespie County Land-Use Expo on Sept. 17 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hangar Hotel Conference Center in Fredericksburg. Contact Kathy if you would like to work in the booth. Attendance is free but registration is mandatory and includes lunch. Master gardeners can earn education hours at this event.

HCMG has received a "certificate of appreciation" for work with the Medina Garden Patch. The certificate is posted in the HCMG office.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

The next HCMG meeting will be held 1 pm on Sept. 7 in the AgriLife Extension classroom.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Connelly, Secretary



Oak Wilt Hits Laceys

By Barbara Elmore

Nine years after the pretty lacey oak became a Texas Superstar, it is under attack in Kerr County from a common foe: oak wilt.

Two Kerrville oak wilt specialists and Hill Country Master Gardeners, Anne Brown and Fay Drozd, have seen lacey oaks in the Hunt area decimated by the disease. "Fay and I went out to see some trees that were dying," Brown said. "We took pictures and leaf samples and sent to Texas Forest Service and they said oak wilt."

The forester also told Brown he has seen evidence that all white oaks, except for post oak, are suffering. Previously, experts studying the disease believed that several types were more resistant to oak wilt, but they are no longer saying that. Oak wilt is also killing shin oaks, Brown said. "We used to say plant red oaks and live oaks at your own risk. Now it's a risk with all of them, and we don't know why." No one is doing significant research on the problem because there is no funding for it.

The drought is a likely contributing factor to a decline in previously healthy oak trees. "Oaks can get a ton of diseases, like *hypoxylon canker*," Brown said. The Texas Forest Service says the fungus causes death in oak and other hardwoods, and is more prevalent during a prolonged drought.

Kerr County has the highest concentration of lacey oaks in the state, Brown said. The

agricultural program at Texas A&M named it a Texas Superstar in October 2002 after its good performance during seven years of state-wide field trials with no chemical rescue. Known as both *Quercus laceyi* and *Quercus glaucoides*, experts say it is a good shade tree for smaller landscapes. Although growth habits change with the environment, its most common size is about 30 to 35 feet in both height and width.

"Leaves expand as a soft pink color, turning a handsome blue-green as they mature, lending the plant an intriguing smoky air. The foliage is seldom bothered by insects or disease. Fall color varies from brown to yellow," said the 2002 story announcing it as a Superstar. Once

established, the tree tolerates heat, drought and soils high in pH. It grows best in limestone soils. Recommended USDA planting zones are 7 through 9.

Oak wilt may have been attacking the lacey oaks for some time, Brown said. In a significant drought like the one Texas is experiencing now, people have difficulty telling the difference between drought-stressed trees and sick trees. "People need to call us so we can come look and take pictures and leaf samples and send them off for testing. The trees we saw in Hunt had no signs of what we were taught that indicated oak wilt," Brown said.

One of the main signs of oak wilt is veinal necrosis. See the photo accompanying this story for details.

The phone number to call for Hill Country Master Gardeners is 830-257-6568.

Photo by Anne Brown





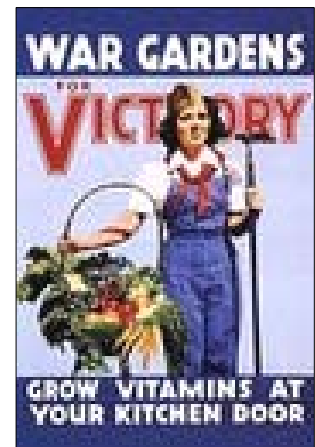
ALL THINGS EDIBLE
September 2011 - by Pam Bresler

Writing about planting a fall garden seems akin to being an accessory to murder....plant murder that is! Until rain replenishes the soil moisture, no amount of irrigation will ensure a thriving fall garden, and with Stage 3 water restrictions, we have very limited irrigation. For the first time in nine years, I have not grown transplants for my fall garden. This may be the year to let the garden lie fallow. Adding a layer of compost followed by heavy mulch will increase the health of your soil for planting once rain comes our way.

A topic dear to my heart is the *locovore* movement. Whether supporting your local farmers' market, growing your own food, belonging to a CSA, or participating in a Community Garden, we can improve our diet and our health by "eating local." This website allows you to enter your zip code and find your local growers: <http://www.localharvest.org/search.jsp>

Our grandparents' gardens sustained them through the Depression and our parents helped the war effort with Victory Gardens in World War II. My goal is to plant vegetables I've never grown before and to increase the diversity in my garden. Last winter, I ordered many new seeds and was excited about trying new species and cultivars. The seeds are still in my refrigerator, waiting for the rain that hasn't come. In the future, I still hope to maximize my garden by planting in three seasons and growing more vegetables than I grow now.

The increasing number of school gardens helps instill the love of vegetable gardening in a new generation, assuring fresh local produce in coming years. The Hunt School Discovery Garden and the Medina School Garden are local projects passing knowledge to the next generation.



Another encouraging development in the *locovore* movement is young families with children starting vegetable gardens to teach their children how to grow their own food. Besides being a great hobby for the family to share, the family produces wholesome, fresh food while getting sunshine, exercise and time together. I was surprised to read about the Bass family in Oak Park, Michigan, who planted an attractive raised bed garden in their front yard and received a summons from the city for a code violation. Being a tech-savvy family, they started a blog about their battle with Oak Park, along with photos of their garden: <http://oakparkhatesveggies.wordpress.com/page/13/>. (Start reading at the bottom of the page, as the early posts and photos are at the end.) Comments of support came from neighbors, as well as people in foreign countries. A friend started a *Facebook* page. The phone numbers and e-mails of the city manager, city planner and mayor were posted and they were inundated with phone calls and e-mails supporting the Bass family. After several weeks of drama, the result: the Bass family could keep their veggie garden, but they were hounded for weeks by the city.

The Oliveira family of Toronto had a similar fight with the bureaucracy, resulting in a re-writing of the city ordinances:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/973178--porter-spring-brings-thaw-in-city-s-bueaucracy-on-boulevard-gardening>

As Master Gardeners, I hope we can become more self-sufficient by growing more of our own food or supporting our local growers. We all benefit by eating local.

Remember, you can't eat Bermuda grass!

Hill Country Master Gardeners 2011 Executive Committee
 Chris Seifert - *President*
 Barbara Elmore - *Vice President*
 Jackie Connelly - *Secretary*
 Roy Eliff - *Treasurer*
 Randy Simmons - *Ex-officio Advisor*
 Roy Walston - *C.E.A. Advisor*

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Education:
 Debbie Russell, Chair

Greenhouse: Vickie Killeen & Anne Brown, Chairs

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 Sandy Martin, Chair

Market Days:
 Ron Smith II, Chair

Mentors: June Sher

Programs: Melva Chancellor

Public Relations: China Long

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 Judy Fleming, Chair

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 Jackie Connelly

Newsletter & Website Chair & Newsletter Editor

Eleanor Baldwin

Assistant Editors - Betty West & Kathie Marlow

Columnists - Pam Bresler, Barbara Elmore, Marilyn Pease, Judy Fleming

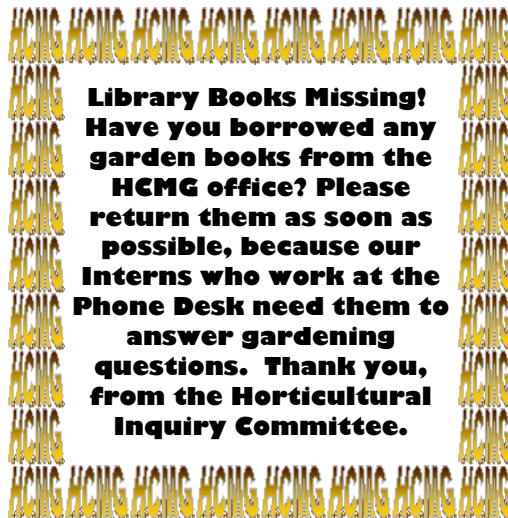
Environmental Reporter

Bernadell Larson

Webmaster - Carol Brinkman

Web Assistants - Anne Moss, Julie Bartosh, & Betty West

Submissions to baldwin@kcg.com



Library Books Missing! Have you borrowed any garden books from the HCMG office? Please return them as soon as possible, because our Interns who work at the Phone Desk need them to answer gardening questions. Thank you, from the Horticultural Inquiry Committee.

Light: Continued from Page 6

3. Another 10% in the mid range just causes glare, and only 40% is productive because that portion of the light shines downward. Aim fixtures downward so no light spills upward or leaves your property. A good rule of thumb is to purchase and install outdoor lighting where the bulb is completely shielded. Draw a horizontal line equal to the very bottom of the fixture. If all the light shines downward from that line, the fixture is a Dark Sky approved fixture.

4 Use low wattage, energy-efficient bulbs that do not over-light an area compared to the background lighting. High and low pressure sodium bulbs, and the newer LED lights are energy efficient. They use little energy, but provide lots of light where you need it.

5 Turn off the lights when not needed.

When I first moved to Kerr County, I had the privilege of talking with a rancher and she told me she did not use outdoor lighting. If you needed to walk outside at night, give yourself a minute and your eyes would adjust. If you were still uncomfortable, she kept a flashlight by the door and she would walk you to your car.

Remember, only light what you need, when you need it. Be considerate of your neighbors – they might be stargazing.



Webmaster Carol Brinkman's

Website of the Month

A friend recently sent a link to a blog discussion. I am not a fan of blogs so I very reluctantly looked at this one. It was a discussion of design styles for the native garden – the premise being that the current trend to use native plants could quickly become as ubiquitous as the green lawn and foundation shrubs we see everywhere.

Exactly what I have been thinking! In further investigation I came across highplainsgardening.com. More blog than website, admittedly, I recommend this one for its sound content especially in the *Design Theories* section which is quite relevant to the use of native plants.



Marilyn Pease made this bouquet of Massachusetts flowers