

March 2012  
Volume 10, Issue 3

Texas Fire Wise Program	1
President's Letter	2
Events Calendar	3
March Gardening Tips	4
February Meeting Minutes	5
A "Buggy" Read	6
More Class of 2012	7
Demo Garden Design Contest	8
All Things Edible	9
Website of the Month	10



*Check out  
Bernadell's  
discovery on  
this page.*



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.

**HCMG Monthly Meeting 1:00 p.m. March 7, 2012  
at the AgriLife Office**

**Our HCMG March Program is "The Fire Wise Program".**

**With the recent fires in the Hill Country and with the forecast of continued drought, it is important for us to learn how to protect our homes, land, and lives through safe landscaping practices.**

**The two-year-old Texas Forest Service Program is similar to the older California programs. The Texas programs have proved to be very effective. The information in this presentation could very well help you prevent the loss of property and lives in the event of a fire.**



**Be sure to attend this program to obtain invaluable information.**

**Can you guess what fabric this girl is wearing?**

It's called *QMILCH*

*By Bernadell Larson*

Ever thought about wearing milk someplace other than as a mustache? A German female fashion designer has developed a fabric made entirely from milk that is environmentally friendly and smoother than silk. It drapes and folds like silk but can be washed and dried like cotton. The fabric is named *Qmilch* and looks like normal fabric, but when you touch it you can feel the difference.

The fashion designer, who is also a biochemist, started experimenting to find a non-irritating fabric because she watched her step-father suffer through terrible skin irritations when he was being treated for skin cancer. It took two years of trial and error for the designer and a research lab, but they developed a process of reducing milk to a protein powder that is then boiled and pressed into strands.



Model Britta presents a Qmilch dress designed by Domaske for her MCC fashion line.

*Continues on Page 4*



## *Note from our President, Pat McCormick*

I always enjoy a presentation that begins with speaker's story of how they came to love gardening. The speaker may have helped their parent as a small child sitting nearby in the dirt, playing with a cup and a bucket, or whether as a young person being inspired by a science program in school, or at summer camp, or in their grandfather's greenhouse, taking special interest in horticulture and experimenting with hybridization.

I became addicted to gardening when I realized how much it meant to others to experience a beautiful setting, whether they were seeking such a garden or just happened to discover one. I was told over and over again that the church's memorial garden I cared for was a wonderful place, and that the personal attention I gave to its maintenance was appreciated and made them feel good. To be clear, I had not created this garden. I had merely revealed its beauty by caring for it.

In doing so, I learned much about what makes a garden appealing. The overall appearance from the exterior should call you into the garden. It is intriguing to know something interesting is going on, but you aren't quite sure what it is. Something in the distance, or just hidden such that you can't quite see it clearly might pull you in. A small graceful sculpture, a beautiful bench, a stone wall, or an interesting pattern in the stone walkway might whisper a personal invitation. Perhaps a fragrance, the movement of something in the breeze, or the impact of seasonal color might speak more loudly that personal invitation. Once the garden threshold has been crossed, your interest should be sustained by the layout, and how you view the details. How you are guided through the garden is important. And finally, the details should create little surprises, give you the serenity you seek, or reveal the much sought after information with the signage.

During this time when I cared for my church's memorial garden, I was asked by my friend, Amy, to help convert her grassy, suburban back yard into a beautiful garden.

Her husband, Ken, was terminally ill and especially enjoyed gardens. Together Amy and I discussed the design criteria. What did she and her husband think were important criteria for their garden? How did they want to feel when they were in the space? What did they want to do in the space? What did she feel was important to keep in the back yard?

With that knowledge I created a high level plan. How would the project impact the household which included pets and two active teenagers. How might it affect the neighbors if we were to trim trees? Did they want to have automatic irrigation? Did they intend to maintain the garden themselves or would they engage a maintenance service? Then later we discussed the fine details such as the microclimates, the history of successes and failures in specific areas, and the kind of plants would they enjoy most. Would they prefer the high impact of intense color from annual flowers, the serenity of a slow growing graceful shrub, or the architectural interest of a fruit tree in winter with the benefit of fruit in the summer?

Together we researched hardscape features such as the patio pavers, colors and height of the glazed pots, the type of bench desired, and the decking which would facilitate entry into the hot tub. The plants were also researched and priced. Then we scheduled all the required resources through our network of church friends, some of whom had the required professional tools and skills. The work day came and Amy and her mom had lunch prepared for eight hoped for workers. There were in fact 28 who came, requiring an extra trip to the grocery store. We ran out of chili, but it was a great day. And the results were wonderful. Ken was able to enjoy the garden for about a year. And I have to admit that it was indeed lovely.

The family garden, though private, was truly a community garden in which everyone participating felt at least some pride and ownership. A good landscape garden generates a positive feeling in all who enter. How we make people feel is so very important, and we have the honor and pleasure of doing so as Hill Country Master Gardeners.



## Calendar of Events

By Betty West

*(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.*

**February 21 - 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. Peggy Sechrist will discuss *"The Slow Food Movement."* Visitors welcome.

**February 21 - HCMG classroom training session at 1 pm. Dr. Mark Black will discuss "Concepts of Plant Diseases."**

**February 28 - HCMG classroom training session at 1 pm. "Concepts of Insects" presented by Dr. Chris Sonsone.**

**February 28 - Fredericksburg NPSOT** meets at 7 pm at United Methodist Church, 1800 North Llano St. The speaker will be Steve Stoutamire on *"Archeology of the Edwards Plateau of Central Texas."* Visitors welcome. ***Please note the change in location to the United Methodist Church.***

**March 5 - Kerrville Garden Club and Ingram Garden Club** will co-host the meeting at 11:30 a.m. at First Presbyterian Church's Ryan Hall, 800 Jefferson St., Kerrville. This month's presentation will be *"Birds"* by Kevin Pillow of Wild Birds Unlimited. Visitors are welcome but please contact [vkilleen@stx.rr.com](mailto:vkilleen@stx.rr.com) to make reservations.

**March 6 - HCMG classroom training session at 1 pm. Robert Hocker (HCMG) will discuss "Veggies." Deborah Russell (HCMG) will present "Herbs."**

**March 6 - Boerne NPSOT** meets at Cibolo Nature Center. Program begins at 7 pm. Social starts at 6:30 pm. Speaker TBA.

**March 7 - HCMG Executive Committee meets at 9:30 am and Committee Chairs join them at 10:30 am. HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 pm at Kerr County AgriLife Extension Office. Speaker's topic is the Texas Fire Wise Program.**

**March 13 - HCMG classroom training session at 1 pm. Brent Clayton will discuss "Rain Water Harvesting."**

**March 13 - Kerrville NPSOT** meets at Riverside Nature Center at 5 pm. Light refreshments served at 4:30 pm. Mike Mecke will share his knowledge on *"Drought, Rivers and Groundwater - Connections to Growth."* Visitors welcome.

**March 14 - Rose Garden Club of Medina** meets at Medina Community Center (13857 St. Hwy. 16 N) at 2 pm. Sandy Martin (HCMG Rainwater Specialist) will discuss *"Water Conservation."* Visitors welcome.

**March 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. Frank Clark's presentation is *"Hydroponic Lettuce Farming."* Visitors welcome.

**March 20 - HCMG classroom training session at 1 pm. "Job Fair" will be hosted by HCMG members & committee chairs.**

**March 27 - HCMG classroom training session at 1 pm. Dr. David Appel will discuss "Oak Wilt."**



## GARDENING TIPS for MARCH

by Kathie Marlow

If Punxsutawney Phil, the Seer of Seers and the Prognosticator of all Prognosticators is correct with his prediction of six more weeks of winter we need to be cautious to not get overly exuberant in our gardens too early.

- March is the time to prune ever-blooming roses and plant container-grown roses. Begin the weekly sprays to control black spot and mildew. It is also time to start weeding the gardens by hand-pulling or shallow cultivation if you haven't started that already.
- Divide and replant the overgrown perennials.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicides to prevent spring-germinating weeds.
- It should be time to replace fading cool season annuals or to just fill the beds in with plantings of heat loving annuals. But be ready to protect all tender plants from any possible late frosts.
- Weed, water and fertilize as needed. Watch for early signs of pests and diseases.
- Deadhead annuals to encourage continued flowering.
- Apply summer mulch to already established plantings.
- Apply a slow-release 4-1-2 fertilizer on your lawns at the recommended rate. Also apply pre-emergent weed control to the lawn.
- Correct the soggy areas in the lawn and get ready to begin the mowing routine once again.

### *Qmilch continued from Page 1*

These strands are then woven into fabric. The strands can be spun rougher for a heavy, nubby texture, or shiny and smooth to create a soft jersey that feels like silk. She uses only organic milk that cannot be consumed because it failed Germany's strict standards for consumption. Fabrics made with milk protein (casein) have been around since the 1930s, but most of them rely heavily on acrylics. She wanted to make something that is completely organic.

The fabric is expensive at \$14 per pound, but she is hoping that increased demand and production and awareness will bring the cost down. The fabric only uses a half-gallon of water to produce two pounds of fabric (enough to make several dresses). The same amount of cotton requires more than 2,500 gallons of water, and a lot of land to produce. And, the relatively new synthetics and jersey fabrics rely totally on byproducts of crude oil.

The name Qmilch is a combination of the word Quality and the German word for milk. Qmilch won the innovation award of Germany's Textile Research Association, which recognized it as a new sustainable fiber that could revolutionize the clothing industry.

## Green Step



### Be Mindful of What you Add to Tea

Most everyone has heard that tea is loaded with antioxidants, which can lower heart disease, stroke and some cancer risks. Did you know that lemon or lime boosts tea's antioxidant properties, while milk reduces it? In a Oxford Brookes University study, they discovered that skim milk decreased tea's antioxidant properties by up to 25% and whole milk by up to 7%.

*Bernadell Larson*

## HILL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS February 1, 2012 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by **President Pat McCormick** at 2 pm, after a presentation by Master Naturalist Jim Stanley on "Cedar: Myth, Reality and Management." There were 50 members in attendance.

Members unanimously approved minutes from the January 2012 meeting as written in the newsletter.

**Diane McMahon**, Treasurer, presented a detailed Summary Financial Report from December 1, 2011 to February 1, 2012. The chapter has \$18,712 in checking, \$58,840 in savings.

### New Business:

**Demo Garden Design: Barbara Elmore** presented the committee's concept of having a contest for a new design of the demo garden. The committee met several times starting in late 2011 and created the criteria for a professionally designed garden with architectural/hardscape elements and educational/informational signage. The redesigned garden would feature a diversity of adaptive and native, *waterwise* plants. The committee suggested that a contest be announced to the general public for entries, with Master Gardeners also encouraged to enter. The possibility of a \$300 cash award was considered. MGs discussed whether a winning Master Gardener would be eligible for the cash award, or whether MGs should win some other prize. The committee would narrow down and present anonymous entries to the membership for voting.

Some members felt that only Master Gardeners should redesign the garden, and many members offered suggestions for redesign. After lengthy discussion, **Deborah Russell** recommended that the contest criteria and concept be emailed to all members for their consideration and the item will be placed back on a future agenda. Member **David Buchen**, former chair of the demo garden, said that Chair Barbara Elmore should make her own decisions about changes to the garden.

**July 4<sup>th</sup> General Meeting:** Our monthly membership meeting falls on the July 4<sup>th</sup> national holiday this year. A motion was made to cancel the July meeting, seconded and motion approved.

**Spring Plant Sale:** It is time to order plants to be sold at the Spring Plant Sale. Due to the drought, it was suggested that it is not good practice to promote plantings during these conditions. **Vickie Killeen** announced that she and **Anne Brown** attended the Wildfire Preparedness Seminar and the officials are predicting continued severe drought conditions with possible Stage 5 water restrictions this year. After discussion, the motion was made to not have a Spring Plant Sale; seconded and motion approved.

**Green House Chair:** The Green House Committee Chair is still vacant and there is not an urgent need to fill this position at this time.

**Market Days:** Newly certified MGs **Denise Ferguson, Don Walzel** and **Milton Wilson** have volunteered to co-chair the committee. We have reserved two booths for the Kerr County Market Days on April 28, May 26, June 23 and July 28. We will sell rain barrels this year and answer horticultural questions. Our focus this year is on education and we will need to find four MGs to do demonstrations to provide the public with information on good gardening practices.

**State Conference Scholarships:** The Texas Master Gardeners' State Convention will be held in San Antonio on May 3-5, 2012. The registration cost and workshop fees are expensive. The Executive Committee suggested issuing scholarships to help two members with the costs. The motion was made to approve the two 50% scholarship selected by lottery, seconded and approved. The scholarship will be announced to the membership via email.

### Announcements:

**Field Trip:** Pat mentioned she was intrigued by the tours scheduled for the TMG conference and asked if there might be an interest in arranging

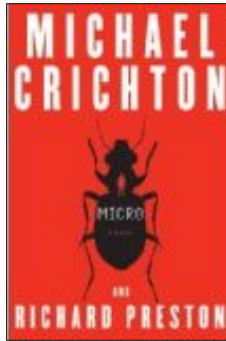


**ANOTHER GREAT “BUGGY” READ**

By Marilyn Pease

Knowing my predilection for insects, fellow Master Gardener **Vickie Killeen** recently

recommended to me the book “*Micro*” by Michael Crichton and Richard Preston. This was the last book by the well-known author of such thrillers as “*Andromeda Strain*”, “*Congo*” and “*Jurassic Park.*” Unfortunately, Michael Crichton passed away before he could complete the book, and it was finished by science writer Richard Preston. In true Crichton fashion, this sci-fi novel is fast-paced and full of great descriptions of the many types of flora and fauna of Hawaii. The plot centers around a group of research scientists from various disciplines who are drafted by a microbiology corporation to study the



plants and insects of one of the natural areas on the island of Oahu.

This mysterious company, which was started by the brother of one of these scientists, claims to be studying plants and insects for the purpose of developing new drugs to benefit mankind.

As the story progresses, however, more sinister motivations are uncovered. When the brother disappears in a boating accident, the group begins to be uneasy about their involvement in this project.

There are some gory scenes that may not be for the faint-hearted but, overall, it is a great read. I think most people who are interested in science would really like it.

As Vickie said to me, “I’ll never look at soil the same way again”.

Thanks again, Vickie, for the recommendation.

*Minutes continued from Page 5*

**Announcements continued:**

group tours for some time in the fall. The members agreed to investigate this possibility.

**Boys and Girls Club of Bandera: Jan Grimes** announced work on the B&G Club vegetable gardens on February 8, 15, and 22 at 4 pm. Contact Jan if interested.

**Deborah Russell** congratulated and introduced newly certified **Master Gardener Beatrice Borton.**

There being no further business or announcements the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

The next HCMG meeting will be held at 1 pm, Wednesday, March 7, 2012, in the AgriLife Classroom.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jackie Connelly, Secretary*

*Carol Brinkman’s husband brought home this Asiatic lily feeling they needed a spark of color. This certainly does the trick.*



## Meet almost all the rest of the Class of 2012 (two more to go)



**Ellen Folk** has been all over the country. They have recently moved here from Virginia, but they love to travel and are planning a trip to Canada soon. She and her husband are reaching 50 years of marriage. They have two wonderful grandchildren. Ellen is a fiber artist; she loves to spin and hook rugs and even dabbles in quilt making. And, when she isn't busy with those past times, she is busy in the garden.



**Janet Lindley** lives in Fredericksburg on a 30-acre ranch. She is a Master Naturalist and is using that knowledge to improve their pastureland. The yard is planted in native plants, and according to Jackie, is ever-changing and in bloom with something year round. She is a retired nurse and has raised four children. At one time she raised saddlebred horses but now raises sheep and goats. On a creative note she enjoys crafts such as painting ceramics and stained glass.



**Debbie DeLoach** and her husband of 38 years have returned to Texas from Florida recently. She has a PhD in biology with degrees from Sam Houston and Rice University. Debbie has many hobbies that have also turned into paying jobs. She is a freelance writer, a gardener, and a birder which turned in to a year and a half job that she is now wrapping up. For the past 11 years in Florida she was Master Gardener.

Holistic health care has been an interest of Debbie's for quite sometime.



**Jonathan Johnson** retired from the VA hospital after 18 years of service. He also spent 21 years in the US Army. He was stationed in Europe for four years and was able to visit Italy, Israel and the USSR. After high school Jonathan spent a summer in Monterrey, Mexico where he went to school. Home improvement has become his second career, and you might run into him at Lowe's, his favorite hangout. He has put in a rain harvesting system and has planted his 10 acres in wildflowers. When he is not at Lowe's or planting wildflowers, a game of catch with *Big Foot the Wonder Lab* is in store.



**Mary Lee Stewart** is a native to Kerrville. She was born and raised here but lived in the Houston area as well. Most of her gardening is in containers since she lives on rocks and a caliche hill. She said the only things she can grow successfully now are pesky invasives. After this course she hopes that will change.



## Demo Garden Design Contest

By Barbara Elmore

How would you like your Demonstration Garden to look? Submit your design to our Demonstration Garden

Design Contest for Hill Country Master Gardeners. Your prize, if you win, will be a plaque in the garden — and perhaps a great deal of satisfaction in meeting a gardening challenge.

Members who want to enter will find entry forms and design criteria established by the Demonstration Garden committee on our website. **Entry deadline is April 13**, and results will be announced at the May 2 meeting.

This revised plan comes after our February meeting, during which members had mixed reactions to the garden committee's contest idea. Several expressed an interest in submitting a master plan for the garden, and we hope these members will do it.

In the contest criteria, you will notice that the garden committee is interested in much more than placement of plants. We want a plan that incorporates professional garden design principles that take into account our irrigation system (we can change it), shade and sun areas, current plant placement, the turf plots we have now (we can move them), and hardscape that fits the Hill Country environment. We also want to see our own rain barrels blended into the design, so don't forget drainage patterns.

We hope for an overall plan that invites people into the garden instead of chaining them out, so a winning design will show an entrance that welcomes visitors. We also want a garden that volunteers can help build and one that is possible

to maintain with volunteers. Please don't forget to suggest materials that deter weeds — a recurring problem on the current garden's pathway despite earnest removal efforts. And yes, new designs can alter the pathway.

Thanks to all members who participated in the lively February discussion. Your comments provided alternative viewpoints about who should design our garden, and I believe your preference is for a member of our organization to do it. I tried to hear all of the comments — although one that I did not hear but another

committee member did was an especially good one: Someone said perhaps our garden should be something that the homeowner/gardener can install himself.

That's a good idea. But, just like homeowners need help, we might need help, too. I remain open to the idea of

getting help with design items we do not have the expertise or equipment to create.

Much of the discussion Feb. 1 focused on whether Hill Country Master Gardeners have the expertise to know what we wanted, and many of you stressed that we do. I agree — but we are not talking about just plants. In fact, the garden committee talked far more about the best setting for plants with a goal of creating a garden showplace.

Those of you interested in designing our master plan should look for the "Contest" button on our home page. Click on it and log in to find entry forms and criteria on the Members Only page. Here you will find an aerial view of the garden as well as measurements. Please follow all the criteria in your entry.

Potential entrants can call or email me with their questions. My phone number and email address are on our membership roster. **Good luck!**



Current Demo Garden





**ALL THINGS EDIBLE -  
March 2012**

by Pam Bresler

March Madness is not just about the NCAA Final Four. Serious vegetable gardeners appear quite mad as they do the Texas two-step: toting their plants outside to

harden, bringing them in on cold nights and then trying to rush the season by planting in March. During a warm winter, I have planted tomatoes as early as March 10, but it is a real gamble since our last average freeze date is March 30. The reason to gamble with large-fruited tomatoes is to set fruit before hot weather starts. Small-fruited tomatoes like "Sweet 100" cherries or "Juliet" will set fruit all summer, so you don't need to rush the season.

When the Gardens Alive catalog arrived, I was surprised that the company now offers vegetable plants. Previously, they only had products for organic gardeners. I was really surprised to see grafted tomatoes. Since tomatoes grow so easily from seed, I was curious why anyone would want grafted tomatoes. I discovered that the Japanese and Koreans have been growing grafted vegetables since the 1920s. Since their growing fields have been used for millennia, plant pathogens and harmful organisms like nematodes can build up in well-used soil. By growing grafted vegetables on vigorous, disease-resistant rootstocks, they are able to grow weaker varieties that have desirable characteristics like flavor or color.

In northern areas like Vermont, grafted tomatoes are popular with greenhouse and high-tunnel commercial growers. They are looking for vigor and rapid growth due to a short growing season, not just resistance to pathogens. Two rootstocks currently used for grafted tomatoes are "Maxifort" and "Beaufort" which are resistant to soil-borne diseases and have vigorous growth.

Tomatoes are grafted using two methods: side graft and top graft. With the side graft, young tomatoes of the same size, but germinated in

separate pots, are grafted together and then repotted in the same pot. After the graft heals, the



root portion of the scion is severed and the scion grows only on the rootstock. With the top graft, the scion and rootstock are grown in separate pots, the scion is removed from its root and grafted onto the rootstock whose top is removed. Both types of grafts are held together with clips until the graft is healed.

Johnny's Seeds has instructions and good photos of the grafting technique. They also sell the grafting clips: <http://www.johnnyseeds.com/Assets/Information/ TomatoGrafting.pdf>

The University of Vermont has a nineteen-minute video showing both grafting techniques: [http://www.johnnyseeds.com/t-video\\_tomato\\_grafting.aspx](http://www.johnnyseeds.com/t-video_tomato_grafting.aspx)

The reasons to experiment with tomato grafting in the Hill Country might be: soil infestations of root-knot nematodes, desire to grow weaker heirloom tomatoes on vigorous roots or desire for early vigorous growth before the summer heat. While our weather is very different, we actually have short growing seasons like Vermont. The difference is we have two short seasons, one in the spring and one in the fall.

The other two vegetables currently being grafted are cucumbers and eggplants. The cucumbers are grafted onto winter squash and the eggplants, being in the same family as tomatoes, are grafted onto "Maxifort" tomato rootstock. The rootstock is always from the same plant family as the scion. Tomatoes can even be grafted onto a potato tuber!

*Continues on Page 10, bottom*

Hill Country Master  
Gardeners 2012 Executive  
Committee

**Pat McCormick - President**  
**Patty Zohlen - Vice President**  
**Jackie Connelly - Secretary**  
**Diane McMahon - Treasurer**  
**Chris Seifert - Ex-officio Advisor**  
**Roy Walston - C.E.A. Advisor**

Committees

*Archivist:* Ida Luckey

*Demonstration Garden:*  
Barbara Elmore, Chair

*Education:*  
Deborah Russell, Chair

*Greenhouse:* TBA

*HCMG Office Manager:*  
Liz Althaus

*Horticultural Inquiry:* Anne Moss

*Information:* Betty West

*Jr. Master Gardener Program:*  
Sandy Martin, Chair

*Market Days:* Denise Ferguson,  
Don Walzel & Milton Wilson

*Membership:* Patty Zohlen

*Mentors:* June Sher

*Plant Propagation:*  
Dorothy & David Buchen, Chairs

*Programs:* Melva Chancellor  
& Jane Rackley

*Public Relations:* China Long

*Record Keeping & Volunteer  
Hours:* John LaRoche

*Scholarship:* TBA

*Speakers Bureau:* Kathy Lewis

*Special Projects:* Chris Seifert

*Technology:* Cindy Anderson

*Volunteer Email Coordinator:*  
Jackie Connelly

Newsletter & Website

*Chair & Newsletter Editor*

Eleanor Baldwin

*Assistant Editors - Betty West  
& Kathie Marlow*

*Columnists - Pam Bresler, Barbara  
Elmore, Marilyn Pease*

*Environmental Reporter*

Bernadell Larson

*Webmaster - Carol Brinkman*

*Web Assistants - Anne Moss,*

*Julie Bartosh, Betty West*

*& Vickie Killeen*

## *Website of the Month*

By **Carol Brinkman**



Did I miss something?! Am I the last to know?!

The US Department of Agriculture has issued a 2012 Plant Hardiness Zone Map. According to their website, "*Zones in this [2012] edition of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM) are based on 1976–2005 weather data . . . The previous edition of the USDA PHZM, revised and published in 1990, was drawn from weather data for 1974–1986.*"

The area represented by HCMG members is now classified 8A rather than 8B as it has been for so long. **Anne Moss** wonders, "Does 8B to 8A means we are getting colder? Strange, because the news reporting made it sound as if all the changes were from colder to warmer." It does make one wonder!

Continuing to read on the USDA website I found this reassuring bit: "*If your hardiness zone has changed in this edition of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM), it does not mean you should start pulling plants out of your garden or change what you are growing. What is thriving in your yard will most likely continue to thrive.*" Obvious and reassuring!

See for yourself at HillCountryMasterGardeners.org > Resources > Find Your Growing Zone

[http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org/revised\\_resources07.09.htm](http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org/revised_resources07.09.htm)

or go directly to the USDA map at

<http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/Default.aspx>

*All Things Edible* continued:

If you intend to purchase your vegetable transplants, buy them as soon as you see them in nurseries so you have a good choice of varieties suitable for the Hill Country. They will probably be root-bound, so re-pot them into larger pots and untangle the girdling roots. Replant at the same depth for all veggies except tomatoes. Tomatoes benefit from burying some of the stem, as roots will form along the buried stem. A large tomato in a quart or gallon pot will have a head start, whether you gamble for March Madness or plant safely in April.

