

**August 2020**

**Volume 18, Issue 8**

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**HCMG Online  
Zoom meeting**

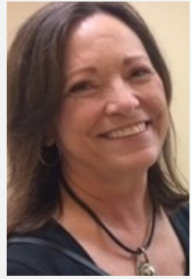
**August 5, 2020  
1: 00 p.m.  
Program: 2:00 pm**

**Bulbs**

by Beth McMahon,  
Gillespie County Agrilife  
Horticulture Agent since  
2016. Degrees from Texas  
A&M and Oklahoma  
University.



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**President’s Message**

Rachel Garrison

*“All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence; then success is sure.”*

*--Mark Twain, author*

As I’ve said before, I love flowers. My gardening skills are minimal, but I’ve learned so much since I became involved with Hill Country Master Gardeners, and, more importantly, I’m continuing to learn and improve my gardening skill. Yet, I often plead ignorance, but thankfully I’m gaining confidence because I have so many tools and knowledgeable people to consult. All of this contributes to some measure of success in my garden!

As an intern in April of 2017, I volunteered at our Blooms & Barrels sale and purchased an ornamental plant that was new to me. I was eager to experiment and test some of my newly gained knowledge. The plant, Salvia ‘Indigo Spires’, with very little help from me, turned out to be a winner on many levels.

When I purchased the plant, it had no blooms. But, I was pleasantly surprised by the beautiful blooms after a short time in my raised bed garden. I was so pleased with the plant that I purchased another from the 2018 B&B sale and planted it in the ground in a bed along the side of my house. Both locations receive full sun, and both benefit from the sprinkler system servicing the locations. I fertilized occasionally, but certainly not consistently. This long-blooming plant rewarded me with blooms continuously from early summer to frost. I pruned them to the ground in the spring.



**Continued on page 14**



## Demo Garden Summer 2020

Photo Credit: Mark Shultz

Write up: Jackie Skinner

Our young Texas prairie garden  
featuring native grasses and  
wildflowers.

Tended by Kerry Brittain.



Above: Transitional garden, full shade to full sun. Tended by Darla Cluster and Sue Hall.

Many deer resistant plants:

Flame Acanthus,  
Lamb's Ears,  
Pink Scullcap,  
Jerusalem Sage,  
Society Garlic,  
Nolina, &  
Zexmenia.

Tended by Shannon Barker.





## Demo Garden Summer 2020

**Photo Credit:  
Mark Shultz**

**Write up:  
Jackie Skinner**

**Summer annuals and  
perennials.**

**Tended by  
Dave Kinneberg**

Cactus and Succulent section  
created and tended by Wil Rolfe  
Right: Century Plant—the hummingbirds love it!



Another demo garden picture on page 8



## Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace

I think some record high temperatures were broken this month. If not broken, it sure scared the heck out of them. I remember seeing 107 one day and 105 another. After that, I quit looking. With a southerly wind, it felt like a blast furnace when I stepped outside. Coupled with no rain for the past few weeks, my spring

garden plantings are done. Those of you who know me, know that I seldom take anything through the summer and this year was no exception. A deer got in one night and munched on the tomatoes. Once a tomato plant has been damaged, it seldom grows back to produce much. I generally pull them and start over.



Recent temperatures



New beginnings

I was wondering through the African Violet Nursery south of Boerne the other day and found some Roma tomatoes and jalapeno peppers. Brought them home and transplanted them into six" pots. I have them on the porch, for now so they don't get hit by that afternoon sun. I'll save them for the fall garden. I have a Texas Yellow Pear tomato on the deck as well. Along with assorted herbs, on the deck that's all I have for now. I'm seriously contemplating some sort of automated watering system as well as portable sunshade.

One bright note is the one Lambs Quarter that was a volunteer this year. I did a germination test on some seeds I had collected a few years ago. The test was not very good. I found a seedling outside the garden and was able to retrieve it before the deer found it. Deer love this stuff and will eat all that's not protected. I like the wild edibles because they don't need the care that other plants need. It's amazing how many plants that we call "weeds", are useful. I'm not sure if Lambs Quarter is native or

introduced, but I remember it from my childhood. I've seen nutrition data that shows it out performs spinach. Hopefully we will be able to start our meetings in person again soon. I miss seeing everybody and hope everyone is doing well. When it cools down a bit, I'll be out getting the beds ready for the fall.



Herbs



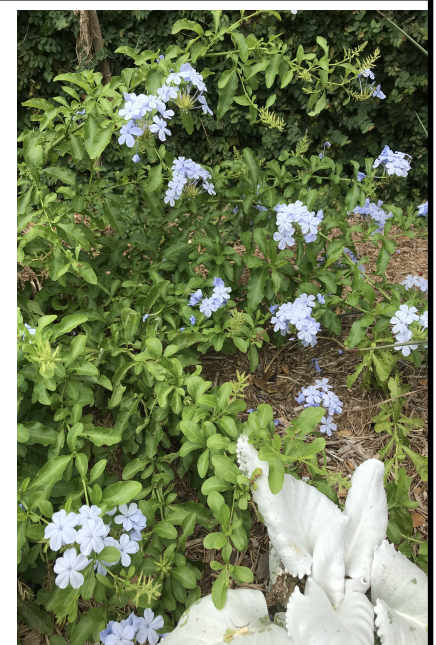
Lambs Quarter

## The Fate of Blooms and Barrels' Plants



This is my **Silver Pony Foot** thriving in my small crushed granite garden shaded by a blooming crape myrtle tree. It was a very small plant when I purchased it at our plant sale. I've never before had this plant in my garden. I hope everyone else, who purchased this plant at our plant sale, is enjoying it as much as I am.

**Janice Walker**



Left to right: **Whopper Begonia**-Bronze Leaf Red. Very happy in the shade of my front porch! I've had great luck with these in the same location for several summers. **Catmint** – Walker's Low. My first experience with this sweet little plant. It's in my courtyard and thriving despite receiving the worst of the afternoon sun. **Plumbago** – Deep Blue. I use these in several different places in my yard. I usually lose some over the winter, so I consider them annuals and when they return it's a bonus!

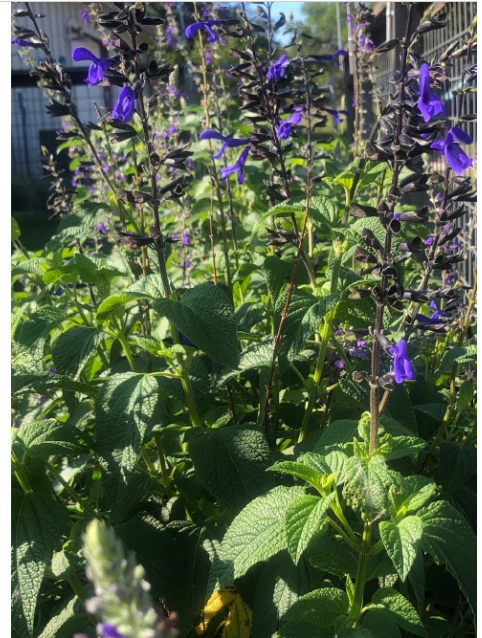
**Pam Umstead**

## The Fate of Blooms and Barrels' Plants



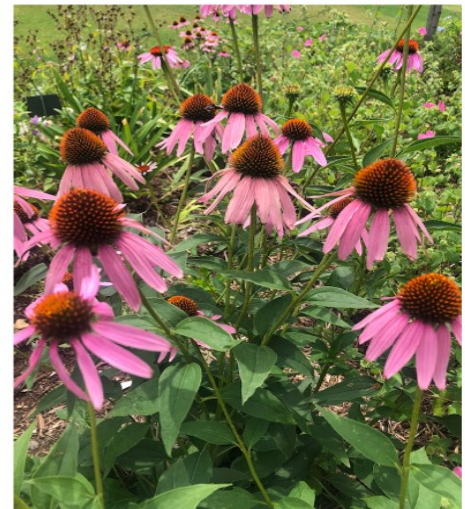
### Salvia Black & Bloom

Left: submitted by  
**Jackie Skinner**  
I purchased this plant  
at the HCMG sale last  
April. It's a terrific  
performer in part  
shade and is a  
show-stopper in our  
atrium. I'm told it is a  
reliable perennial. I'll  
be eager to see  
whether it returns next  
spring.



Upper Right: **Leigh Thomas** wrote: This Perennial has the most vibrant electric blue spikes of flowers. I have found that it blooms from April to first frost. It grows as a perennial in Texas Gardening Region III which is USDA Hardiness Zone 8 and the area where I am located. In my experience the plant grows to about 3-4 feet tall and about 2-3 feet in diameter. It grows best in full sun and establishes well there. If planted in part sun it seems to stretch toward the sun and becomes very lanky and could cause it to fall over. The butterflies and hummingbirds love this plant and it draws in the honey bees and bumble bees. I have two flower beds that include the **Black & Bloom Salvia** for its great color and ease of care. It is pest free and grows well in amended native soil.

**Purple Coneflower** submitted by Leigh Thomas. This Perennial gives plentiful color to your garden. Its composed of long-lasting daisy like pink/purple flowers. This plant will grow from spring throughout the hottest part of summer. It grows very well in Texas Gardening Region III which is USDA Hardiness Zone 8 and the area where I am located. In my experience the plant grows to about 3 feet tall and about 18" in diameter. It loves the full sun, but will grow in part-shade and grow taller as it reaches to find sun. This plant doesn't seem to have any pests and that makes it a winner in my book. The Purple Coneflower attracts butterflies and hummingbirds and as it continues into fall will attract birds looking for seeds. It grows in my amended native soil and adds a gorgeous burst of color in a summer flower bed.



## The Fate of Blooms and Barrels' Plants

**Patty Zohlen, MG wrote:** the Hill Country Master Gardeners were asked to write about their favorite plant purchased from our plant sales, I didn't hesitate in my decision. I enjoy using ornamental grasses in my landscape and my favorite is *Melinus nerviglumis*, commonly called "Ruby Grass." I was introduced to this grass at my first HCMG plant sale in 2012 and have bought them every year since then.

This beautiful bunch grass is a native of south Africa, the West Indies, and Indochina where it is often called "bristle-leaved red top." It was first introduced to the United States nursery trade in 1998, and has become a popular landscape plant.

The grass is 12 – 24 inches tall (depending on the variety) and 15 inches wide. The leaves on this grass tend to be a blue-green color. The flower panicles are light to dark shades of pink, initially emerging in the darker shade of pink and fading to almost white as the flower matures. It likes full sun and is somewhat drought tolerant, but prefers slightly moist soil. It is not always hardy in our climate, so should probably be considered an annual.

One of the attributes I most like is that this grass never looks scraggly. It blooms all summer and even when it isn't in bloom, the tidy bunch of blue-green leaves are attractive. It looks great in containers or as landscape accents (see photos included). It is not invasive and the few plants that result from wind-scattered seeds are easily pulled if you don't want them in that spot.

The plant can be propagated from seeds or by dividing clumps before they succumb to the cold weather. These can be potted up for growing through the winter to plant in spring. Or you can wait for the Blooms and Barrels Plant Sale to see if the HCMG are selling them. No matter how you acquire them, they will be a fun plant to grow in your garden.

*Continued on page 8*



Ruby Grasses grown between the colorful Tonto crepe myrtles along our driveway add some movement to this bed.



This Ruby Grass is a smaller specimen and I used it as an accent in the garden. Note the pretty blue-green color of the leaves.

## The Fate of Blooms and Barrels' Plants



**Photo  
Credit:  
Patty  
Zohlen**



1. Ruby Grass works well in containers. These individual plants filled the containers on our patio near the pond.
2. Ruby Grass may survive the winter. This group of three plants are on the south side of our house and two of the three are repeat performers. I added one “new” plant to the grouping to make it fuller.

Dry bed garden  
in the  
Demo Garden  
tended by  
Rita Aliperto



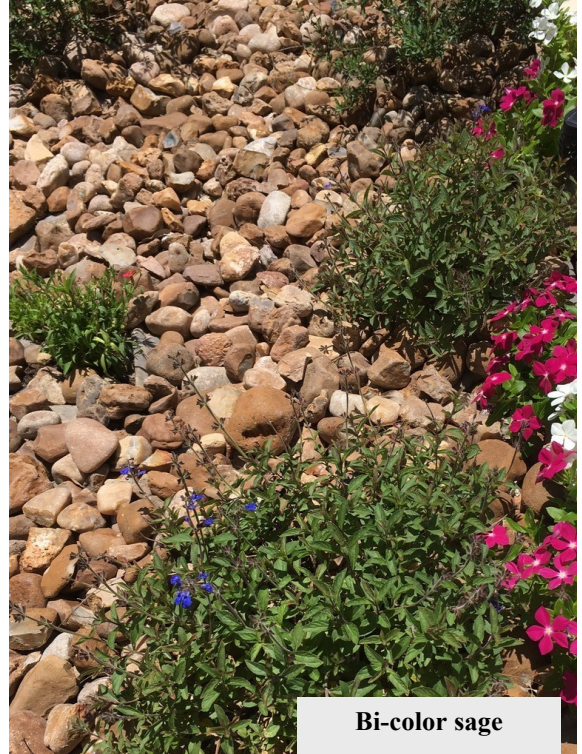


## The Fate of Blooms and Barrels' Plants



Ruby Grass

Photo  
Credit:  
Dave  
Kinneberg



Bi-color sage

**Dave Kinneberg wrote:** A neighbor of mine created a new garden in his yard using a number of plants purchased from the B&B sale (through me). While the area (raised bed, full-sun with drip irrigation) is beautiful now, in a couple of months the plants will have developed to the point where the garden will be truly wonderful. My neighbor had the following comments:

"We are super happy with all of the plants we received:

- ◆ Ruby grass, is just spectacular. It put out "flowers" right from the start, and is strong, compact, and very attractive. We will add more next season, possibly by splitting the one we have.
- ◆ Bi-color sage, has put out lots of delicate unusually deep-blue flowers. They are growing quite quickly, and spreading out. The only downside is that the flowers are rabbit candy.
- ◆ Flame acanthus, are growing strong. We expect flowers later in the year.
- ◆ Salvia, are doing great. But they need to be cut back a little.
- ◆ Mexican feather grass, are all doing well, even though they are in full sun.
- ◆ Santolina, is looking good. No blooms yet, but it's an attractive plant



Flame Acanthus

Bottom line...everything is growing well, and I just need to take care of them as the season rolls along."

## 2020-2021 HCMG Scholarship Recipients By Carl A. Luckenbach



**Bin Wu attending 2018 Nursery-Landscape Expo in San Antonio. Below: digging holes by using the earth auger. Right: doing an experiment**

**BIN WU** is a graduate student at Texas A&M University, working on his PHD in Horticulture. He began his studies at Texas A&M during the spring of 2018. He has served as both a teaching assistant and as a research assistant. He completed his undergraduate work at the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) in Beijing. Additionally he served as a research assistant in the tissue culture of camillias at CAF.

Bin's research focuses on cultivar improvement via DNA-mediated and RNA-mediated technologies. He is particularly focused on creating resistance to crape myrtle bark scale (CMBS), and if the opportunity becomes available, he is prepared to make a presentation to HCMG on this subject. He plans to do both an oral and a poster presentation at the 2020 American Society of Horticulture Students in August 2020. He won second place in the 2020 Texas A&M Plant Breeding Symposium "Foresight 2020: Tuning Crops for Future Needs" poster competition in February 2020. He did a poster presentation in the 2019 International Plant Propagation Society 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Baton Rouge in October 2019, and he served as a coordinator in a 2018 Nursery Landscape EXPO in San Antonio in August of 2018.



One of his occupational goals "would be to become an extension specialist in Texas, to cooperate with the green industries, providing suggestions on ornamental plants breeding."





## 2020-2021 HCMG Scholarship Recipients

By Carl A. Luckenbach

**KASSIDY MCCABE** graduated from Texas A&M University in May, 2020, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture. Her first three college semesters were at Tarleton State University, and the last five were at Texas A&M in College Station. She earned A's in all her college courses. Kassidy is now a graduate student at Texas A&M, again majoring in Horticulture.

Kassidy grew up in College Station and graduated from College Station High School, where she was an active Future Farmers of America (FFA) member and served as Floriculture team captain. Also in high school Kassidy was a three-time district and area champion in track and qualified for three events in the Texas Relays. She lettered in volleyball at College Station High all four years and was known as "Momma Kass" due to her skill as outside hitter.

She was a member of the National Honor Society, Principal's Cabinet, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

At Tarleton, Kassidy was on the volleyball team, served as a Morning Greeter and Gym Monitor at Stephenville Independent School District, created and facilitated invitational FFA floriculture competitions, and coached teams for Stephenville Parks & Recreation. At A&M, she continued creating and facilitating FFA floriculture competitions, held various part-time jobs, and serves as part-time volleyball and track and field coach for College Station Independent School District.

One of Kassidy's career goals is "after furthering my college education is to become a college professor. I hope that in doing so I can change just one life the way mine has been changed."



## HCMG Monthly Business Meeting July 8, 2020 Online Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

June 2020 Minutes can be found on our website

### **Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer's Report**-Jackie Connelly- Jackie Connelly reported the sale of some rain barrels and a scholarship contribution. The detailed report can be found online on VMS.

**Exxon Contribution**-Rachel Garrison thanked Liz Althaus for directing her retirement based donation from Exxon Mobile, due to her volunteer hours, to our scholarship fund. If anyone else has retired from a large company that offers such contributions, please consider directing donations to HCMG.

**Plant Sale Report Opportunity**-Rachel Garrison presented an opportunity to gain volunteer hours by taking a photograph of a plant purchased at our most recent B&B sale along with a write-up about the merits of the plant. Send the information to Pat Wolters for newsletter publication. More details of this opportunity will be included in the next couple of e-minders.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**Demo Gardens**-Jackie Skinner provided narration of the many recent photos of the Demo Garden taken by Mark Schultz. Jackie pointed out that there is a complete list of all plants mentioned above and an accompanying diagram of the gardens. The list includes common names as well as scientific names of all plants. She also mentioned that Dee Dunton has replaced all the missing plant markers. Rachel mentioned that the garden looks well watered and the irrigation expenditures had paid off. She thanked Jackie for her hard work and beautiful results. The Cactus Garden was damaged when the roadside fence was pushed down and covered part of the cactus garden, The Extension office is

working to get the fence repaired. The cactus garden has a Century plant currently in bloom attracting hummingbirds and butterflies. Jackie mentioned the ongoing need for more volunteers.

**In House Programs**-Rachel Garrison for Edna Platt-Rachel reported that there is no CEU for today's meeting but Edna is working on finding an interesting CEU topic for the next meeting.

**Research Desk**-Mark Schultz-Mark reported that the Research Desk project is close to achieving its goal of remote staffing capability. According to Mark the inquiry protocol remains the same. Mark said the new 2020 Inquiry Form can be found on VMS, along with Inquiry Log and Inquiry Worksheet. Mark also reported 8 interns are about to finish the two step training procedure and 3 more are signed up for the second step, but he still needs a few more interns to sign up for the second session. Rachel and Jackie Connelly reassured potential research desk volunteers that the office has hand sanitizers, masks, and sanitizing wipes. Anything that is touched must be sanitized. Rachel also suggested some interns might be nervous about coming in right now and its okay if they choose to wait.

**Scholarship Committee**-Carl Luckenbach explained that the committee received three applications from students at Texas A&M and one from Texas Tech. Two were approved. The first recipient was Bin Wu. Bin is a doctoral student and has been at A&M for 3 years. He has published 57 papers and his specialty is Crepe Myrtles. His goal is to become a University Professor.

Kassidey McCabe is a College Station resident and is now entering graduate school at A&M, maintaining straight A's throughout. If she makes a presentation to HCMG she will speak about the value of exposing young children to horticulture.

Rachel thanked the scholarship committee members, Carl Luckenbach, Anne Brown, and Liz Althaus.

**continued on page 13**

## HCMG Monthly Business Meeting Continued

### Announcements

**Butterfly Count**-Tom Collins reminded the membership of the Kerrville County Butterfly Count on July 15, 2020. Normally held at various parks, due to COVID restrictions, this year the counting will be done on each participating member's personal property. Counting should be done for 15 minutes-one hour but not exceeding 2 hours total time. The geographic area comprises all of Kerrville County and a small part of Gillespie County. If possible, identify the butterflies or take a picture and send it to Tom for identification. Caterpillars are counted also. This count has been done for 15 years identifying a cumulative total of 81 species, averaging 35-40 species each year.

### Victoria Master Gardeners Gardens-

We ended the meeting with Carl Luckenbach sharing a slide presentation of his recent visit to Victoria Gardens in Victoria, Texas. Carl explained the garden includes 37 garden areas along with 13 other features. Ground was broken in May of 2000 with the help of 50 Master Gardeners. Originally a WWII USAF base, decommissioned following the war, re-commissioned for the Korean War, and decommissioned again, the property was awarded to the city in the late 1950s. The runways were converted to a municipal airport and the swimming pool is now a Koi pond. The grounds contain two historical markers. Interestingly the Mexican government sent a squadron for training close to the end of WWII. Special mention was made of the rose gardens, daylily gardens and a separate garden for Texas Superstar plants.

**Volunteer Opportunities**-Rachel mentioned a need for volunteers at the Kronkosky Center, currently closed due to COVID. Keeley Porter has requested assistance with three raised

bed gardens which have plenty of space for appropriate social distancing. The gardens produce food for Meals on Wheels and the Boerne Food Pantry. The beds need harvesting and preparation for an August rest. Rachel also mentioned Chris Seifert at the The Coming King Sculpture & Prayer Garden Cross needs help, and Shirley Smith and Judy Beauford need volunteer help at Cultivar Farms. Rachel reminded all attending that this meeting qualifies for 1 volunteer hour

**Location for August meeting**-Rachel said the August meeting will probably be another Zoom online meeting. The meeting will be on August 5 at 1PM.

### Adjourned

Submitted by  
Donna Nutt, Secretary

**Visitor Information box at demo garden complete with brochures, a plant list, and garden map.** Photo Credit: Jackie Skinner



**Hill Country Master  
Gardeners 2020  
Executive  
Committee**

Rachel Garrison  
*President*

Debra Bacon  
*Vice President*

Donna Nutt  
*Secretary*

Jackie Connelly  
*Treasurer*

Jackie Skinner  
*Ex-officio Advisor*

Roy Walston  
*C.E.A. Advisor*

**Committees &  
Project  
Coordinators are  
listed on our  
website**

**Newsletter & Website**

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**Submissions to**

Newsletter.editor.hcmg  
@gmail.com

**Education  
Committee**

continues to evaluate  
the training provided  
in 2020 and plan for  
next Master Gardener  
Training in 2021.

We are learning to use  
online zoom,  
sort of.....



**President's message continued from page 1**

This Salvia variety, a hardy perennial, grows to about 3 feet tall and 2-3 wide. Butterflies and hummingbirds love the plant. We had many plants on our property that suffered from attracting the interest of deer, but not this plant. Deer seemed to ignore this Salvia.

The color of the blooms on the Indigo Spires is absolutely beautiful, a deep, rich color. I have read that it does well when dried, as it tends to retain much of the vibrant color.

I highly recommend this plant as a relatively carefree yet rewarding addition to your garden. It is a great plant for beginning gardeners, as it will give one confidence in their ability to grow a pretty plant. I hope that we continue to sell it at our Blooms & Barrels sales. The Mystic Spires Blue Salvia is a Texas Superstar so it would be a winner too.



**Mystic Spires Blue Salvia**

If you would like to earn some volunteer time, select a plant you purchased at one of our B&B sales. Take a photo of the plant and do a short write-up about it. Your write-up might answer questions about the plant such as where you planted it or difficulty with deer. We would like to know what you consider the strengths or weaknesses of the plant. Is it a winner or should we consider not including it in future B&B sales? Include anything you think would be valuable to the Greenhouse and B&B committees, and fellow gardeners. Send the photo and write-up to our newsletter editor, Pat Wolters. As space permits, she will include the information in upcoming newsletters.

Thanks for your input!