

April 2019

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HCMG will meet on
April 3, 2019

Location:
Kerr County
Youth Event Center

1:00 - Meeting
2:00 - Program

Edible Flowers

Beth McMahon,
Horticulture Agent
Gillespie County



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AGRILIFE
EXTENSION**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity".

President's Message



"Long experience has taught me that people who do not like geraniums have something morally unsound about them. Sooner or later you will find them out; you will discover that they drink, or steal books, or speak sharply to cats. Never trust a man or a woman who is not passionately devoted to geraniums."

Beverley Nichols, author

Our 2019 Blooms & Barrels fundraiser is almost upon us! The stars of our sale for the past few years are our spectacular geraniums. The sight of tables full of the beautiful blooms is truly a sight to behold.

The plant that is commonly known as geranium is actually of the genus *Pelargonium*. It should not be confused with true geraniums, often called "cranesbill" or "hardy geranium", which belong to the genus *Geranium*. Both are members of the Geraniaceae family. These plants are natives of South Africa, but when pelargoniums were exported to Europe in the 1700s there was confusion. The plants were labeled "geraniums" even though they were actually pelargoniums. As time passed, the name geranium stuck. The name geranium comes from the Greek word "geranos" meaning "crane," as the seed pods of a true geranium resemble a crane's bill.

Geraniums arrived in America in 1786 when Thomas Jefferson shipped them from France. They quickly gained in popularity and became one of the most favored flowers in American gardens. One of the characters in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, written in 1868, cultivates a red geranium. Written in 1960, Harper Lee also uses geraniums in *To Kill a Mockingbird* to express character qualities of a character in her book.

Geraniums are easily propagated by tip cuttings. For centuries, favorite varieties grown from cuttings were passed down from generation to generation. Known as zonal geraniums because of the "zoned" leaf markings, they are available in a wide range of colors. Zonal geraniums have flowers that are doubled and frilly, but produce no seeds. In 1962, breeders at Pennsylvania State University developed the first

Continued on page 4

HCMG 2019 Continuing Education Opportunities prepared by Racann Reid

Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional. We list events for those wishing to attend other educational offerings, not all events are eligible to fulfill CEUs credits toward annual recertification.

April 2, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m., NPSOT Boerne. Susan Tracy, NPSOT member and a practicing pteridomaniac (lover of ferns) will present "The Ferns of Texas". Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium. Visitors welcome.

April 3, 1:00 p.m. business meeting, 2:00 p.m., Hill Country Master Gardeners. Beth McMahon, Gillespie County TAMU AgriLife Horticulture Agent, will present a program on edible flowers. Hill Country Youth Event Center. HCMGs, interns, trainees.

April 9, 1:00 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 1:30 p.m., NPSOT Kerrville. Dr. Virginia Sawin, biologist, toxicologist and Hill Country Master Naturalist, will present "What's in your garden? The good, the bad, and some others." Riverside Nature Center. Visitors welcome.

April 10, 2:00 p.m., Rose Garden Club of Medina. HCMG Patty Zohlen will present "Vermiculture, the Art of Worm Farming." Medina Community Center. Visitors welcome.

April 13, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Gardening 101. HCMG Kim Courtright, will present "Sun/shade and row covers." Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library.

April 15, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Riverside Nature Center Association. Billy Kniffen, retired AgriLife Extension agent and statewide water resource specialist, will discuss rainwater recovery and storage systems. Space is limited. Reserve at 830.257.4837. Upper Guadalupe River Authority Building.

April 16, 10:00 a.m., Hunt Garden Club. Rick Fink, owner of Bandera Bees, manager of central Texas Bee Rescue and president of The Alamo Area Bee Keepers Association, will relate his experiences living and working with bees. Hunt United Methodist Church. Visitors Welcome.

April 16, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Riverside Nature Center Association's Ned talk will be the screening of a film entitled "Hometown Habitat: Stories of Bringing Nature Home, a collection of success stories of implementing the use of native plants and the beneficial effects to the whole ecosystem. Douglas Tallamy, author of "Bringing Nature Home," narrates the film. Tickets will be \$5. Kerrville Rio 10 Cinemas

Addresses found on page 7

April 20, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Boerne and April 27, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Fredericksburg. NPSOT Native Landscape Certification Program Level 1. Instructors will focus on the value of native plants in landscapes, the differences between sustainable and conventional development, your Texas vegetation regions and soil, and 45 native Texas plants recommended for your landscape and five to avoid. For info about the Fredericksburg class, see details in flyer attached to the 3/17/19 reminder. Boerne class description is identical. For more information, contact Meg Inglis meg.inglis@npsot.org or 512.589.1316. Register in advance; class size is limited. Cost: \$45. Cibolo Nature Center on 4/20; Central Texas Electric Cooperative on 4/27.

April 23, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m., NPSOT Fredericksburg. Kathy Lyles, native plant expert, will present "Native Plant Gardening in the Hill Country." Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

April 27, 10:00 a.m.-noon, Cibolo Nature Center. San Antonio Wildflower Farm and Garden will present "Hyperlocal Cut Flower Workshop." \$15. Contact Stephanie Patillo at Farm@cibolo.org. Herff Farm Teaching Barn.

HCMG Training, 9:00 a.m. to noon and 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Hill Country Youth Event Center (except where noted). Trainees, interns and members. Class details on VMS. HCMGs and interns sign up on VMS to ensure enough seating.

April 2, a.m. Kathy Lyles, Native Plants of the Hill Country, Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office

April 2, p.m. field trip to Kathy Lyles' property, FBG

April 4, all day. Field trip to Medina Garden Nursery

April 16, a.m. HCMG Caryl Hartman, Earth-Kind Landscaping and Herbs

April 16, p.m. Dr. Kimberly Cochran, TAMU and AgriLife, Plant Pathology

April 18, a.m. HCMG Jackie Skinner, volunteer opportunities; HCMG Melayne Arnold, research desk

April 18 p.m. Graduation



Hill Country Veggies

April 2019

By Allen Mace

This is turning out to be one of those years where I'm going to rely more on history and experience, than conventional wisdom.

My "Average Last Freeze Date" in Comfort is around March 20th, but the Mesquites on the property are telling me that winter is not quite finished yet. Even though all my fruit trees are blossoming out now, fruit trees are not to be trusted. They have a double blooming capability for a reason. They can be tricked into thinking that winter is over, when it's not. This is looking like one of those years. Punxsutawney Phil, the prognosticating woodchuck from Pennsylvania, prophesied that winter would soon be over. Remember, never trust a rat.



Mesquites

to never leaf out until the threat of a freeze is over. I've watched them for years, and never plant my spring garden until I have seen the leafing out of the mesquites. I can only remember one year, back in the 90's, when we had a freeze in mid-April. I take those odds, every time.



Fruit Tree Blooms

Year in and year out, I have come to rely on the humble Mesquite tree. Mesquite trees are really a scrubby, woody legume that is native throughout Texas. Most folks don't like this tree and generally take it out of their landscapes. It tends to be a water hog and will diminish grass production on rangelands when it gets out of control. The beans are edible for domestic animals as well as wildlife. Native peoples would harvest the beans as well. Personally, I don't like the taste, but in a survival situation, anything goes. Seldom, if ever, are Mesquites fooled by Mother Nature. They seem



Nature's Rototiller

While you're waiting for winter to end, now is the time to get your garden plot ready, if you haven't done so already. I cleaned up my raised beds a few weeks ago, but there seems to be an armadillo that has decided to till them again, again and again. At some point I will have to deal with him and that's all I will say about that. For now, I will start a few more plants in pots and continue to bring them in when the temperature drops into the mid 30's.

The HCMG Class of 2019



Front row: Tina Woods, Chris Hopf, Susan Millis, Ray Tiemann, Mimi Bouslog, Mark Schultz, Jim Wilson, Luci Nic and Bob Moore.

Back row: Karen Fuller, Darla Cluster, Cindy Poynter, Paula Stone, Jeanne Hoverson, Trudy Boardman, Mindy Skaggs, Sandra Yarbrough, Linda Kaiser, Donna Nutt, Shannon Barker, Bee Evans, Laurie Kilpatrick and Cruzita Hernandez.

President's message continued from page 1:

commercially successful seed propagated geranium. Within a few years Harris Seed Company and Pan American Seed Company also developed seed varieties. Zonal geraniums have larger flowers and have outstanding performance as potted plants. Seed geranium varieties are more often used in bed and borders, as they have more numerous flowers and a branching growth habit.

Geraniums are a great container plant for our climate. They do well in a pot with drainage holes, as they don't like soggy soil. They thrive with lots of light potting soil that is allowed to dry out a bit between watering. Half strength balanced water-soluble fertilizer every two weeks will keep them lush.

Americans think of geraniums as a thoughtful housewarming gift, as they denote friendship. They are also thought to represent gentility and esteem. Some say they are a symbol of happiness and positive emotions. I would have to agree. While I may not be "Passionately devoted to geraniums: as the above quote states, when I see our beautiful display of tables full of blooming geraniums, it makes me very happy and full of positive emotions. Thank you to the Green House committee for leading us in this endeavor!

Rachel Garrison, President

HCMG Propagation Class



Master Gardeners, Debra Bass, Sandy Lewis and Anne Brown, provided a day of information and “hands on” activities for the students.

Janice Walker was the class facilitator

Photo Credit: Patti Schlessiger



Bluebonnets—A Texas Legend

From “Legends & Lore of Texas Wildflowers” by Elizabeth Silverthorne



When President Theodore Roosevelt visited Austin on April 6, 1905, thousands of schoolchildren lined the road, singing “America” and tossing bluebonnets in his path. Like the Lone Star flag and the longhorn, the bluebonnet is a symbol of Texas. It seems such a perfect choice for the state flower that few people realize it had to win out in hot competition with the open cotton boll and the blossom of the prickly pear cactus.

In 1901 when a resolution proposed by the Colonial Dames of Texas to adopt the bluebonnet as the state flower was introduced in the Texas House of

Representatives, a business leader suggested that the open cotton boll, “the white flower of commerce,” be adopted instead. Jack Garner, future vice president of the United States, rose to support with glowing praise the prickly pear, a prominent inhabitant of the area near his Uvalde home. The Dames marshaled their forces to lobby the representatives, and as a visual aid they brought into the House a bluebonnet picture painted by Miss Mode Walker of Austin. The opposition, including “Cactus Jack,” was overwhelmed, and the bluebonnet won the day.

The question of the state flower, however, was not at rest. The bluebonnet named in the legislators’ resolution was *Lupinus subcarnosus*, not considered by most bluebonnet lovers to be the most attractive of the six species discovered so far in the state. Many argued the *Lupinus texensis*, known as the Texas Bluebonnet, which creates lush blue carpets throughout Central Texas each spring, should be the official designee. Finally, seventy years later, in 1971, the Texas congress passed a new resolution that added the Texas bluebonnet and also “any other variety of Bluebonnet not heretofore recorded”. We have, therefore, as Jean Andrews (author of *The Texas Bluebonnet*) points out, six state flowers and the possibility of others if new species are discovered.

This photo was taken on my property on Upper Turtle Creek Road. When I moved there 40 years ago, there were no Bluebonnets in the area. I have planted many seeds over the past forty years with little luck until two years ago when a few plants emerged. This year the plants have quadrupled in number. Do not give up!

Photo Credit Pat Wolters



Meet the 2019 Students



Ray Tiemann has been gardening in the Texas Hill Country for the past 33 years. He lives in Fredericksburg. He enjoys growing all kinds of vegetables and also works with landscape and flower beds. Ray says that he has been gardening most of his life, but now that he has retired from being a Lutheran Minister he wants to increase his knowledge and meet a whole new group of people.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do?" He answered, "Take care of God's creation, serve the community, and provide beauty and healthy food."



Darla Cluster has been gardening all of her life but for the past 20 years in the Texas Hill Country. She lives in Kerrville. She currently grows flowers and ground covers. She has always had a love of nature and gardening and finally has the time for education and volunteering. Darla was an outfitter in Colorado.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do?" She answered, "Learn by textbook, experience, and sharing with each other. Educating and helping community; and planning and planting gardens when needed".



Laurie A. Kilpatrick and her husband owned the Choo Choo Patio Shoppe. She lives in Fredericksburg. Now that she has retired there is more time to garden. She has been gardening in the Texas Hill Country for 18 years. She describes herself as artistic and enjoys color and abstract lines and drawing pictures. She wants to gain knowledge about plants. Since she has a green thumb and she also likes to cook, she plans to use the plants that she grows.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do?" She answered, "I think they create beautiful gardens and help to conserve the environment".



Jeanne Hoverson lives in Kerrville and works at Flowbee. She doesn't have much gardening experience but has always loved plants. Jeanne is interested in vegetable gardening and meeting people. She looks forward to gaining knowledge.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do?" She answered, "Learn, help, volunteer".

Meet the 2019 Students



Susan Millis is a retired lawyer from Farmers Branch. She has a second home in Fredericksburg and one of her neighbors is Raeann Reid. Susan has been doing her landscaping for the past 30 years, 4 of those years in the Texas Hill Country. She has always had an interest in gardening and landscaping and now that she has retired, she has more time to pursue. She looks forward to volunteering with like-minded neighbors.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do? She answered, "Develop expertise in native plants, gardening and related fields; volunteer their service in the community".



Bee Evans is a retired paralegal. She has 15 years of gardening experience, 2 of those years in the Texas Hill Country. She enjoys landscaping and growing vegetables. Bee lives in Kerrville. She wants to learn more about natives species, landscape design and how to grow vegetable successfully. She is looking forward to contributing to the community.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do? She answered, "Help people in the community with gardening, maintain nature center and demonstration gardens".



Jim Wilson lives in Kerrville and currently works at the Salvation Army, KROC Community Center. He wants to learn how to grow, care and share healthy food. He has no gardening experience but is anxious to gain experience.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do? He answered, "Service organization to help others grow nutritious, healthy foods".



Cindy Poynter lives in Kerrville. She retired as Assistant Treasurer for Aramco Services Company. Cindy has 10 years of gardening experience, 1 year in the Texas Hill Country. She holds a life long interest in landscaping, organic gardening, herbs, and hydroponic gardening.

In answer to the question "What do you think Master Gardeners do? She answered, "Demonstrate a passion for gardening and sharing that passion with others through clinics, education and volunteer programs".

Editors note: I especially enjoyed reading what each student thought a Master Gardener does. It reminded me of why I joined the Hill Country Master Gardeners and gave me time to reflect on if I was meeting my personal goals.

Vegetable Day

The students met at the Gillespie County Extension Office in Fredericksburg for Vegetable Day. Pictured to the right is County Agent, Beth McMahon, and Education Committee Chair, Lydia Jones, answering questions about seed packets.



Beth McMahon will present a program "Edible Flowers" at the Wednesday, April 3rd, meeting of Hill Country Master Gardeners (HCMG). Beth is active in HCMG and attends most of our meetings. She is a graduate of Texas A&M and has a master's degree in Horticulture from Oklahoma State University. She is currently the Horticultural Agent with AgriLife in Gillespie County.

"Soil Your Undies" Challenge



1. Find a pair of white, solid cotton underwear (men's or women's).



2. Bury the underwear in your garden up to the waistband (or bury the whole thing, just mark it so you can find it again.)



3. Dig up your underwear in 2 months.

4. Rinse off the dirt.



5. Have someone take a picture of you holding what's left of your undies.

6. Send your picture to me at Newsletter.editor.hcmg@gmail.com by June 15, 2019.

I will post the pictures in the July Newsletter

HCMG Monthly Business Meeting

March 13, 2019

Call to Order -Rachel Garrison called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance-Terri DeBusk led the pledge.

Invocation-Patti Schlessiger gave the invocation.

Verification of Quorum – Patti Schlessiger-Verified a quorum was present.

Treasurer's Report – Bernadell Larson/
Approval of Treasurer's Report-Bernadell gave the balances,

Susan Roberts moved and Sandy Martin 2nd to accept the reports as presented. All approved.

Approval of February 2019 Minutes-A motion was made and 2nd to approve the minutes.

Old Business—none

New Business

Pat Wolters talked about "Soil your Undies" Challenge: the challenge is to bury a white cotton undies in order to test soil quality. She asked any member doing this test to bury the undies in the garden and take a picture 2 months later when they are dug up. Email the pictures to her at newsletter.editor.hcmg@gmail.com

Announcements

- Photo Release-Jackie Connelly had members sign a form as they arrived for meeting.
- Riverside Nature Center/UGRA EduScape Project tours – Pam Umstead reported there will be a program on May 23rd at UGRA. More info can be obtained on the Riverside Nature Center website.
- Tree Care Advanced Training class – HCMG hosting, June 12-14, 2019 – Jackie Skinner gave an overview of the classes and had forms available for those interested in attending. The first 4 paid members will be accepted.
- Update on Jim Wilhite – Jackie Skinner reported on Jim's progress from his foot surgery, and read his email.
- Master Gardener Training – Lydia Jones

invited the members to attend the field trips.

- Blooms & Barrels – Jackie Connelly gave updates on the plants, which number approximately 1640, with more to come.
- Committee chairs report on their projects:
 - Demo Garden Workday – Wednesday, March 27th, 9-12-Jackie Skinner said help is needed to prepare for Blooms and Barrels tours.
 - Janell Dahms asked members to sign-up on VMS for Blooms and Barrels Spa Day, Moving Day and Sale Day.
 - Logo wear – Debbie Bacon is taking orders and will be placing an order soon.
 - Feed Tubs - Raeann Reid brought feed tubs for anyone wishing to have them.
 - Propagation Committee and Public Programs – chairs needed
 - State Conference-Duane Robinson gave date and info about the conference to be held in Victoria, TX.

Next meeting –April 3, 2019

Adjournment-Duane Robinson moved and Melayne Arnold 2nd the meeting adjourned
Respectfully submitted,
Patti Schlessiger, Secretary

Addresses from page 2

Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water St. KRVL
Cibalo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne
Herff Farm Teaching Barn, 33 Herff Road, Boerne
Kathy Lyles' Home, 457 Oxen Trail, Settlers' Ridge, FBG
Medina Community Center, 13857 State Hwy 16N, Medina
Medina Garden Nursery, 3417 State Highway 16 N, Medina
Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam St, FBG
Rio 10 Cinemas, 1401 Bandera Hwy, KRVL
Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, KRVL
Upper Guadalupe River Authority Aud, 125 Lehmann Dr, KRVL

**Hill Country Master
Gardeners 2019
Executive
Committee**

Rachel Garrison
President

Debra Bacon
Vice President

Patti Schlessiger
Secretary

Bernadell Larson
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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Special thanks to
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**Hill Country
Texas Master Gardeners
Blooms & Barrels Sale**

Saturday, April 13, 2019, 9 am—2 pm

PLANTS

Native - Adapted - Ornamentals
Herbs -Vegetables

RAIN BARRELS

Demo Garden Self Guided Tours
Children's Activities Booth
Exhibits / Vendors

EDUCATION STATIONS

10 to noon

Bring your questions to our experienced Texas Master Gardeners

Garden Preparation – Judy Beauford, Shirley Smith
Butterfly & Hummingbird Host & Nectar Plants – Tom Collins
Ornamental Grasses / Shade Plants - Jackie Skinner
Rainwater Harvesting Program @ 11 am—Anne Brown
Vegetables – Lydia Jones, Connie Townsend

Visit HCMG Information Booth
for more information and **FREE SEEDS!**

All Sales on 4/13/19 are **Tax Exempt**

BYOW—Bring Your Own Wagon *if you'd like!*

Cash or Check Only (ATM available)

Hill Country Youth Event Center – Ag Barn
3785 Hwy 27 East, Kerrville

Hill Country Master Gardeners



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