

April 2022

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HCMG
April 6, 2022
HCYEC

11:00 am
 MG Volunteer Opportunities

12:00 Graduation/
 Potluck Lunch

1:00 Business Meeting

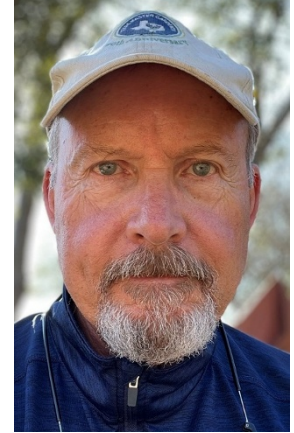
2:00 Program

“A Springtime Tour of the HCMG Demonstration Garden” hosted by Jackie Skinner and the demonstration garden committee.

“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

Dave Kinneberg



Jayla Fry, Texas Master Gardener Coordinator, recently sent an email to all MG associations requesting information on “quality, successful partnerships with other groups or businesses.” (Why she wanted this information has yet to be explained.) Two HCMG projects were suggested to the Executive Committee as fitting this description: UGRA EduScape and Glory Community Garden, both championed by Pam Umstead. Of course, other HCMG projects fall into this category as well; these two projects just seemed to stand out. I passed Jayla’s request along to Pam who put together brief summaries for Jayla.

As President, you would think I would be aware of the “great deeds” done by HCMG. I knew a little about the Glory Community Garden because Allen Noah gave his heart-felt thanks for our support at one of the HCMG monthly meetings last year. (And because of Pam’s frequent updates during our monthly meetings.) However, I knew nothing at all about the UGRA EduScape project. My excuse is simple: HCMG has many worthwhile activities and, as a relatively new member, there is a lot to learn. Since other MG’s might be in the same situation, I thought I would use this space to publish Pam’s summaries.

“The UGRA EduScape. Hill Country Master Gardeners have partnered with the Upper Guadalupe River Authority for many years to promote catching rainwater with rain barrels which we make and sell – UGRA provides a 50% rebate to homeowners, and we use the proceeds for our scholarship fund. They asked us for help creating a concept plan for their ¾-acre hillside property, to demonstrate green storm water infrastructure. A Master Gardener committee created a landscape plan incorporating many water-retentive practices including pervious walking surfaces, rain gardens, terracing, gabion walls, rain and A/C condensate tanks, and xeric areas, along with a recommended deer-resistant native and adapted plant list. We also provided oversight during construction and installation. As the project caught the public’s attention, we held informational seminars for city managers, contractors, and landscapers.

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Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace, MG

Every time I try something new, or something that I have not done in a long time, it creates a learning opportunity. Last month I wrote about starting seeds. I had found a new recipe for a seed starting mix. I

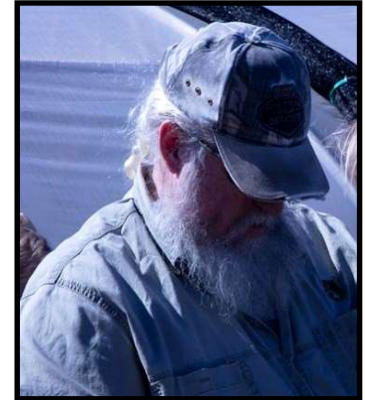


Seedlings

I went to a local supply house and purchased the ingredients. Came home and set up the grow trays with grow lights and a small heat pad. I did not have any small plastic six packs so I used some 4" pots instead. I watered the pots then added the seeds the next day. A few days later I had tomato seedlings emerging from each pot, 16 in total. Turned the grow lights on and marched forward. If you remember, I had made a starting mix of roughly 50% Sphagnum Peat Moss and 50% Vermiculite. All seemed well. A seed has enough built into it to germinate and start to grow. After a short time, it will need some fertilizer in

order to continue to grow. I had failed to check the pH of the Sphagnum Peat Moss. The seedlings were growing, but they were pale green in color. Still not thinking about the pH, I mixed some water-soluble fertilizer into my water can and poured it into the bottom of the trays that the 4' pots were sitting in. This water-soluble fertilizer was a bit high in nitrogen. After a few days, the seedlings were still pale green in color. Normally I'm dealing with alkali soils and water. It was at this point that I thought, what's the pH of my starting mix? In the words of that great philosopher Gomer Pyle, "Well Surprise, Surprise, Surprise", Sphagnum Peat Moss is between 3 and 4.5 pH and Vermiculite is between 7 to 7.5 pH. Most vegetables need a soil pH of between 6 and 7 in order to absorb nutrients. Normally by adding a fertilizer higher in nitrogen to alkali soils, I lower the pH to a level that the plants like. The potting mix that I made was slightly acidic. By fertilizing with higher nitrogen, I pushed the pH even lower thus creating a more acidic environment for these new seedlings. I have thinned out the seedlings and repotted into 6" pots and now have 5 seedlings that hopefully will be transplanted into the garden later this spring.

Lessons learned from all of this. Don't just try something new without really thinking through it all first. pH is important throughout the whole growing process, from start to finish. I like the water holding aspect of Sphagnum Peat Moss but will be adding a bit of Dolomite Lime, sometimes called Agricultural Limestone, to try and neutralizes the acidity of the Sphagnum Peat Moss. I think the 4" pot might have been too large for starting seeds. I have since found some plastic six packs with much smaller growing cells. I believe the smaller cells of the six pack will be better than the 4" pot for starting seedlings. I still have seeds to start and look forward to making these changes and see how they work.



Dolomite Lime



By Cindy Anderson
Master Gardener
Native Plant Society of Texas

The flashy red flowers of Coral Honeysuckle beckon hummingbirds to their sweet nectar.

Spring for this NICE Texas native vine!

Texas is a large, diverse state and plants that work for one region may not always be the best choice in a different region. The Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) created the N.I.C.E. Native Plant Partners program to help nurseries offer natives that are right for the local environment. Two local chapters of NPSOT, the Kerrville and Fredericksburg chapters, implement this program by choosing one native plant to promote each season – in cooperation with wholesalers, in order to assure availability – and in cooperation with participating local nurseries.

The N.I.C.E. acronym stands for “Natives Improve and Conserve Environments.” The goal of the program is to introduce people to great native plants that are available locally to use in place of non-native species.

WHY PLANT NATIVES?

The home page of the state website, NPSOT.org, says:

- Native plants are drought tolerant, naturally conserving our precious water resources
- Native plants provide habitat and food for birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife
- Native plants don't need special pampering or fertilizing
- Natives are natural to their eco-system
- Natives help us maintain biological diversity

This spring season (which begins on March 20), the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are featuring Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), at six local nurseries as their N.I.C.E. Plant of the Season.

We recently welcomed **The Garden Haus of Comfort** to our NPSOT N.I.C.E. Program! We are delighted to add this beautiful nursery, owned by Karen and Jonathan Letz, to our program. The Garden Haus is located at 31 Highway 87 in Comfort, on the site of Karen's grandparents' home. The nursery carries an impressive selection of Texas native plants, as well as offering landscape and design services.

Coral Honeysuckle

Coral honeysuckle is a lovely twining vine that can reach 10 to 20 feet tall and 3 to 6 feet wide, making it an excellent choice for a trellis, pergola, or fence. It can also be used as a sprawling groundcover, but will naturally twine around any support it can find. To train the vines upward, simply tie the stems to the structure you want it to climb.

Continued on page 4

It is also very easy to grow, and has few pest or disease problems. It should be planted in well-drained soil and kept well watered until it becomes established. It can be grown in sun or partial shade, but will produce more flowers in full sun, especially if its roots are kept moist and shaded with mulch.

Unlike its non-native cousin Japanese honeysuckle, our native Coral honeysuckle does not become invasive. It is aggressive enough to grow well, but remains very well-behaved. If it becomes overgrown, it can be easily cut back after flowering in the spring. The non-native Japanese honeysuckle, on the other hand, often kills small trees as the vines twine around and girdle them, and it forms such a dense groundcover that no other plants can grow. Our native Coral honeysuckle is a wonderful, well-behaved alternative.

Once established, Coral honeysuckle is very drought-tolerant. It is best planted in the spring or fall, as the summer heat will stress a new plant. Regular watering will help promote healthy blooming and is most important for young, establishing plants.

As to deer resistance, research says that both the foliage and flowers may be nibbled by white-tailed deer up to the height they are able to browse.

Sometimes classified as “semi-evergreen,” here in central Texas Coral honeysuckle is mostly evergreen. In colder climates it may lose its leaves in winter. The leaves of the woody vine are smooth, glossy, and paired, with 2-4 clusters of red, tubular blooms followed by bright-red berries. The trumpet-shaped flowers are red outside, yellow inside, in several whorled clusters at the ends of the stems. The mature bark is papery, exfoliating and orange-brown in color.

This beautiful, high-climbing vine is frequently visited by hummingbirds and butterflies in spring and summer, while in the fall its red berries attract songbirds. The heaviest flowering occurs in the spring, with sparser flushes of blooms throughout the summer.

WHERE TO FIND IT

Our local N.I.C.E. nurseries have happily agreed to stock up on our Plant of the Season in order to have it available to the public. These independent nurseries carry only the best plants for our area, as well as high-quality soil amendments and gardening supplies.

Look for the “N.I.C.E. Plant of the Season” sign stake at these nurseries and growers in Kerrville, Fredericksburg, and Medina:

Natives of Texas, 4256 Medina Highway, Kerrville, 830-896-2169

Plant Haus 2, 604 Jefferson Street, Kerrville, 830-792-4444

The Gardens at The Ridge, 13439 S. Ranch Road 783 (Harper Rd.), Kerrville, 830-896-0430

The Garden Haus, 31 Highway 87 North, Comfort, 830-995-5610

Friendly Natives, 1107 N. Llano Street, Fredericksburg, 830-997-6288

Medina Garden Nursery, 13417 Tx. Highway 16, Medina, 830-589-2771

Our chapter website contains articles of past N.I.C.E. plants, going back as far as 2009. To peruse the list, go to the following link: <https://npsot.org/wp/kerrville/nice-2> and scroll to the bottom of the page for the list of featured plants.

President's message continued

The **EduScape** also contains educational signage with QR codes for more information on the source of the Guadalupe River, various structural elements installed on the property, and the 1,000+ plants thriving there. The relationship continues, as I and several other community partners give tours to interested groups. The EduScape was awarded the annual Texas Water Development Board's Raincatcher of the Year award. You can see more about it at www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/eduscape.

Glory Community Garden. A local historic church congregation wanted to establish a community garden on vacant land they own in a neighborhood identified as a food desert. Several Master Gardeners have served on the steering committee in various capacities. No funding was available, but through word of mouth interested partners came to the table, including architects, contractors, building supply houses, seed and plant suppliers, and financial donors. There are 32 garden beds, rented annually for a nominal fee; as well as a storage building filled with tools. As the garden developed, neighbors who weren't gardeners wanted to enjoy the space too, so a pavilion was constructed and a series of public events to "build community" were begun. Various organizations participate with information and displays focusing on improving health. The Garden has hosted many children's groups for education about plants and healthy eating. Recently a local brewery asked to create a seasonal beer (Apple Glory Brown Ale) with a souvenir goblet to help raise funds for needed additions to the garden. Several Glory Gardeners have also been awarded scholarships to take our Master Gardener class. The garden director was recently invited to speak at the Annual Conference of the American Community Gardening Association. You can see more about it on their Facebook page – Glory Community Garden.”

One reason I joined HCMG was to contribute to our community. As I told the current HCMG class in my "welcome speech," hearing Allen describe the impact the Glory Community Garden has on local residents made me proud to be a Master Gardener (even though I had nothing to do with the work). Now I can point with equal pride to the UGRA EduScape. One last note, Anne Brown told me the other day that we have sold over 800 rain barrels since the project began. Wow!

The Joys of Gardening Seminar in Bandera



What a great success “The Joys of Gardening” seminar was on March 3, 2022 at the Bandera County AgriLife Extension. David Rodriguez (Grow Your Own Vegetables) and Molly Keck (Entomologist) from the Texas AgriLife Extension/Bexar County gave very informative and lively presentations on their fields of expertise. HCMG members, Sue Hall and Marge Muniz, were there to lend a hand and give out information on the Hill Country Master Gardeners. Here they are greeting their first visitor from Uvalde.









By Jackie Connelly

Wildflowers Taken from “Legends & Lore of Texas Wildflowers” by Elizabeth Silverthorne

In ancient times when people were more aware of their dependence on plants to provide food, medicine, fuel, and materials for clothing, there grew up a vast amount of superstition and folklore. Over the years much of the folk wisdom about plants was forgotten or ignored as more sophisticated scientific technology ruled the world. Only recently have we become aware that the lowliest wildflower may harbor some important secret, and only very recently have we become aware how profligate we have been in destroying these potential sources of life and well-being. If we and our planet are to survive, this awareness must increase quickly as more and more plants enter the endangered or threatened lists.

Wildflowers are important not only to the well-being of our bodies but also to the well-being of our spirits. The more we learn about wildflowers—their astounding variety, their tricks and ways of attracting propagators, their histories, their clever survival tactics, and their many forms of beauty—the more we will enjoy them.

Every trip to a new environment and every walk in the country will become a journey of discovery. We can enliven our gardens and our lives by planting wildflowers that will attract birds and butterflies. Like grace notes in our lives, these gifts of nature soften the effects of living in a world that is often violent and callous. Long before there were cultivated flowers, there was the custom of giving flowers as symbols of peace and love. As we look at fields of wildflowers this spring enameled by nature’s color palette, we might remember what Keats wrote, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever”.

Flower		Month	Facts
Bluebonnet		March - April	Surprisingly, not all are blue.
Indian Paintbrush		April - June	Several types bloom across the country.
Pink Evening Primrose		April - June	Better known as a <i>Buttercup</i> .
Texas Thistle		April - August	Highly sought after by bees and birds.
Indian Blanket		April - July	Also known as <i>Firewheel</i> .
Blue-eyed Grass		May - August	Attracts butterflies.
Basket Flower		June - August	Smells like honey!
Common Sunflower		June - September	1 of 19 variations of TX wild sunflowers.

Students and their **mentors** attend the March MG Business Meeting. The Hill Country Master Gardeners were happy to welcome students to the latest meeting. Some worked in the Demonstration Garden before attending the meeting. George Cates from Native American Seed in Junction provided the continuing education program “Native Grasses Explained, Becoming Native to Your Place”. Photo Credit: Pat Wolters



Jodi Tippens and mentor, Trudy Boardman



George Cates



Michael Bell and mentor,
Fernando Gonzalez



Diane McRae and mentor, Debbie Lea



Tish Hulett and mentor, Janice Walker

Our Class of 2022 Lends a Helping Hand

by Vickie Killeen, MG

Following a day of classroom instruction, many students were eager to get their hands dirty and help grow plants for our upcoming Blooms & Barrels sale. Greenhouse Committee member Anne Brown gave a demonstration of our potting technique before the new volunteers dug into potting soil and 145 new plants needing more room to grow. Having so many enthusiastic potters made short work of the chores and allowed new recruits to sample working in our greenhouses.



1



2



4

1. Anne Brown demonstrates for (left to right) Cattina Gonzales, Kathy Enke, Shannon Stuteville and Phil Roberson
2. Left to Right Kathy Enke, Diane McRae and Mary Mechler
3. Kathy Nelson with fellow students
4. Rae Raiford with fellow students



3

HCMG MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING

March 2, 2022

Hill Country Youth Event Center

Call to Order Dave Kinneberg called the meeting to order on this Texas Independence Day.

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation – Sue Hall

Verification of Quorum – Rita Aliperto established that a quorum has been met.

Welcome/Opening Remarks – Dave welcomed visitors (interns) in attendance. He commented that he and Anne Brown attended the Directors’ meeting and one of the take-aways was the new format to the agenda. Additionally, he will ask Jackie Connelly to include each month’s agenda in the e-Minder to help cut down on the number of copies being made for each business meeting.

Approval of Minutes from February 2, 2022 Meeting – A motion to approve the February minutes was made by Anne Brown and seconded by Melayne Arnold.

Treasurer’s Report – Rachel Garrison explained why the money from the matured CD was put temporarily into the checking account. A motion was made by Melayne Arnold to approve the Treasurer’s report and seconded by Shannon Barker.

Committee Reports

B&B Plant Sale – Janell Dahms again reported the three important dates for us all to remember. April 7th Spa Day; April 8th Move Day; and April 9th Sale Day. She stated that we have just under 1,600 plants and to please sign up in VMS to work these days. We need “all hands on deck”! Students are welcome, too. Master Gardeners who wish to purchase plants may do so on Spa Day or between 7:30 and 8:00am on Sale Day. MGs are limited to 5 plants and some of the plants may be off-limits to MGs and only available to the public. She asked that MGs bring cardboard boxes that will accommodate 3-4 one-gallon pots. If you have a wagon to allow customers to use, please mark it

and bring on either spa or sale day. If anyone would like a flyer to distribute, please see Janell. She also gave Vickie Killeen due praise for her outstanding job of advertising for the sale to the public.



Publicity Committee - Vickie Killeen (above) stated she began advertising for the Blooms and Barrels sale at the end of January 2022 to all local newspapers. She doesn’t subscribe to them all, so she’d appreciate clippings from MGs for her publicity book. She advertised in the Kerr County Ag Extension Office’s new newsletter, *Top of the Windmill*, which reaches approximately 1,200 readers. Vickie recently had an article appear in the Kerrville Daily Times featuring rain barrels. She is working on advertising for the specific plants. Vickie has written ads, articles and obtained approval on a great deal of media including radio spots. She credited Pam Umstead for her wonderful radio voice on public service announcements. The B&B sale will be advertised on The Ranch Radio Group, running March 26th through April 8th. She also urged all MGs to send information regarding the plant sale out on their own social media. A round of applause was given to Vickie for all her hard work. (Note: Vickie would like to pass the Publicity Chair torch on to someone else, so please contact Vickie or Dave if you’re interested in this volunteer opportunity.)

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Monthly minutes continued

Greenhouse – Fernando Gonzalez reported that, to date, there are 1,560 plants in the greenhouse, and he hopes to have 1,600 by Friday. He anticipates around 1,900 total, including vegetables, herbs and annuals that will be purchased about 2 weeks prior to the sale. As of March 20th, watering will be done daily. Please sign up for watering dates in VMS. Continue to remove buds and flowers until March 16th. He said there were a few problems this winter mostly due to climate swings. Other issues were a bad circuit breaker, but he brought heaters from his home to remedy. New insulation and a new motor to be installed soon.

Education – Donna Bellis reported that we currently have 29 students (1 dropped out). There will be a Potluck luncheon on Wednesday, April 6th at 12:00pm (at the HCYEC) to welcome the interns, prior to the 1 pm business meeting. The membership is also invited to attend. The Hospitality Committee will provide a cake. Debbie Bass and Janice Walker are doing a propagation class for the interns on March 10th and another for the class of 2020 on March 29th. They need ‘material’ for the class and are asking that anyone who has a houseplant they can work with, to email or text Debbie for further information.

Demonstration Garden – Jackie Skinner thanked the intern volunteers who helped with the Demo Garden clean up today. She asked for additional volunteers on Wednesday, March 16th to spread mulch in the garden. If you have a wheelbarrow, that would also be appreciated. Jackie is asking if any MG with carpenter skills could repair the decorative rain barrel in the flower bed in front of the Ag Extension Office. The Demo Garden Committee will be hosting the CE training on April 6th. Volunteers from the Demo Garden will give group tours of the garden. In the event of inclement weather, Beth McMahon will provide training.

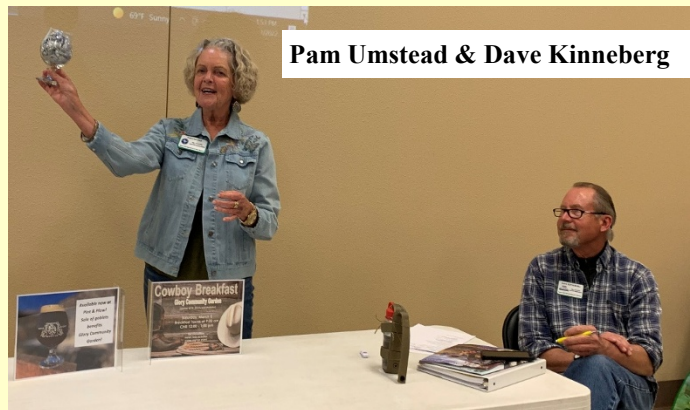
Hospitality Committee -Linda Proffitt and Jackie Skinner are working on the HCMG Christmas Party. Jackie reported that the going rate for a catered lunch is around \$30. We could opt for that or a potluck luncheon at HCYEC. A straw poll

was taken, and the membership voted for a potluck.

Other Business

MG Directors Meeting – Anne Brown and Dave Kinneberg attended a virtual Directors’ meeting. Discussed were amendment of the by-laws as well as definition of a quorum. There will be some virtual training coming up on the subject matter of tree care and irrigation. More to follow.

Comments/Announcements



Pam Umstead & Dave Kinneberg

Pam Umstead reminded the membership that the Pint and Plow (332 Clay St., Kerrville) is offering Apple Glory Brown Ale beer for purchase, named for the Glory Community Garden. Patrons may also purchase the commemorative glass. Proceeds will be donated to the garden. On March 5, 2022, the Glory Community Garden is hosting a Cowboy Breakfast and Chili Lunch starting at 9am. There is no charge to attend, donations are welcome.

Patti Schlessiger is asking the membership to bring garden-related items to the open barn (behind the greenhouses) for the plant sale ‘Garden Shed’. Books should be brought to the HCMG office (e-mail Dee Dunton so she can pick them up). All other garden-related items can be left in the barn. Please do not bring plastic pots. Only ceramic, terracotta or other decorative pots should be donated. The Plant Haus has a place on their property to recycle your plastic pots.

Respectfully submitted,
 Rita Aliperto, Secretary

Adjournment

Hill Country Master Gardeners 2022

Executive Committee

Dave Kinneberg
President

Patti Schlessiger
Vice President

Rita Aliperto
Secretary

Rachel Garrison
Treasurer

Anne Brown
Ex-officio Advisor

C.E.A. Advisor

Committees & Project Coordinators are listed on our website

Newsletter & Website

Newsletter Editor
 Pat Wolters

Associate Newsletter Editor
 Patti Schlessiger

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Why go native? (continued from page 3)

To sustain our local ecosystem, native plants are essential, and many non-native plants are extremely detrimental. Nonnatives may seed out more easily, grow faster, and use more water – proliferating and crowding out native species until the natives become extinct.

Native plants, on the other hand, have lived here for centuries (without fertilizer or pesticides); have evolved to withstand our temperature and moisture extremes and our poor soil; and have supported the local wildlife by providing food and shelter for our native animals, birds and insects. As they are forced to compete with non-native plants for resources, the native plants become fewer and fewer until they are crowded out or eaten to extinction.

From the Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter and Fredericksburg Chapter:

- The Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas hosts monthly programs at the Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, September through May. See npsot.org/kerrville for details.
- The Fredericksburg Chapter of NPSOT meets monthly at Presbyterian Memorial Church, 601 North Milam Ave., Fredericksburg. See npsot.org/fredericksburg for details.

Cindy Anderson is a member of the Native Plant Society of Texas (Kerrville Chapter) and the Hill Country Master Gardeners. An enthusiastic (though often frustrated) gardener, she has learned first-hand the value of native plants, and gladly shares reviews of her favorites in this quarterly seasonal column.

