

February 2019

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HCMG will meet on
February 13, 2019

Location:
Kerr County
Youth Event Center

1:00 - Meeting
2:00 - Program
"There was No MiracleGro
in the Garden of Eden"

Carol Bailey



**TEXAS A&M
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"



Rachel Garrison

President's Message

Roses are red. Violets are blue.
This Texas girl likes yellow ones too!

February is upon us. It's the shortest month of the calendar year, but it's jam packed with celebrations including Groundhog Day, the Super Bowl, Presidents' Day, and Valentine's Day. As if those aren't enough reasons to celebrate, during February we also celebrate Black History month, American Heart month, Canned Food month, National Grapefruit month, National Cherry month, Bubble Gum Day, No Politics Day, Toothache Day, Clean out your Computer Day, Do a Grouch a Favor Day, and the list goes on. My

favorite just might be on the 11th this year. It is the designated Don't Cry over Spilled Milk Day!

As a child, I always looked forward to celebrating Valentine's Day. In elementary school we cut a slot in the top of shoe boxes, which we then decorated in anticipation of the big day. Cards were chosen and addressed with great care and then distributed to each classmate. The school party day was a sugar high with conversation hearts, cupcakes, and chocolate.

All too soon, those Valentine's Days were replaced with more grown up remembrances, heart shaped boxes of chocolates and roses. I love flowers of all kinds. In my ignorance I thought I could grow my own roses. How hard could it be?

My first attempt at growing roses was when we lived in Houston. I planted a yellow climbing rose between the sidewalk leading to our front door and the side of our garage. It climbed beautifully but, to my dismay, almost never bloomed! My friend gave me my first bit of gardening advice; prune roses near Valentine's Day. Easy to remember, but what about black spot and sparse blooms? We moved away and I soon forgot my failed attempt.

A few years later we were back in Houston again. We had beautiful azaleas so I decided to give roses another try. This time around, I did a little research before purchasing Knock Out Roses. They did much better than the climbing rose I had planted previously and proved what I later learned in Master Gardener training---choose the right plant for the right spot.

The little bit of gardening knowledge I acquired in Houston and in some of the northern states I've lived in doesn't work well in the Texas Hill Country. I was taking Master Gardener training as we were landscaping and setting up vegetable gardens and ornamentals in our new Boerne home. I tried to follow practices set forth in our materials, including drip irrigation and adequate fencing to protect our plantings from all the hungry deer. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommends Earth-Kind Roses. The Aggie Horticulture website states that Earth-Kind Roses do well in a variety of soils and are heat and drought tolerant. With an abundance of rock, little soil and tendency toward drought, they seemed to be the right plant for the right place. We planted several of the "Fairy Earth-Kind Roses" in a deer protected spot, and are pleased to say they have performed well. They have produced an abundance of pink blooms and the plants have thrived in spite of my haphazard attention. Now, I just need to find the perfect place to plant Belinda's Dream.

HCMG 2018, Calendar of Events prepared by Raeann 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.

February 1, 8:30-3:30, Gillespie County Texas A&M AgriLife and HCMG will present Plantastic Vegetable Gardening Seminar. See details and registration information in this newsletter. Gillespie County Farm Bureau Center.

February 1, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Fredericksburg ISD Continuing Education Program with Fredericksburg NPSOT. Kathy Lyles, NPSOT member and native plant expert, will present "How to Prune Native Plants." Bring pruning shears and gardening gloves. \$20; register with Joanie Kramer at 830.997.7182 or joaniek@fisd.org. Fredericksburg Post Office Native Plant Garden.

February 5, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m., NPSOT Boerne. Deanna Pfeiffer, TPWD Lead Biologist at Kerr Wildlife Management Area will present "Ecosystem Management of the Edwards Plateau's Kerr WMA/ How plant communities and ecosystems have changed over time." Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium. Visitors welcome.

February 12, NPSOT Kerrville, 1:00 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 1:30 p.m. Susan Tracy, a contributor to Texas Gardener, will present a program on Texas native ferns. Riverside Nature Center. Visitors welcome.

February 13, Hill Country Master Gardeners, 1:00 p.m. business meeting, 2:00 p.m., Carol Bailey, Territory Sales Manager, The Espoma Company, will present "There Was No MiracleGro® In the Garden of Eden." Hill Country Youth Event Center. HCMGs, interns.

February 14-16, 2019, Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association Annual Conference, Corpus Christi. See details online at <http://www.tofga.org/page-1863580>.

February 19, 10:00 a.m., Hunt Garden Club. Karen Taylor, past president, UGRA river monitor and "going green" homeowner will team with Melissa Clark-Maynard, club member and hydroponic gardener to present "Being Green:

Reducing Our Impact on the Earth. Hunt United Methodist Church. Visitors Welcome.

February 20, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Fredericksburg ISD Continuing Education Program with Fredericksburg NPSOT. Mary Frushour, Master Naturalist and native plant gardener, will present "Native Plant Gardening for Butterflies, Native Bees and Hummingbirds. \$25; register with Joanie Kramer at 830.997.7182 or joaniek@fisd.org. Fredericksburg High School Library.

February 23, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Cibolo Nature Center. Dr. Don Fraser, VP of Alamo Area Beekeepers, will present "Honey, I've got the Bees." \$110. Contact Ben Eldredge at ben@cibolo.org with questions. Register at Cibolo.org. Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium.

February 26, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m., NPSOT Fredericksburg. Pete Van Dyck, owner of Van Dyck Earthworks and Design will present "How to Drought-Proof Texas." Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

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

See page 9 for class topics

Addresses for Events

Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium, 140 City Park Rd, Boerne
Fredericksburg High School, 1107 S State Hwy 16, FBG
Fredericksburg Post Office, 1150 North US Hwy 87, FBG
Gillespie County Farm Bureau, 237 Equestrian Dr, FBG
Hill Country Youth Event Center, 3785 Hwy 27, KRVL
Hunt United Methodist Church, 120 Merritt Rd, Hunt
Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam St, FBG
Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, KRVL



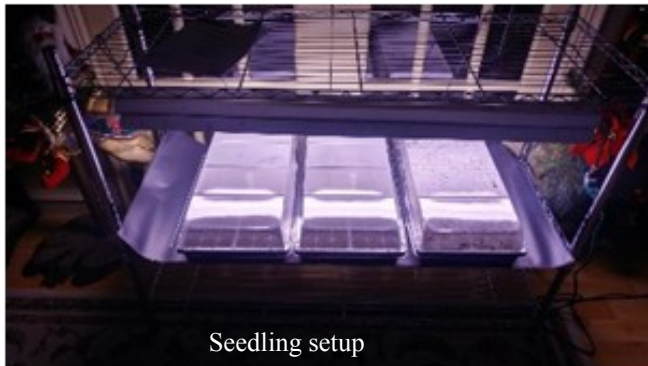
Hill Country Veggies

February 2019

By Allen Mace

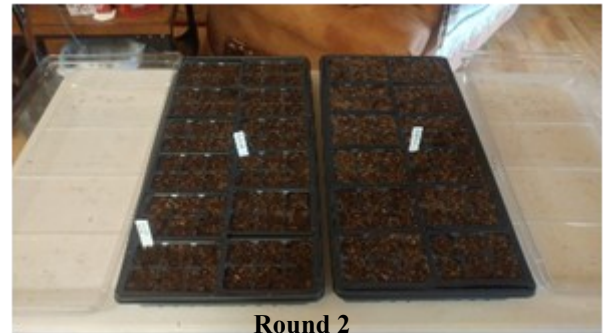
Here we are at the beginning of a new year, a time to brush off the old and prepare for new opportunities, hopes and

desires. This year, I pulled out my grow light and seed trays in the hopes of starting tomato seedlings. My desire was to rekindle my efforts to develop a few lines of vegetables that work in my soils and climate. By saving seeds from the strongest plants and then using those seeds the following year, I should be able to develop a strain



Seedling setup

that works better in my garden. Its been a long time since I've started anything from seeds and I've made a few mistakes. I'll call these, opportunities to learn what not to do. I once read that Thomas Edison tried 1000 ways before he figured out how to make the light bulb work. When asked if he was discouraged, his reply was "no" for he had found 999 ways that it didn't work. When something does not work as planned, we always have an opportunity to try again. I now know two things not to do the next time, both of which deal with better observation and set up. New seedlings are very fragile. Close observation is a must. They also don't respond well to temperature and light change. It takes a few weeks to get them up and going before you start making changes. In



Round 2

other words, patience. I had set up in the well house. On cold nights I have heaters going to prevent pipes from freezing. This worked for a few nights, then it warmed up. I took the plastic hood off, for air circulation. The well house got very warm and the seedlings dried out quickly. **1st lesson learned**, I need a better climatized area to start the seeds, someplace with an even temperature. This gave me an opportunity to try again. I set up some shelves in the front room of my house. I set the grow light above the seed trays, a heat pad under the trays and the trays sitting on a shelf in the front room of my house. Everything was working great. I had seedlings germinating in a warm humid environment, this was working. We had a nice warm sunny day and I thought some sunlight would be good for the plants. **2nd lesson learned**, the sun was too much too soon. When I went back to check on them, all the seedlings were laying limp on top of the soil. I should have left them inside until they were bigger and stronger. This is where patience should have kick in. I salvaged what I could and have those under the grow light. I'm not sure if these will make it or not, time will tell. I will most likely start a 3rd bunch in a week or so.

On a happier note, my winter greens, sorrel, chard and cabbage all seem to be doing well.



Salvaged

For the Love of a Butternut Squash

In the November Newsletter, I featured the picture (below in the middle) of the little girl kissing a butternut squash. I thought it was so cute, I shared it with my daughters (who are both gardeners) and they immediately responded back with their own pictures. I find this pretty amazing that these young girls find the butternut squash so endearing.



Dorothy Jean Ross-age 5

Dorothy and Anna are Pat Wolters's granddaughters. Reynee is Angela Fiedler's (county agent) daughter.



Reynee Fiedler-age 5



Anna Gail Strouth-age 5

Our word "squash" comes from the Massachuset Native American word askutasquash, meaning "eaten raw or uncooked". The late-growing, less symmetrical, odd-shaped, rough or warty kinds, small to medium in size, but with long-keeping qualities and hard rinds, are usually called winter squash. They belong, almost without exception, to the species *Cucurbita maxima* or *C. Moschata*. All species of squashes and pumpkins are native to the Western Hemisphere.

Nutrition Information: Winter squash (includes acorn, buttercup, butternut, and hubbard varieties) is rich in Vitamin A (beta-carotene), dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), and potassium. If it is eaten without added fat or salt, it is naturally low in calories, fat, and sodium.

Planting and Harvesting: winter squash needs to be planted in the late summer months (August to September). Harvesting would then occur October to November. Choose firm, well-shaped squash that are heavy for their size and have a hard, tough skin. Do not choose those that have sunken or moldy spots. Avoid squash with cuts or punctures in the skin. Also, slight variations in skin color do not affect flavor. A tender rind indicates immaturity, which is a sign of poor quality in winter squash varieties.

Blanching procedure:

1. Cut squash into small pieces, remove seeds and peel.
2. Cook until soft.
3. Mash pulp or put through sieve.
4. Cool by placing pan containing squash over crushed ice and stir until cool.
5. Place in an appropriate freeze bag, or container, with 1/2" head-space; freeze.

Information from Aggie Horticulture



Zinnias
I mourn your absence



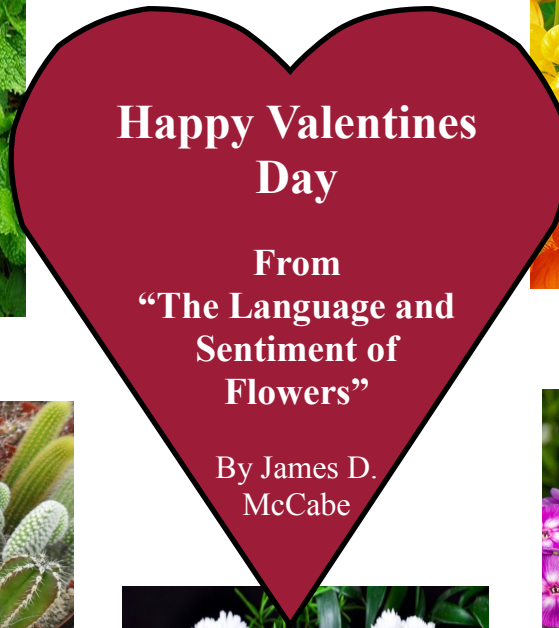
Bougainvillea
Passion



Pansy
Think of me



Peppermint
Warmth of Feeling



Nasturtium
Impetuous Love



Cactus *Ardent Love*



Phlox *Our souls are united*



Coreopsis *Always cheerful*
White Carnation *Sweet
& Lovely*
Red Rose *Love*





Retama in full bloom

The Retama is a popular, fast-growing ornamental tree for warm regions



By
**Cindy Anderson, HCMG &
Native Plant Society of Texas**

Winter is a NICE time to plant a Retama

The Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), Kerrville and Fredericksburg Chapters, are putting the spotlight this winter on the Retama (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) — as part of a quarterly program called Operation N.I.C.E. N.I.C.E. is an acronym for “Natives Instead of Common Exotics,” a program designed to introduce people to great native plants that are available locally to use in place of non-native (exotic) species. Plants that are exotic, or not native to a local region, may seem suitable, but quite often they offer nothing in the way of food or habitat for key wildlife species. Native plants, on the other hand, provide nectar for insects, shelter for birds, and food for wildlife. “We want all Texans to value native plants, native habitats, and healthy ecosystems as essential to the well-being of living things and to our quality of life,” said Debbie Windham, president of the Kerrville Chapter of NPSOT, in a recent newspaper article entitled “Protecting our natural blessings.”

RETAMA

This winter season (which began on Friday, December 21), the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are featuring the Retama (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) at five local nurseries as their N.I.C.E. plant of the season. Retama, also known as Paloverde or Jerusalem Thorn, is a native spiny shrub or small tree. It is native from central Texas south into South America and west to Arizona. It is usually found on limestone soils in areas with moisture, but it is nevertheless strongly drought-tolerant, and can also withstand saline conditions. It will grow in any well-drained soil of any type: sand, loam, clay, caliche, etc.

A graceful and beautiful tree, the retama has unusual green bark and a profusion of bright yellow flowers

Continued on page 7

Retama—continued from page 6

throughout the warm months. It bears airy, delicate leaves on long drooping branches, and narrow seedpods 3 to 5 inches long. It requires full sun, and performs best in spots that are neither too moist nor too dry.

Retama is vigorous and quick growing. It can grow as tall as 30 feet, but in most cases will grow only half that. Its benefits to wildlife include nectar for insects, seeds for birds and small mammals, foliage and pods for deer browse, and even emergency forage for livestock. Bees produce fragrant honey from the flowers, and the flowers also attract butterflies.

Because of its needle-like thorns on stems and trunks, it is usually not bothered by deer. Those thorns can be hazardous to humans, either walking by or maintaining the tree (as in snipping off blackened winter-killed twigs in early spring.) So it should be planted quite away from paths or walkways, allowing extra space for future arching branches.

Some dieback may be expected in cold weather, but the retama rebounds quickly, becoming hardier to cold as it acclimates to its site.

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 “NICE Plant of the Season” sign stake at these nurseries and growers in Kerrville and Fredericksburg:

Blue Oak Trading Company, 1834 Junction Highway, Kerrville, 830-315-2583

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

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

Why go native?

To sustain our local ecosystem, native plants are essential, and many non-native plants are extremely detrimental. Non-natives 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, which hosts monthly programs at the Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, September through May. See npsot.org/kerrville for details.

– And the Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter, which 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.”

February 1, 2019

PLANTASTIC

Vegetable Gardening Seminar

Check-In: 8:30 a.m.

Program: 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (45-minute lunch)

Gillespie County Farm Bureau Center

237 Equestrian Drive, Fredericksburg

Cost: \$35 with a box lunch, \$25 without lunch and \$40 at the door (no lunch included)

Topics include: Getting good soil in the garden, Tomatoes, Crop covers, Controlling pests and preventing diseases in your garden, Starting plants from seeds, Seed saving, Keyhole and container gardens, & Caring for your garden after planting. Also Question & Answer Session and Door Prizes!

Planning committee works out details for Plantastic. Clockwise: Lydia Jones, Raeann Reid, Allen Mace, Beth McMahon, Connie Townsend and Kim Courtright. Also on committee but not pictured is Chris Seifert and Pat Wolters.



Photo credit: Pat Wolters

For more information, please contact the Extension Office at 830-997-3452



Date	Morning Session : 9-Noon	Lunch	Afternoon Session: 12:20-3
Tues Feb 26	Class Orientation	Pot Luck	Backyard Wildlife Jessica Alderson—TX Parks & Wildlife
Thur Feb 28	Soils of the Hill Country Travis Waiser	Brown Bag	Composting & Soil Amendments Chris Seifert & Duane Robinson
Tues Mar 5	Plant Biology Brenda Fest	Brown Bag	Trees: Selection, Maintenance & Disease Management —Erin Wieser
Thurs Mar7	Vegetable Gardening Chris Seifert, Pat Wolters, Beth McMahon-Fredericksburg		Vegetable Gardening Cont'd Allen Mace, Donna Bellis, Duane Robinson, Lydia Jones-Fredericksburg
Tue Mar 12	Propagation Deb Bass & Team	Brown Bag	Propagation Cont'd
Thurs Mar 14	Water Conservation Anne Brown	Brown Bag	Fire-Wise Landscaping Carol Hagemeyer
Tues Mar19	Projects Tour Fredericksburg	Brown Bag	Weed Identification & Chemical Safety Fredericksburg-E. McMahon
Thurs Mar 21	Fruit Trees Dr. Larry Stein (TAMU)	Brown Bag	Fruit Trees cont'd
Tues Mar 26	Entomology 101 Molly Keck, Entomologist	Brown Bag	Vermiculture (trip to worm farm) Patty Zohlen
Thurs Mar 28	Intro to Landscaping in HC Dennis Hale	Brown Bag	Ornamental, Native & Turf Grasses Dennis Hale
Tues Apr 2	Native Plants of the Hill Country —Kathy Lyles	On your own	Field trip to Kathy Lyles Property in Fredericksburg
Thurs Apr 4	Field Trip Boerne or Medina	On your own	Field Trip
Tues Apr 16	Earth-King Landscaping & Herbs —Caryl Hartman	Brown Bag	Pathology Kim Cochran (TAMU)
Thur Apr 18	Volunteer Opportunities Research Desk	Pot Luck Cake	Graduation

**Hill Country Master
Gardeners 201p**

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

Newsletter & Website

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Special thanks to
Judy Beauford for
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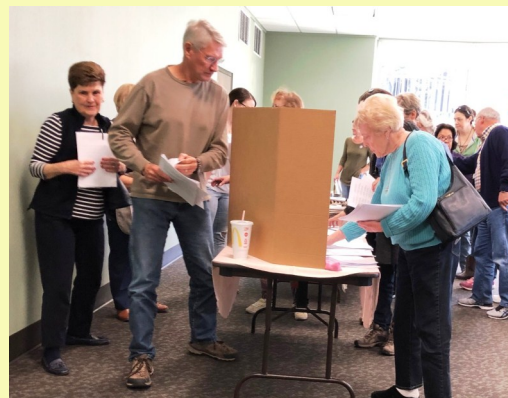
Submissions to

Newsletter.editor.hcmg
@gmail.com

Library to Host Gardening 101 Series



Enthusiastic crowd (about 36) participated in the first of the gardening series at Butt-Holdsworth Library. Kim Courtright, HCMG, is presenting this series.



Participants at the first gardening class

Kim Courtright (above), HCMG, is presenting a one-hour program on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m. through July at the Butt-Holdsworth Library classroom at 505 Water Street in Kerrville.

Month	Topic
February 9	Seed starting, making environmental friendly posts and container gardening
March 9	Transplanting your starts and Water/Fertilizing
April 13	Sun/shade and row covers
May 11	Harvesting and composting
June 8	Seed saving
July 13	Fruit trees and Vines

This free program is open to the public and no registration is required.

For more information concerning the programs and any other questions, please contact the library reference desk at **830-258-1274**.