

February 2021

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**HCMG
February 3, 2021
Zoom Meeting**

1 p.m.

**CEU
Kathy Downs
Monarch Butterflies**

***See page 11 for more
information on CEU**



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President’s Message

Anne Brown

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to 2021 and good riddance to 2020. Hopefully we will get vaccinations shortly so we can go back to seeing everybody in person and get on with being

Master Gardeners again, helping our communities with all their horticulture needs.

We don’t know yet whether we will be able to do a combination Zoom and in person meeting in February, but we will keep you advised. As you know, we have to follow the guidance from Agrilife and at present that means no in person meetings. I would encourage everyone in their own counties to, with your doctors advice, get the vaccination. In Kerr County there will be a phone bank set up so you can call in and get registered to receive the vaccination. I’m sure our other counties have programs to facilitate the administering the vaccine. I trust that with the vaccinations, we will more easily able to return to our projects and things you like to do as MGs.

We had 57 people join us on Zoom this month. I am going to relate some of what was discussed at the meeting, so everyone is kept up to date. Most importantly and sadly Donna Bellis announced that we had to cancel this year’s class. She and her education committee had everything organized to go but we had only 8 applications, had some difficulty getting instructors because of the covid, and did not want to risk people sitting in an enclosed room for 6 hours. We’ll be all set to go in 2022.

The other thing I wanted to tell everyone is what a great job everyone did keeping most of our projects going. Y’all did so well that we actually worked more hours in our projects in 2020 than we did in 2019, in spite of 3 projects being inactive for 2020. So the bottom line is that y’all rock in your commitments in to our communities and projects!

I hope to see everyone on February 3, 2021. Happy New Year to all.



<https://txtbba.tamu.edu/?s=lesser+goldfinch>
Enter lesser goldfinch in search

Chris Seifert Writes Letter to Owners of Kerrville's Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop

Dec. 17, 2020

Hi Linda and Kevin,

Well I'm feeling better, now that Wayne tells me you find it hard to believe that those cute little Lesser Goldfinches are ravaging my vegetables. I

didn't believe it either, until I finally caught them red-handed.

My story: A few years ago I had a lovely small patch of Swiss chard, broccoli, and kale really looking good. Then, in the middle of winter, I noticed holes in the leaves. Try as I might, I could find none of the usual nibblers, such as caterpillars, grasshoppers, sowbugs or slugs. Besides, the nights were just too darn cold for such creatures. The holes in the leaves were angular, near the leaf ribs, and were scattered on many plants, not eating up one plant as a hungry caterpillar would.

Then I finally saw what I'd never heard of: goldfinches stealing salad! I asked around and everyone thought I needed new glasses. The birds fly to the taller leaves, sit on the leaf rib, then lean

over and take a big nip! Then their buddy and cousins get bites too. Once I covered the plants, I got a little for us to eat.

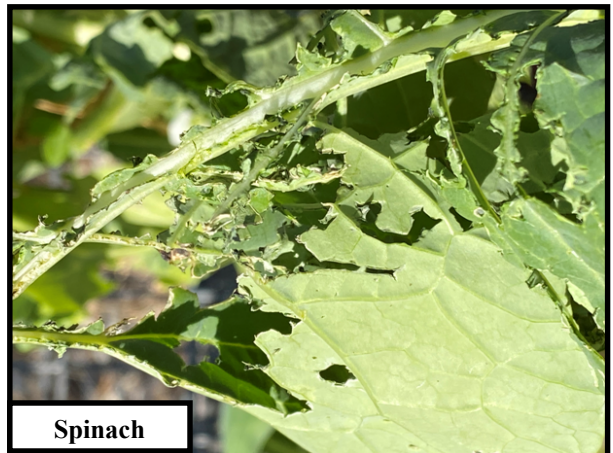
This year the same thing was happening to spinach, beets and mustard. I don't have a good enough camera to catch the little guys foraging on greens, but here is the result. The solution to raiding is row cover (pictured on left), which lets in enough sun, but keeps out uninvited guests.

The cover lets rain through, but must be lifted to water well with a hose. Part of the fun of gardening is seeing the healthy, green plants, but I guess I'll have to settle for just the fun of eating them.

Sincerely,
Chris Seifert, Master Gardener

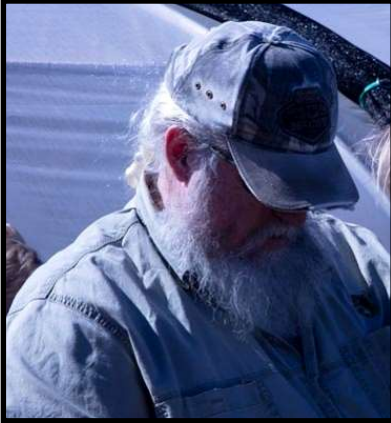


Swiss Chard and Mustard



Spinach





Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace

Happy New Years.

*After experiencing the first two weeks free trial, I have canceled my subscription to 2021 and have decided to skip forward to 2022. If only it were that easy. So, buckle up Buckeroos, its Powder River time, let er buck.***

The other day I made a trip to one of the local nurseries to pick up some Swiss Chard, which I found. Swiss Chard is one of my winter favorites. As I wondered through the vegetable section, looking for some spinach, which I did not find, something else caught my attention. I picked it up and looked at the label. The label said Corn Salad (Mache). I was intrigued, this was something new, to me. Ok, it is in the vegetable section next to the Swiss Chard. It is green and leafy, so I pinched off a small leaf and gave it a taste, after making sure no one else was around. It tasted good, I am going to have to buy a few plants and give it a go. Off to the checkout stand I went. As I was checking out, I casually asked one of the attendances what was Corn Salad? I was met with a blank look. As the other attendant walk by, she said it was some leafy thing, it was good. I asked if it was cold hardy and she assured me that it was. With my transaction concluded, I was on my way home with my new leafy prize that I had been assured, was good.



Corn Salad

I did a quick Google search, before Google gets pulled down and world war three begins, to find out a bit more about this new plant. Other common names for this plant are Mache, Corn Salad, Lamb's Lettuce and Field Lettuce. It is an annual that can grow up to 2 ft. tall. This plant is native to Europe, North Africa and Western Asia. It is commonly found as a weed in corn fields, thus the name Corn Salad. Mache is a cool season plant that can withstand temperatures as low as 5 degrees. It should do well here in the Hill Country during the winter months. When planted in good rich soil, you should not have to fertilize much if any because as the weather heats up, it will bolt and seed out. It likes a soil pH of 6.5 to 7, slightly acidic to neutral. You can harvest the head or pick a few leaves at a time as a "cut-and-come-again" lettuce. Corn Salad is generally eaten fresh as a salad or you can wilt the leaves for a side dish. I would recommend wilting to taste

**That was a rodeo term for when it was about to get rough and Western.

The Robert L.B. Tobin Land Bridge at Phil Hardberger Park

Hardberger Park in San Antonio has been separated by the Wurzbach Parkway until the land bridge was completed in December 2020. The Land bridge is 150 feet wide at the top, 165 wide at the base, broad enough for animals and people to safely cross. The Land Bridge is a continuation of the natural beauty of the park. People crossing it will have the experience of climbing over a hill, unaware of the traffic below (I couldn't hear any traffic).



Hardberger Park has 7.5 miles of trail. The Water Loop and Geology Trails are 2.5 miles and connect to the greater Salado Creek Greenway trail system. The Oak and Sanvanna Loop trails are 4.5 miles. Bikes are welcome on all trails, except you must walk your bike over the land bridge.

Photo Credit below: Pat Wolters



One-of-a-kind Skywalk, an elevated walkway that gently climbs through the treetops to the top of the bridge (currently under construction)



Planting and installing irrigation lines is happening right now. The picture on the right is the artist's vision of what this trail will look like once all the plants have grown.



A N.I.C.E. and very fragrant tree: Texas Kidneywood



By **Cindy Anderson, MG**
Native Plant Society of Texas



Picture by **Bill Lindeman**



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

KIDNEYWOOD TREE

This winter season (which begins on Monday, December 21), the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are featuring the **Kidneywood Tree** (*Eysenhardtia texana*), at five local nurseries as their N.I.C.E. Plant of the Season. It is a small flowering tree in the legume family *Fabaceae* (the pea family.) It is commonly known as Texas kidneywood, bee-brush, or vara dulce.

Why is it named for an organ of the body? The tree of this wood “fluoresces” in water – becoming brilliantly colored and emitting light. For this reason, both kidneywood species – *E. texana* and the more westerly *E. orthocarpa* – were once thought to possess magical healing powers. They were harvested to treat disorders of the kidney and bladder, hence the name.

Texas kidneywood is an open, airy shrub or small tree with sweet-smelling white flowers and small compound leaves. It normally grows to about 10 feet tall and 8 feet wide, often with several trunks, and is particularly attractive when pruned into a small tree.

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Texas Kidneywood is a fast grower that prefers to grow in the sun, but will tolerate partial shade. The leaves have a pungent smell of citrus when crushed, and the entire plant is a favorite of deer, livestock, and other wildlife.

A Texas native, Texas kidneywood can be found growing in dry, brushy hills, canyons, and rocky limestone soils in Central and West Texas and south to central Mexico. It is very drought tolerant once established, although it may drop its leaves in periods of drought. It will grow faster with more moisture, but still must be planted in well-drained soil. Texas-tough, it is tolerant of heat, cold, and drought, making it an excellent landscape plant for this area.

Although Texas kidneywood is in the same family as acacias and mimosas, it does not have their characteristic thorns. Its small compound leaves, very mimosa-like, are finely divided, light and airy.

The blooms of kidneywood occur intermittently from April to October, especially after rains. The most flowers appear in late August to September. These flowers are like magnets to butterflies and bees seeking nectar. Kidneywood is also a host plant for the Southern Dogface butterfly, whose larvae (caterpillars) eat the leaves of Kidneywood (so leave them be!) In September, it bears fruit in the form of small brown pods attached to the ends of stems. The kidneywood tree is deciduous, meaning that it loses its leaves each winter.

In a list of plants that are browsed by deer, kidneywood is in the column “Highly Preferred.” For this reason, unless it is behind a fairly tall fence, it must be protected with a wire cage as high as the deer can reach. Even rabbits will graze on it when small, so the base of the tree also must be protected with a barrier until it develops a tough layer of bark. Other than that, no maintenance is required except for shaping and pruning as desired.

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

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.

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**A Perfect Ending to a Trying Year
December 31, 2020**

**Photo
Credit:**

1. Pat Wolters
2. Pam Umstead
3. Janice Walker
4. Frank Dunlap



A great way to start
the New Year

Photo Credit

1. Meg Scott Johnson
2. Pam Umstead
3. Dave Kinneberg
4. Deborah Lea—3.5 inches in Mountain Home



Photo Credit

1. Anne Brown -Greenhouse protecting B&B plants
2. Frank Dunlap
3. Deborah Lea-Mountain Home
4. Raeann Reid-Fredericksburg



AGENDA

HCMG Monthly Zoom Meeting January 6, 2021

Call to Order

Verification of Quorum – Donna Nutt-
Verified

Executive Committee Reports

**Approve Meeting Minutes as listed in Of
Leaf and Limb** - approved

Treasurer's Report –Jackie Connelly-Jackie reported an ending balance at Guadalupe Bank of \$42,930.45. She reported an ending balance in Security State Bank of \$21,483.51. Detail can be found on VMS.

Final MG count and intern count for 2021 – Jackie Connelly-Jackie reported 109 members have recertified for 2021, with one dues payment still in transit. She reported two interns remain working toward certification.

Committee Reports

B&B report – Janell Dahms- Janell announced plans for the B&B sale and work days to run from Tuesday April 6 - Saturday April 10. Tuesday and Wednesday will be spa day and move day. Thursday through Saturday will be the sale days. This schedule makes it possible to better limit customers hour in the building for social distancing purposes. Janell said there will be no vendors, no refreshments offered, and she said the Garden shed may be cancelled unless someone volunteers to organize and staff it.

Greenhouse – Fernando Gonzalez - Fernando announced an upcoming purchase of geraniums for HCMG members. He discussed ways to structure the pre ordering of colors and quantities. After discussion with Jackie Connelly, the two agreed that Fernando will announce colors available and then members can email their purchase commitments to Fernando.

Research Desk – Mark Schultz - Mark

announced that he hopes to have the new Inquiry system operating within the week.

Newsletter – Pat Wolters (Anne Brown)- Anne said that Pat Wolters is asking members to please submit snow pictures to include in the newsletter.

Education – Donna Bellis- Donna Bellis announced that the 2021 class is officially cancelled. Due to Covid restrictions and difficulties with small class size, and difficulties with scheduling instructors due to Covid, class is cancelled. Donna said the committee will continue updating tests and study guides for the 2022 class.

Unfinished Business

CEU Program Chair- Anne Brown- Anne said we still need program chair. Edna Platte has classes scheduled through April. Without a program chair, there will be no CEU offered following monthly meetings. Anne Brown suggested two co chairs would be acceptable.

Volunteer Opportunities- Anne Brown mentioned that project chairs might want to start promoting their volunteer needs in the newsletter or at meetings to get ready for spring and summer.

Background Checks Needed - Jackie Connelly - Jackie reminded members that background check forms and payment are due soon. Jackie said 38 are renewing this year. The form is on VMS. She said forms can be dropped at office or mailed. Any questions may be direct to Liz Althaus.

New Business

New publicity opportunity – Pam Umstead - Pam announced a new weekly scheduled garden minute program on Ranch Radio. Harley Ballew has offered this free of charge. Pam said she will write and record monthly and said she welcomes suggestions for topics. Ray Tiemann suggested this could be used for recruiting 2022 class members

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Update on the latest Agrilife Covid 19 rules

- Anne Brown explained that the office is closed to in person meetings. We will begin again when allowed. The office is currently limited to essential functions only. Outside work in the garden is allowed. The Research Desk is not closed.

Special Project Hour Recap 2020 - Jackie Connelly

- Anne Brown shared the results of comparing 2019 volunteer hours to 2020 volunteer hours. She said she was surprised to discover that even with the temporary reduction of required hours to 12 hours for 2020, and the hardships imposed by Covid, HCMG performed more volunteers hours on projects in 2020 than in 2019.

Approval of 2021 Budget – Jackie Connelly

- Jackie presented the 2021 budget. Carl Luckenbach moved to approve the budget and it was seconded by Sandy Martin. Jackie said the budget is uploaded to VMS.

Financial Audit – Jackie Connelly-TBD

- Jackie announced that a committee has been formed, including Anne Brown, Jackie Connelly, and two HCMG members. The audit must be complete by January 31, 2021.

Announcements

Sue Hall announced that we raised over \$3,000.00 for Helping Hands of Bandera, Inc., enough to help with clients' heating bills, food, and electricity bills.

Duane Robinson announced that there will be up to 5 Advanced Training classes upcoming. He also said the state organization may start awarding pins again for completion of Advanced Training classes. He requested member input as to the style desired; generic or specialized and the method of funding the pins.

Anne Brown announced that Kathy Downs will provide February, 2021 CEU. Topic will be monarchs and their host plants*

March CEU will be cactus

Adjournment

Next meeting February 3, 2021

Place to be announced

Donna Nutt, Secretary

Photo Credit: Anne Brown



*Cathy Downs of Comfort will present the program emphasizing the importance of Monarchs and their dependence on milkweed.

Cathy has received awards and certifications for her work with Monarchs. She received awards from Texas Wildlife Association, Native Plant Society of Texas, Cibolo Nature Center and a certified Monarch Larval Monitoring Project. She is a true Monarch educator who has educated about 100,000 Texas children and adults about Monarch and pollinator habitat and conservation

**Hill Country Master
Gardeners 2020
Executive
Committee**

Anne Brown
President

Patti Schlessiger
Vice President

Secretary
Donna Nutt

Jackie Connelly
Treasurer

Rachel Garrison
Ex-officio Advisor

C.E.A. Advisor
Angela Fiedler

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

Newsletter & Website

Newsletter Editor
Pat Wolters

Associate Newsletter Editor
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Mark Shultz

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**Christmas at the Glory
Community Garden**

The famous veggie tree, new lighted nutcrackers, cross and gifts, and fresh cabbage for Rudolf (not shown).
By Pam Umstead



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 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.