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President’s Message	1
Lifetime Achievement Award	2
Volunteer of the Year	3
President’s Awards	4
Hill Country Veggies	5
Goldenball Leadtree	6-7
Table Decorations	8
Holiday Luncheon	9
Minutes	10
Mushrooms	11
Mercy Gate	12

**Wednesday
January 10, 2024**

HCYEC

Meeting 1:00 pm

CEU 2:00 pm

**“Mushrooms of
the Hill Country”**

**Michael R. McGinnis,
Ph.D.**

**See page 11 for more
information**

“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 Sheryl Landrum



I love new beginnings and the opportunities to move things forward. This is why Monday is my 2nd favorite day of the week; I mean, I’d be crazy if I didn’t think Friday was the best day of the week.... who doesn’t love Friday? However, Monday, for me, brings hope and anticipation for new beginnings, adventures, and accomplishments. Most of all, Monday gives me excitement over the opportunity to make a difference. So how do Mondays equate with a changing of the metaphorical “guard” for the Master Gardeners? For me, it is definitely a new adventure and experience! I will have new opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges while learning the ins and outs of the organization, its people, and the needs of our community. I will also try not to make any big mistakes! Going into this new position, I am excited, a bit nervous, but mostly hopeful and grateful for the opportunity to serve the Master Gardeners. With Dave by my side, the Master Gardener Team, and with all the support and encouragement I have received from you, my fellow Master Gardeners, I feel I am in very good hands and that we can do this together. As a side, I am also hoping I can actually learn to grow produce in Texas as well? So far, my Texas produce hasn’t worked out too well... I commit to you all to give you, my best. I want you to know that my door is always open and your thoughts and ideas are always welcome and appreciated. I work well in a team environment and I am working with one of the best teams Texas has to offer, so I am positive about our future. I have a lot to learn from you all and I appreciate, and value, your input and support as we begin the next two years together. I look forward to our new beginning and to what we can accomplish for the Hill Country Master Gardeners.

Thank you, Sheryl!



ANNE BROWN RECEIVES VOLUNTEER SERVICE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Hill Country Master Gardener Anne Brown was recently recognized with the prestigious President’s Volunteer Service Lifetime Achievement Award. The award, under the authorization of President Biden and carrying his signature, is presented to volunteers contributing over 4000 certified hours to their local communities. Brown received her award on December 6 at the HCMG’s Annual Holiday Luncheon from Mike Morris, Kerr County AgriLife Extension Agent “Anne, who joined Master Gardeners in 2005, has many more than 4000 volunteer hours to her credit,” explained Jackie Connelly, HCMG’s Presidential Volunteer Service Awards Administrator.

“However, it wasn’t until 2015 that a standardized procedure for certifying hours was established, and so her many volunteer hours during her first ten years as a Master Gardener did not count towards this honor. She is the first person in the Hill Country Master Gardeners chapter of Texas Master Gardeners to receive this honor.” Brown is very active in the Hill Country Master Gardeners. “Besides serving as president of the group for three terms, she currently orchestrates the purchase and care of plants for the annual Blooms and Barrels Sale each spring,” said HCMG President Dave Kinneberg. “In addition, she speaks to garden clubs and homeowner associations on fire-wise landscaping and oak wilt disease, makes home visits to assist residents with horticultural problems and manages the Research Desk, a resource for providing answers to residents on horticultural problems. She is also an expert on rainwater collection and oversees the sale of rain barrels to benefit the Hill Country Master Gardener scholarship fund.” Brown received her award before a cheerful crowd of fellow volunteers who gave her a standing ovation. The mission of the Hill Country Master Gardeners is to assist the AgriLife Extension service by providing research-based information and education to the community. If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, visit their website at www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org or call 830-257-6568.



Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen

HCMG 2023 Volunteer of the Year



AgriLife Agent, Mike Morris, presents the certificate to the 2023 Volunteer of the Year, Donna Bellis. Donna was certified as a master gardener in 2018. Highlights of her contributions to the organization include: Chair of the Education Committee, which plans, develops and presents the annual training for new master gardeners, Chair of the Special Opportunity Center Garden which provides gardening activities for people with physical and mental challenges, frequent presenter at venues including the Library, training classes and the annual Plantastic Class. She has also completed advanced training in Vegetables.

Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen



Education Committee members received computer training from Melayne Arnold



SPECIAL APPRECIATION AWARD

A Special Appreciation Award was presented to Connie Townsend to recognize her distinctive and significant contributions to the mission of Hill Country Master Gardeners during her Texas Master Gardener career. In particular, Connie continues to be one our most dependable public speakers, giving presentations this year not only on gardening but also on how to make a tasty salsa.

Connie received the award from President Dave Kinneberg.

Presidential Service Awards

Anne Brown won the Gold Award (500+)



Silver Award (250-499 hours) Left to right: Rachel Garrison, Donna Bellis, Michael Bell, Darla Cluster, Janice Walker, Pat Wolters, Jackie Connelly and Dave Kinneberg



Bronze Award (100-249 hours) Left to right back row: Michael Bell, Rae Raiford, William Haney, Melayne Arnold, Kay Nelson, Sandy Lewis, Pat Corbin, Sheri Worsham, Jodi Tippens, Raeanne Reid
 Front Row left to right: Pam Umsted, Patty Zohlen, Barbara Castillo, Lisa Cantini, Linda Lockhart, Imelda Horne, Kathy Lewis, Rita Aliperto, Sandy Martin, & Bee Evans.

Not pictured: Vickie Killeen, Chris Seifert, Jim Wilhite and Sheryl Landrum

Photo credit: Vickie Killeen

Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace, MG



So far, this Fall has been pretty mild. I've had cabbage, broccoli, Brussel sprouts and Swiss chard on my porch, in a location where they catch the morning sun but far enough back that the deer can't reach them. They are still in the 6" pots and the roots have grown



Plants ready to plant

out nicely. I've been watering these plants with a mixture of water soluble fertilizer every few days, keeping the soil in the pots moist at all times. I had one night where the temperatures dropped into the upper 20's, but these are cold hardy plants and they did just fine. At this point I should be transplanting them into the Winter Garden soon. I cleaned up the garden last week. Before I move these plants into the wicking pots, I must first



Root ball

amend the soil. I'll do this by adding some new potting soil, compost and time released fertilizer. I will also keep some blankets handy just in case we get some colder weather as we get further into winter.

After the Holydays, my mind will start turning towards starting seeds for next year's Spring Garden. I try to keep all this equipment together in clear plastic containers. That way it's easier to find when its time to set everything up. My seed starting toy box consist of heat mats, grow lights, seed trays with built in grow lights and a dibble with a small scoop. This is



Plastic toy box and contents of toy box



also a good time to start thinking about what you are interested in planting in the spring. Tomatoes always come to mind. If you are interested in growing own your tomatoes from seed, then you will need to consult a calendar.

Tomatoes and peppers should be started indoors around 8 weeks before the last freeze date. If you wait until the soil

temperatures have warmed enough to sow seeds directly into your garden, chances are by the time they are mature enough to produce fruit we will be heading into summer. If that happens, these plants will start to burn up or go dormant. If I'm starting tomatoes or peppers, I target the first part of January to get these seeds started indoors. If you want to buy seedlings, you may start finding them at the plant nurseries as early as the end of January or the beginning of February, just don't put them out in the garden that early. You will need to protect them until after the threat of freezes have past.



Goldenball Leadtree: a DELIGHTFUL small tree to plant this winter

By Cindy Anderson
 Native Plant Society of Texas
 Hill Country Master Gardener

This small native tree with
 bright yellow “puffballs”
 will brighten up any
 landscape.



Is there a gardener on your Christmas list? Have you thought of shopping at one of our local nurseries? The drought we’ve been experiencing for the past few years has many of us hesitating to buy new plants. But TREES are vitally important to our planet – the more the better. Trees purify the air and combat climate change. Tree roots keep soil in place. Trees provide nourishment and habitat for insects, birds, and other wildlife.

But one of the most important benefits of trees is spiritual – that is, they are beautiful. Trees offer countless varieties of interesting barks and foliage, tree forms and shapes, varying textures, and vibrant colors – all of which add peace and beauty to our yards and to our lives. As you may know, the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) passionately advocates for the use of landscape trees and plants that are native to each area, and each climate, of Texas. This winter season, which begins on December 21st, the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are promoting the Goldenball Leadtree (*Leucaena retusa*) at local nurseries as part of the N.I.C.E. Native Plant Partner program. (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. Read on for the description of a most delightful tree – one of my very favorites in my own backyard.

Goldenball Leadtree is a very decorative, fast-growing deciduous tree that natively occurs on dry rocky slopes in Texas. It usually grows 6 to 15 feet tall. It has airy, “acacia-like” foliage that casts a lovely filtered shade, but is open enough that sun-loving species can bloom underneath.. It is a very attractive foliage plant most of the year, but puts on quite a show with bright yellow powder-puff flowers that appear from spring to fall. It is very drought tolerant and can withstand reflected heat from sidewalks or patios. Though it is a good browse plant for cattle, this small tree is now cultivated in warm regions for the showy yellow flowers and conspicuous seed pods that follow the blooms. The yellow puff-ball flowers are sweet-smelling and will appear after every rain from spring through fall.

It also adapts to different soils, but prefers good drainage. The bark is cinnamon-colored and flaky. It is a legume with the acacia look, but without the thorns. In the wild, Goldenball Leadtree grows in fairly harsh conditions in unshaded, well-drained sites in rocky limestone areas and dry canyons.

Continued on page 7

Goldenball Leadtree continued from page 6

A Texas native, it is found in the western part of the Edwards Plateau and the Trans Pecos area, as well as in New Mexico and northern Mexico. It does very well in Hill Country gardens. It can be pruned to be a single-trunked tree, but does best in its natural multi-trunked form. Its fast-growing branches are thin and brittle, so it benefits from occasional pruning. Give it a dry location in full sun or part shade. This tree will need to be caged to protect it from browsing deer or cattle. How about buying a Goldenball Leadtree for someone on your Christmas gift list? Or better yet, for yourself?

WHERE TO FIND IT

Our local NICE 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, Fredericksburg, Medina, and Comfort:

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, 109 Farm to Market Rd. 473, 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 NICE plants, going back as far as 2009. To peruse the list, go to our website: npsot.org/chapters/kerrville and click on the third bullet that says: Information about previous NICE! plants is available here.

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/chapters/kerrville for details. The Fredericksburg Chapter of NPSOT meets monthly in Fredericksburg. See npsot.org/chapters/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.



Clockwise from above

Winning Decoration

“Santa's around the World”

Linda Lockhart, Rae Raiford, Imelda Horne, Jodi Tippens & Pat Wolters

Mary Contois & Diana Johns
 Marge Muniz & Debbie Bacon
 Louise & Bill Haney & Sonja Wilke
 Pat & Sandy Corbin & Shari Worsham
 Patty Zohlen & Dee Dunton
 Jean Sutton & Jeannie Osborne
 Photo Credit: Pat Wolters



Table Decorations





Christmas Luncheon



**Hill Country Master Gardeners
Holiday Luncheon
December 6, 2023
HCYEC**

Call to Order (silence your cell phones)

Welcome/Opening Remarks – Dave Kinneberg welcomed the group for the final meeting of the year.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the group.

Invocation – Pam Umstead delivered a lovely invocation before the potluck luncheon.

ENJOY THE FOOD!

Verification of Quorum – Rita Aliperto verified a quorum had been met.

Approve Minutes from November 1, 2023 Meeting. Frank Dunlap moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Melayne Arnold.

Award Presentations

Presidential Service Awards: Jackie Connelly, as timekeeper, read the names of the award recipients.

There were **23 bronze awards** this year. Recipients included Rita Aliperto, Melayne Arnold, Lisa Cantini, Barbara Castillo, Pat Corbin, William Haney, Imelda Horne, Bee Evans, Vickie Killeen, Sheryl Landrum, Kathy Lewis, Sandy Lewis, Linda Lockhart, Sandy Martin, Kay Nelson, Rae Raiford, Raeann Reid, Chris Seifert, Jodi Tippens, Pam Umstead Jim Wilhite, Sheri Worsham and Patty Zohlen.

Eight MGs earned **silver awards** including Michael Bell, Donna Bellis, Darla Cluster, Rachel Garrison, Dave Kinneberg, Janice Walker, Pat Wolters, and Jackie Connelly. Anne Brown was the only recipient of the **gold** award this year.

Years of Service Awards – Donna Bellis and Betsy Scheffe received recognition for 5 years of service; Gayle Anderson, Barbara Banks, Dee Dunton, Kara Grant, Nancy Kerr, Molly Lorch, Allen Mace, Raeann Reid, Jan Sewell, and Susan Toensing were recognized for 10 years of service. Cindy Anderson, Imelda Horne, Vickie Killeen, Kathy Lewis, and Chris Seifert were recognized for 15 years of service. Patty Zohlen was recognized for 20 years of service.

Volunteer of the Year - Dave read the nominations and presented Donna Bellis with the award and gift certification for Volunteer of the Year.

Lifetime Achievement Award – Mike Morris presented Anne Brown with this prestigious award for her numerous contributions to HCMG.

Special Appreciation Award - was presented to Connie Townsend for her years of exceptional contributions to HCMG.

Table Decorating Contest Winner – After the votes were tallied, table 6 won the contest with a Santa theme. The table consisted of Imelda Horne, Rae Raiford, Jodi Tippens, Pat Wolters, Debbie Lea, Linda Lockhart, and Janice Walker. The group won a gift certificate.

Other Comments/Questions/Announcements – Dave reminded those who haven't yet turned in their dues or volunteer agreement form to please do so by December 31st. He announced an upcoming Facilitator training. Donna Bellis reported that 18 people have signed up and paid for the next class. She said there is room for more and can still sign up.

Closing Remarks – Dave Kinneberg closed his 24th meeting by passing on the symbolic bell to Rae Raiford (VP) for Sheryl Landrum, the newly elected President.

Adjournment
Respectfully submitted,
Rita Aliperto

Mushrooms of the Hill Country

Michael R. McGinnis, Ph.D.
 Professor Emeritus, University of Texas Medical Branch
 at Galveston.

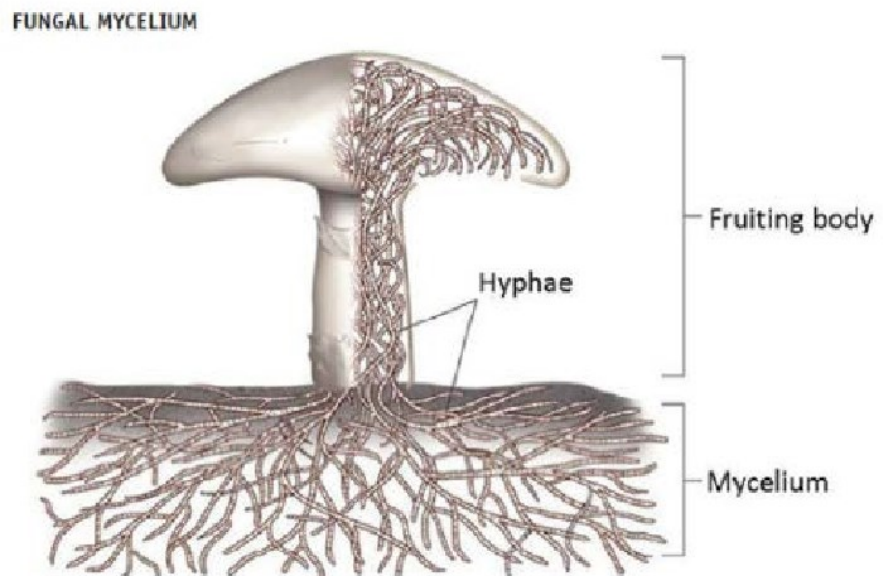


Mike, Professor Emeritus of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and Distinguished Teaching Professor of the University of Texas System, received his Ph.D. in Mycology with minors in Geology and Plant Pathology from Iowa State University in Ames. He is a medical mycologist whose research has clarified much of the confusion surrounding the classification and diseases in humans and animals caused by fungi. Mike has written 424 scientific that includes eight books and given 63 major invited lectures at national and international meetings. Following retirement from UT, he was an adjunct faculty member at Schreiner University in Biology, and has given lectures at the Dieter Center, Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville Geologist Club, and to the Master Naturalists.

CE for HCMG: Mushrooms are among the most beautiful organisms growing in nature. They live throughout the Hill Country where they have an important impact upon many different ecosystems. Mushrooms and truffles are collected and eaten by people because of their pleasant taste. Other mushrooms are collected and eaten because they contain hallucinogenic compounds that can have a stimulatory effect on the brain and nervous system. The fungus mycelium of mushrooms in the form of mycorrhizae are extremely important for good plant health and well-being. Mycorrhizae assist plants by facilitating water and nutrient uptake by the root system, as well as providing some protection against potential soil microbes.

The purpose of this presentation is to explain how mushrooms are collected, identified, evaluated for potential health risks, and their impact upon plants.

The presentation will use color pictures that clearly illustrate the structures needed to accurately identify some of the mushrooms that grow in the Hill Country. If one wants to collect mushrooms, it is important to go collecting with someone that has a lot of experience, and use a quality identification guidebook. One identification mistake can be fatal.



Hill Country Master Gardeners 2024 Executive Committee

Sheryl Landrum
President

Rae Raiford
Vice President

Marge Muniz
Secretary

Jackie Connelly
Treasurer

Dave Kinneberg
Ex-officio Advisor

C.E.A. Advisor

Committees & Project Coordinators are listed on our website

Newsletter

Newsletter Editor
 Pat Wolters

Associate Newsletter Editor
 Patti Schlessiger

Photographer
 Vickie Killeen

Submissions to

Pat Wolters, Editor

Patwolters2865
 @hotmail.com

Mercy Gate Ministries receive donation from HCMG



(Left to right) Frank Dunlap, MG, Lesley Lehrman, Restoration Program Director, Rae Raiford, Vice President HCMG, Kaitlyn Bowen, Case Manager, Sylvia Garcia, Administrative Assistant, Sheryl Landrum, President HCMG, and Jennifer Enciso, Intern.

Each year, the Hill Country Master Gardeners, an educational resource for the local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, selects an organization as their charity for donations by members. This year's recipient is Mercy Gate Ministries whose mission is to help in the prevention, rescue, and advocacy for the victims of sexual abuse and human trafficking. Please see their website for further information: Mercygateministries.com

President Elect Master Gardener Sheryl Landrum, accompanied by Rae Raiford, Vice President and Frank Dunlap, MG deliver a gift of \$2,300 to Lesley Lehrman, Kaitlyn Bowen, Sylvia Garcia and Jen Enciso of Mercy Gate Ministries last Tuesday.



My sisters' Christmas Cactus has been blooming every year since she got it in 1974.

Photo Credit: Pat Wolters