

June 2020

Volume 18, Issue 6

President's Message	1
Hugelkultur	2-3
Hill Country Veggies	4
Tom Collins	5
Henry's Elfin	6
Jan Sewell's Garden	7
Demo Garden	8
Meet the Students	9-11
President's message cont'd	12

Many factors must be considered in order to have a June meeting.

If all criteria is met and we are able to meet, you will be notified by email.



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

Rachel Garrison

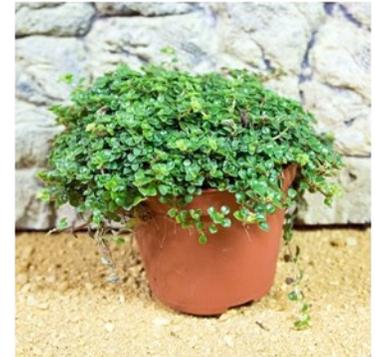
***"Tend your own garden: savor the blossoms, trim the weeds."*** **Ron Kaufman, author**

***Or, in other words...mind your own business!***

These last few weeks, we've had lots of downtime. Some of this time, I have used wisely...gardening, sewing, reading, exercising. However, probably like many of you, I've spent far too much time surfing the internet and watching TV. We especially enjoy British television shows such as *Death in Paradise* and *As Time Goes By*. We also watched a few episodes of an interesting gardening show set in Ireland, *Grow, Cook, Eat*.

One of our old favorite shows is *Rosemary & Thyme*. The series is about two women gardeners, Rosemary Boxer, who holds a doctorate in plant pathology and Laura Thyme, a former police constable. They are hired by various organizations and wealthy people to restore gardens back to their previous, lavish state. Unfortunately, wherever the women go, they stumble on to mystery after mystery, and invariably, a murder occurs. I doubt I would hire them given their track record, but I digress.

A recently viewed episode provided food for thought for this article. Laura was looking at a plant and asked Rosemary to identify it. Rosemary replied that the plant is called "mind your own business". I googled it and, sure enough, there is a plant known by that common name. Other common names for this plant are angel's tears, bits and pieces, and bread and cheese. Many common names of plants cause one to wonder how the common name came about.



Some common names of plants are obviously named for their resemblance to something else, such as bird of paradise, which resembles a bird, elephant ears, and bat face cuphea. Most of us are familiar with the snake plant, also called mother-in-law's tongue. One can only imagine how the latter name for the plant came about. According to Wikipedia, the snapdragon is said to bear the resemblance to the face of a dragon that opens and closes its mouth when the flower is laterally squeezed. I don't see the resemblance, but then I don't think I've ever squeezed the flower.

**Continued on page 12**

## To Hüglekultur or not the Hüglekultur; That is the Question!

by

Meg Scot– Johnson, HCMG Class of 2011



This headline in one of our monthly HCMG Newsletters caught my eye. So, I Googled the word. Did you? Then I watched a couple of YouTubes about and I knew Hüglekultur was mine to do.

Part One: Early April 2020  
Here is my story. Last summer we had to have a large 75 year-old Red Oak removed from the backyard and the stump ground. After grieving the loss of this large tree, I noticed all the sunshine that had not been there before. Hmmm, what are the possibilities for a garden?

During the winter I showed the site to Pam Umstead who could see some possibilities for a garden and for my compost collections.



The old tree had a low rock wall around the perimeter; the wall was cracked, leaning and not attractive. [upper left old wall} After several failed attempts, I found someone to remove the old wall and build a new one at a reasonable price. [upper right new wall}. It was now late February.

Saturday afternoon, March 7, I began my Hüglekultur. I dug down ten inches in the ground stump area to make the trench. Really, it was easy digging. I brought old (at least 15 years-old) oak logs from the back of the yard and placed them as base. Then came old pieces of bark, branches and twigs. Note the four-foot “yard stick” I stuck in the back of the garden space to measure the height from the bottom of the trench.

*Cont’d page 3*



**Hüglekultur continued** On top of the branches I placed partially composed oak leaves. Then I topped that with a mixture of my compost and organic garden soil. I purchased the soil from Plant Haus II as I knew they had donated bags of garden soil to the Glory Community Garden. I admit that I sat and patted the top of the Hüglekultur as it was soft and “pat-able”.



I have been collecting flower seeds for years to share and to use when I had sunlight in a place protected from deer. You can see the assortment and recognize some of these that have been handed out at our meetings.

So, I planted seeds all around the top and sides of the large lump of a brown dirt that my husband calls a sarcophagus. Well, it does have that shape. I did add green pepper seeds and parsley seeds. Then went in onion sets, thanks to Pam Umstead. Thankfully rain came gently at the right time.

Wanting to plant more, of course, I added two Lantanas on the north and east sides of the pile. Then after weeding our Demo Garden one Sunday morning when we began social distancing, I brought home three orphaned, un-named tomato plants. So now seeds are sprouting, tomato plants are thriving, and I may call this a Victory Garden if times get worse in this pandemic.

**Part Two: Early May 2020**

I will say that most of the seeds did not germinate. Some of the seedlings have not thrived. The two small lantanas planted on the sides did not make it. My guess is soil has fallen through, so it is not very deep in places. Such is life in this garden.

What I am learning is that the layer of soil needs to be deeper than what I laid down initially. There are holes where soil has fallen through into the layer of leaves and branches under the soil. The two Lantana did not survive probably due to insufficient soil depth. And the leaf mulch is sliding off the sides! Hmmm! Lesson learned: flatten the soil on top like a mesa rather than make a mound. I do think squirrels are having a field day as in Schlitterbahn! The Dalhberg Daises are happy at the base of the Hüglekultur.



Next spring, I imagine that the Hüglekultur will be lower. I will add soil, flatten the top, and then hopefully roots can go deeper, and the mulch will stay put.

To see a mature and successful Hüglekultur notice the front yard of the Tudor style home on Jackson Rd. diagonally across the street from Trinity Baptist Church.

I am glad to share this information with you all. Consider a Hüglekultur!





## Hill Country Veggies

**By Allen Mace**

It's hard to believe that it is already May. Weather wise, it's been a dry spring in Comfort Texas. We've had a few sprinkles, but not enough that I didn't have to water. Rainwater is always the best for vegetables, it's a pH thing. The rain I was hoping for when I planted last month went around me and then I had a few days with the temperature in the mid 90's. That's not a good combination for newly planted gardens, but it is what it is, and we move on. I've had to water several times a week, but the garden is doing well.

Summer Squash is always a perennial favorite in my gardens. I usually plant both a yellow squash and a green zucchini. Squash is one of the easiest vegetables to grow. I don't plant them in hills, I plant them in offset rows in my raised beds. Summer squash is called "summer" because you'll be harvesting during the summer. These varieties don't take as long to produce fruit. Winter Squash varieties grow through the summer into the fall and are harvested just before, you guessed it, "winter". These varieties will also store



**Summer Squash**



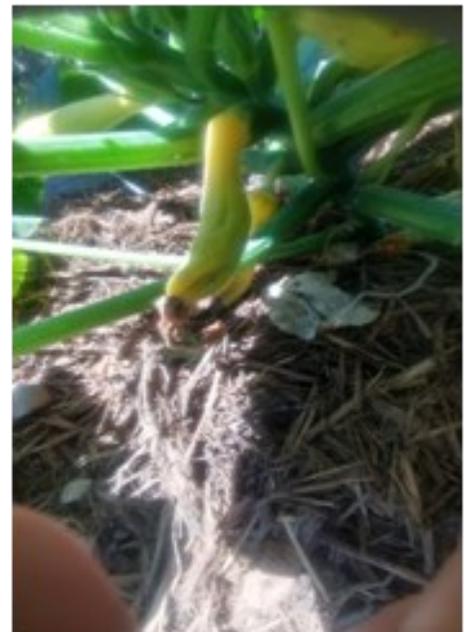
**Male Flower**



**Female Flower**

longer when stored properly. Squash produce both male and female flowers. I'm not going to get technical, but you do have to peek under their leaves. A squash plant needs lots of space because they get big. They will grow wide and cover lots of ground. The flowers grow from the stem underneath their leaves. Not all flowers will produce fruit, that's because squash, like other vegetables, produce both male and female flower on the same plant. If you get down, peek under their leaves and look

at the base of the flower, you'll see that some flowers have a stem that looks swollen at the base, these are the female flowers and the swollen stem is actually the beginnings of the fruit. The stem of the male flower is thin and just ends at the base of the flower. Insects crawl around the inside of the male flower picking up the pollen, then crawl around the inside of the female flower, fertilizing the flower. This causes the fruit to start growing. Once I see the fruit developing, I'll pluck off the shriveled up flower. Sometimes the shriveled up flower can cause the fruit to rot. If that has happened, I just pick the small fruit and discard it.



**Discard fruit**

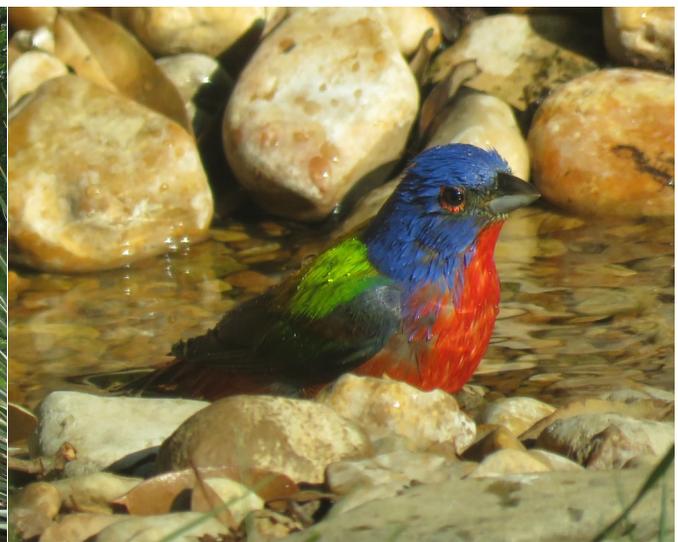
**'TIS THE SEASON FOR ELFINs by TOM COLLINS**

Hello fellow Master Gardeners. Before I tell my story, I felt a not too short introduction was needed. This will be my 20<sup>th</sup> year since I was first certified in Brazoria County after I had retired from 31 years working for The Dow Chemical Company in Freeport / Lake Jackson Texas. Being a 7<sup>th</sup> generation Texan and growing up in the Texas Hill Country has instilled a pride in the beauty and wonder of its resources. My parents were of the Great Depression era. After I was born in San Antonio, they moved to the small community of Grey Forrest on the Scenic Loop road. We had a Helotes address. Our small 12 acres ranch was where I first became interested in nature. My mother was an early Naturalist and over the years her interest in the wildlife and plants were imprinted in me. Being a free ranging child in the early 40's, I found myself learning bird songs, sitting for hours watching Texas Horned Lizards ("horny toad") eat the big red ants (Harvester Ants) and exploring caves, fishing

Helotes creek and collecting plants that I pressed as part of my Helotes Elementary class projects.

Over the years since that very early exposure to nature, I have become very involved in many studies and strange natural history pursuits. My wife, of soon to be 55 years of marriage, and I have studied birds from all over the world accumulating a life list of just short of 5,000 species from some 30 countries – that's close to 50% of all known bird species. We study butterflies and lead annual butterfly counts. Our ranch is managed under a Texas Agricultural Wildlife Valuation with emphasis on birds and butterflies – specifically Monarchs for which I am currently doing a Citizen Science Project called Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP). I spend a lot of time crawling around on my knees searching for Monarch eggs or larva. I keep accurate records of all flora and fauna that has been found on our ranch.

*continued on page 6*



Tom Collins ranch house Xeric Gardening and a photo of a male Painted Bunting bathing in his Ranch front yard Oasis. He has photographed over 100 species of birds bathing in this multi-pool, stream and pond Oasis.

**Photo Credit: Tom Collins**

## Henry's Elfin continued

So, for the present that's all you need to know about me. I am a naturalist at my core and being a Master Gardener keeps me well rooted in what grows in the soil and balances out my attraction to what lives above the soil.

I did not want the title of my story below to get lost in who and what I am, but some introduction was necessary. Now let's talk about one of my favorite subjects – butterflies – in this case the an Elfin. No, I'm not talking about those little people with pointed green hats. The Henry's Elfin is a small butterfly that appear early in spring or late winter. They can be hard to find as they dash in and out of trees and shrubs playing hide and seek until suddenly, they decide to stop and perch out in the open saying "See Me".



**Henry's Elfin**

**Photo Credit: Tom Collins**

**The Henry's Elfin** (*Callophrys henrici* (Grote & Robinson, 1867) is a member of the Gossamer-Winged butterfly family and Hairstreak sub-family. They first appear as a butterfly as soon as their annual alarm clock signals the temperature or solar energy is sufficient to survive. As they emerge from the pupa or chrysalis stage, then begin nectaring on the newly opened flowers of their host plants - Texas Redbud and Mexican Buckeye species. The males sit on exposed branches of their host plant waiting for a female to fly by. After mating, an egg is laid on a fresh leaf of the host plant. As the eggs hatch, the small caterpillars feed first on the buds or flowers, then the young tender leaves. After passing through their instar stages, the caterpillars move to the litter on the ground beneath the host tree to form a new chrysalis that must survive the Texas Hill County heat, rain, drought, bull dozers and next winter, before beginning the process all over again.

Henry's Elfin has a wingspan of 1-1.5 inches and is best identified by the frosting on the trailing edge of the lower surface of the hindwing. Like his cousins, the Hairstreaks, the Henry's Elfin has tails, but they are so small and short that you have to get very close to see them.

Now is the time to go out and find a blooming Redbud or Buckeye and you may see a very small butterfly dashing about. I have been seeing them since the last week of February. Remember they have only one brood per year. So be patient, very still and maybe one will land close to you. If so, you will get to enjoy this very beautiful little Hill Country butterfly.

**Gardening Note:** If you are of the "Love to Rake Leaves and Bag them", please remember that buried within the leaf litter of your Redbud or Buckeye may be the chrysalis of the next generation of a Henry's Elfin. Other species of butterflies also leave their future generation in leaf litter of Live Oaks, Hackberries, and other hardwood trees.

## From the Homes of Master Gardeners



**Jan Sewell** shared pictures of her garden. Starting above: entrance to the vegetable garden. On each side of the arbor are antique Cecil Brunner roses. In the two butterfly pots are red climbing roses. We also planted Hyacinth Vine seeds which will eventually cover the arbor before the end of summer. They are fun to watch.

Vegetable garden. With all the wonderful rain immediately after planting, this is 3 weeks growth. We planted from starters not seeds. The first bed with pots is the herb bed. Blackberries are climbing on the back fence of the garden.

Right: The Butterfly Garden we planted in honor of our grandchildren. After traveling extensively last year, we basically had to start from scratch this year. Coming from Houston, I had to put a red hibiscus in the center pot. Many of the plants in this garden are perennials including esperanza, black and blue sage, gregg mist flowers, passion flowers, calla lilies, among others.

**Photo Credit: Jan Sewell**





### ...and from the Demo Garden...

By Jackie Skinner

It's such a shame our demonstration garden must be closed during this glorious spring. So many blooms have come and gone. But there are many more to come.

In keeping with the HCMG goal of promoting native and adapted plants, we are expanding the range of our perennials, making way for a few wildflowers and discovering old-fashioned bedding plants returning from seeds left by last year's annuals (two species of poppies, coneflowers and zinnias to name a few).

Some garden sections are transforming as we transfer and replace what existed before. For instance, the dry bed garden is being restored to feature Frogfruit, wild Gaura, native Rock Rose, Hill Country Penstemon, and with any luck, an Antelope Horn milkweed. A large section directly north of #1 greenhouse has been almost completely cleared to feature Texas native grasses and wildflowers. There the visitor may view several types of Little Bluestem, a 'Blackhawk' Big Bluestem, Yellow Indian Grass, dwarf Gama Grass, and a garden variety Switchgrass. Adapted grasses include Mexican Feather Grass, Blue Fescue, Purple Fountain Grass, and a variegated Maiden Grass. Indian Blankets, White Winecup, Sunflowers, Woolly Ironweed, and a Kidneywood offer contrast and variety. Maybe these changes will bring visitations from birds, butterflies, and bees we have not yet seen in our garden.



The partially complete grass garden



Square-bud primrose, still blooming along curbside at the demo garden.

Along with our expanded palette of plants, our committee has grown. We have added two new members from this year's graduating class: Rita Aliperto and David Kinneberg, both of whom have adopted a garden section, plus Jim Wilson and Mimi Bouslog, class of 2019. This makes 15 of us but we still have at least three sections in need of someone to love them. The green beings living in them are doing their best to bloom despite the weeds and lack of pruning, but oh how they would flourish under tender caring hands.

The Demonstration Garden Committee is a group of committed gardeners who are learning as we go (no former experience necessary), and feeling proud of what we are creating for the education of our community. We look forward to watching and discovering as we add to our garden collection. Whether you prefer to work alone, or enjoy the partnership and fun of gardening companions, we have just the right job for you. If you're interested in being one of us, please send an email to

[jackieaby195@windstream.net](mailto:jackieaby195@windstream.net)

## Meet the Students of the HCMG Class of 2020

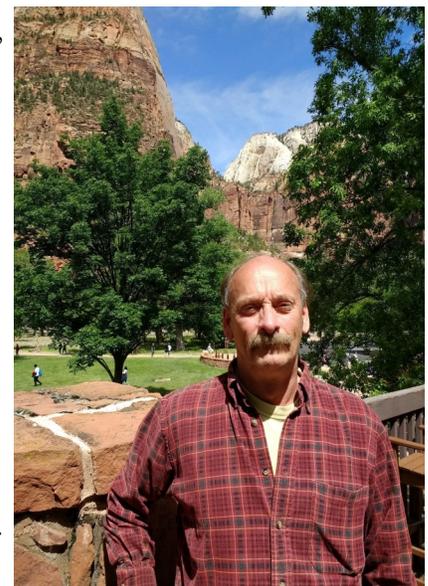
**Kalie Burton**, age 35, was born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida. She studied English Literature and Psychology at the University of North Florida. Her career thus far has been in Insurance, where she travels the country working on Catastrophe Claims after hurricanes, tornadoes and hail storms. Insurance brought her to Texas and she has been living in Austin since 2013. In 2019 she and her boyfriend purchased two properties in Leakey, Texas with plans to create a large homestead and tiny house community for family and friends. Kalie's gardening focuses on vegetables, Super Hot Peppers for hot sauce making and medicinal herbs for apothecary. She also enjoys roasting coffee and making chocolate.



**Marge Muniz** was raised in Wisconsin and always had a big garden along with fruit trees and raspberries. Through her life's journey, she has lived in Iowa and several parts of Texas: Fort Worth and Houston and now settled in Bandera. She heard of the Master Gardener program when she and her husband, Robert, initially started coming to Bandera after purchasing several acres. They made the big move in 2012 from Houston. She finally retired in mid-June of 2019. Several years ago they built a garden with 3 raised beds with mediocre results. Growing a garden in Texas is much different than in Wisconsin. She thought becoming a Master Gardener would be a great opportunity for her to learn more about being a better gardener and a steward of the land. They also have 2 peach trees and one plum tree. She now knows why they don't get any plums and plans to buy another plum trees.



**Jan Boldt** Part-year Kerrville, Texas resident – (Nov – Apr) Part-year Washougal, Washington resident (western Columbia River Gorge, near Portland, Oregon) Farm kid from Colorado, then Commercial Small Fruit grower in Washington (U-pick berries, and tree fruits), Washington Master Gardener 1988. High interest in International Botanical Gardens, favorite gardens are Singapore, Osaka, Dublin, Salzburg, Sydney, Invercargill and many yet to be discovered. Helped to propagate heritage gardens and orchard at Ft Vancouver National Historic Site. (circa 1830) Interests in sustainable natural landscape, water conservation, high density AG (New Zealand / Israel), Community AG Education (4H and seniors), local grown, Farmer's Markets. Beyond gardening interests include: chamber music, alternative education, traveling and volunteering as a 'local' (not as a tourist), cooperative senior housing, new product inventing, alternative energy and building construction. Early retired from career as Tool and Diemaker & Supply Chain engineer for HP. Lived and worked internationally 20+ yrs. Volunteer as an international Cooperative Business Developer



## Meet the Students of the HCMG Class of 2020



**Al Perry**

I have been enjoying the first spring in our new home in a virtually maintenance free zeroscape yard with an abundance of birds, moths, butterflies and hummingbirds. Every week has been a new experience. I am also busy in my support role for Dolores Auger, Lola, my true Master Gardener who has kept me running so far to just about every nursery and garden center between here and San Antonio. I'm lucky to be retired.



**Even mailbox statues are keeping safe during this pandemic.  
You can find this guard turtle on Upper Turtle Creek Road, Kerrville**

**Photo Credit: Pat Wolters**

## Meet the Students of the HCMG Class of 2020

Hello my name is **Jennifer Benitez**.



I live in Gillespie county with my husband. I currently work at Wildseed Farms, in Fredericksburg, Texas. Working at the Wildseed Farms plant department has sparked my love of plants. I wanted to learn all I could so

I decided to apply to become a master gardener. Some of the projects I have been working on with my husband are ornamental gardens around my home, and growing a few vegetable plants. I also have a large collection of house plants. For fun I made a turtle topiary that I'm really proud of.



**Hill Country Master Gardeners 2020 Executive Committee**

Rachel Garrison  
*President*

Debra Bacon  
*Vice President*

Donna Nutt  
*Secretary*

Jackie Connelly  
*Treasurer*

Jackie Skinner  
*Ex-officio Advisor*

Roy Walston  
*C.E.A. Advisor*

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

**Newsletter & Website**

*Newsletter Editor*  
Pat Wolters

*Associate Newsletter Editor*  
Patti Schlessiger

Special thanks to  
Judy Beauford for  
proofreading

*Photographer*  
Mark Shultz

*Continuing Education Editor*  
Raeann Reid

**Submissions to**

Newsletter.editor.hcmg@gmail.com

**President's message continued from page 1**

Hooker's Lips (Psychotria Elata)



A google search provided a very long list of interesting plant names. Orchids seemed to win the prize for the number of unusual names, such as flying duck orchid, Holy Ghost orchid, Virgin Mary in Moon orchid, moth orchid, angel orchid, and hammer orchid. Often in my search, the plant looked nothing like my



perception given the name such as Voodoo lily, chamber maid, and lobster claw. Other plants such as hooker's lips and swaddled babies, revealed obvious connections to the common name.

I also stumbled across some interesting vegetable plant names. Turkey crow bean is said to have been given the name as the plant grew from seeds gathered from the gullet of a wild turkey shot by a farmer. Howling mob corn was named by a breeder after his empty wagon was surrounded by customers angry that his supply of produce had sold out. Myona tomato gets its name from the accent of an Italian immigrant. When he sold his tasty tomatoes, people asked where he got the seeds. Because he had brought them to New York from Italy, he replied, "myowna".



Radiator Charlie's mortgage lifter tomato is an interesting story. Marshall Cletis Byles became known as Radiator Charlie because he had a radiator repair shop conveniently located at the bottom of a steep hill where vehicles frequently overheated. Radiator Charlie was an avid gardener known to grow the biggest and best tasting tomatoes. He cross-pollinated 4 varieties and over

the years selected the best plants. The result was a heavy bearing, disease resistant plant producing fruit up to 4 lbs each. Radiator Charlie's tomato plants began selling and became so popular that he was able to pay off the mortgage of his house resulting in a name change of the tomato to "Radiator Charlie's mortgage lifter." Seeds for this unusually named tomato are available to purchase from several online sources. This tomato might be fun to try.

After so many weeks of staying home and practicing "minding my own business," I'm looking forward to getting out and engaging personally with the world around me. When the time comes that we can return to more normal activities, I'll still try to keep my nose in my own "garden!"