

March 2023

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Wednesday
 March 1, 2023

HCYEC

Meeting 1:00 pm
 CEU 2:00 pm

**Living off the Land?
 Edibles and Beneficial
 Native Plants**

Kim Ort

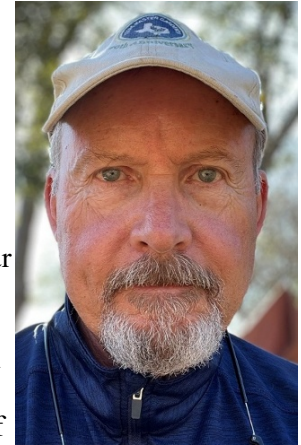
We will talk about some common & not so commonly known edibles & beneficial plants & how to forage them responsibly

Bio on page 9

"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



Springtime is usually the busiest time of year for gardeners. It is, without question, for HCMG's. Four major events take place in February, March, and early April: the "Plantastic" gardening seminar in Fredericksburg, our training class (fully subscribed this year with a waiting list!), our B&B sale (and all the work that goes into re-potting and caring for our "merchandise") and the demonstration garden cleanup. All of this on top of regular project work and, of course, preparing our personal gardens for the growing season. This year is no different from the past; we're busy and yet we find the time. We're master gardeners after all.

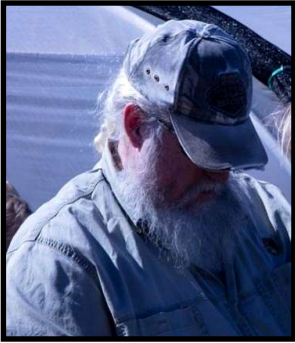
Once things settle down to a "dull roar" (perhaps in May), I ask that we tackle a few non-routine tasks to keep our organization relevant. Policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated to meet the current needs of members and job descriptions need to be edited to reflect reality. If necessary, our by-laws, the foundation of HCMG, must be changed. This is not glamorous work but is necessary.

My request: Please, members and (especially) committee chairs, make sure our documents are accurate and our procedures reflect current practices. Information can be found in the 2023 Handbook (thanks to Patty Zohlen for all her work) or in the "Member Zone" on the HCMG website. If you can't find a document, contact me or another member of the executive committee. Perhaps there is information that should be posted to the website and isn't (job descriptions?). Please give me your thoughts.

Suggestions for changes should be made to committee chairs and to members of the executive team. The executive committee is empowered to update policies and procedures. Major changes, if necessary, will be brought to the membership for a vote. Any change to the by-laws, no matter how small, must be approved by the membership. And our agent-of-record must agree with and approve our actions.

How we operate should reflect the needs of our members and our community. In some cases, our policies must be defined in more detail to be transparent. In others, they need to be amended to include new requirements put in place by TMGA (for example, the new background procedure). All of which is part of "continuous improvement" with the goal of building a better organization. As we go through our busy springtime months, please think about how we can improve so that things are easier in the future. Once we're done, we can spend more time in our gardens.

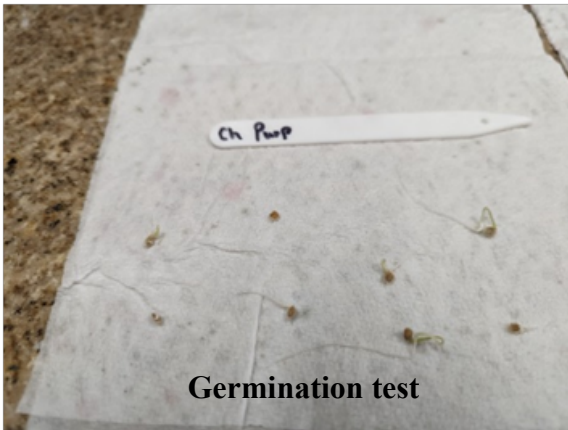
Thanks, as always, for your help.



Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace, MG

Last month I did a germination test on some tomato seeds I had. The seeds were viable and most all of them germinated. I usually discard the germination test and plant new seeds into small pots and charge forward. This year I decided to try and remove the germinated seeds from the moist paper towel and plant the germinated seedlings. This proved to be a bit more difficult than I had expected.



Germination test

The stems were not an issue, but the roots had started to penetrate the paper towel. I was only able to recover about 40% of the sprouted seeds. They are very delicate at this stage and the root separates very easily from the seed. This may have been because I left them in the paper towel longer than I should have. Next time I'll try and remove them earlier in the process. I had one variety of tomato that was all the seeds I had. I was able to recover four of them. Normally I have plenty of seeds so that recovery is not necessary, but it's good to know that it is possible.



Soil cells and water tray

I filled my seedling trays with a starting mix and placed them in a tray with water so the cells were moist before I transferred the sprouted seedling to the growing cells. It is important to water from below and let the soil wick up the moisture. If you water from above, you run the risk of displacing the seed, or in this case, the very fragile seedling. I then placed the cells on a heated grow mat, then placed the clear plastic dome over the cells and turned on the grow lights. I turned the grow lights off at night, then turn them back on in the morning. I'll keep the soil moist from below and in a week or two, I will be transferring the seedlings to larger pots. So far, everything is working well.



Light, dome and heat mat



Everything's working fine

The More The Merrier!

640 newly potted plants were moved into our greenhouses after receiving TLC from our amazing volunteers during our Feb. 7 Pot Party. By Vickie Killeen



Top left: Our Brazilian Rock Roses & Copper Canyon Daisies are in good hands with Debbie Bacon and Jeanine Capeheart caring for them.

Top right: Darla Cluster and Gayle Anderson enjoy chatting with each other while potting up new arrivals.

Bottom right: Lisa Cantini who moved plants into their greenhouse locations, pauses for a minute with Sandy Martin, who prepared the soil for all those plants.

Bottom left: Jan Sewell, Rae Raifod & Anne Brown show off assorted perennials.



Pot Party

By Vickie Killeen, MG



Top left: The mixing of rich soil & fertilizer happened in the storage garage because of the rain threat. Jeanine Capeheart (center) gets a bucket refilled from Janice Walker (left) and Sandy Martin (right).

Top right: Training purple lantana are well-cared-for by Tish Hulett, Aime Tennant and Bernard Warren potting in the Extension classroom.

Bottom left: Bernard Warren snips off blooms & buds before potting lantana. Soil nutrients will help the plant grow more roots and foliage if it doesn't have to support blooms.

Bottom right: JOB WELL DONE! The last of the volunteers admire some of their newly potted plants. From left: Darla Cluster, Janice Walker, Aimee Tennant, Lisa Cantini, Anne Brown, Tish Hulett and Sandy Lewis.



“Plantastic” Annual Vegetable Seminar



Above: Participants were greeted by Master Gardeners: Rae Tiemann, Sheridan Stringer and Allen Mace.
 Below: Raeann Reid (left) makes sure everyone is fed.



Beth McMahon, CEA Horticulture Gillespie County organizes this annual event with the help of Hill Country Master Gardeners. This year’s attendance doubled from last year to almost 100 attending. Above: Beth introduces Peggy and John Benson who gave the key note address documenting their beautiful homestead with vegetable gardens, fields of native plants, and creative ideas for re-purposing. Below right: Patty Zohlen, MG presents on Vermiculture. Below left: Chris Seifert, MG presents on Composting. Also involved in program but not pictured are Connie Townsend and Pat Wolters.





Looking for an Excuse Not to Mow your Lawn this Spring?

Join the “No Mow May” Movement

By Pat Wolters, MG

The “No Mow May” movement is a conservation initiative first popularized in 2019 in the United Kingdom. The start of the growing season is a critical time for hungry, newly emerging native bees. Floral resources may be hard to find, especially in urban and suburban settings. By allowing lawns to grow longer, and not applying pesticides to flowering plants in your lawn, you can provide nectar and pollen to help your bee neighbors thrive.

Think of “No Mow May” and “Low Mow Spring” as a small step towards making yards bee-friendlier. Communities should strive to make their lawn and weed ordinances more pollinator-friendly throughout the year. Tyler, Texas has adopted this concept.

What will happen if I join the movement?

1. You’ll get some color in your yard, dandelions, clover, etc.
2. Bees will get an early boost of nectar. 75% of the world’s food crops and 35% of global agriculture depend on pollination.
3. You’ll cut down on pollution by not using your gasoline lawn mowers, not using fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides during the month of May.
4. You’ll save time and energy while helping the bees.

Counter approach: I do think the “No Mow May” is a start, but a better approach might be:

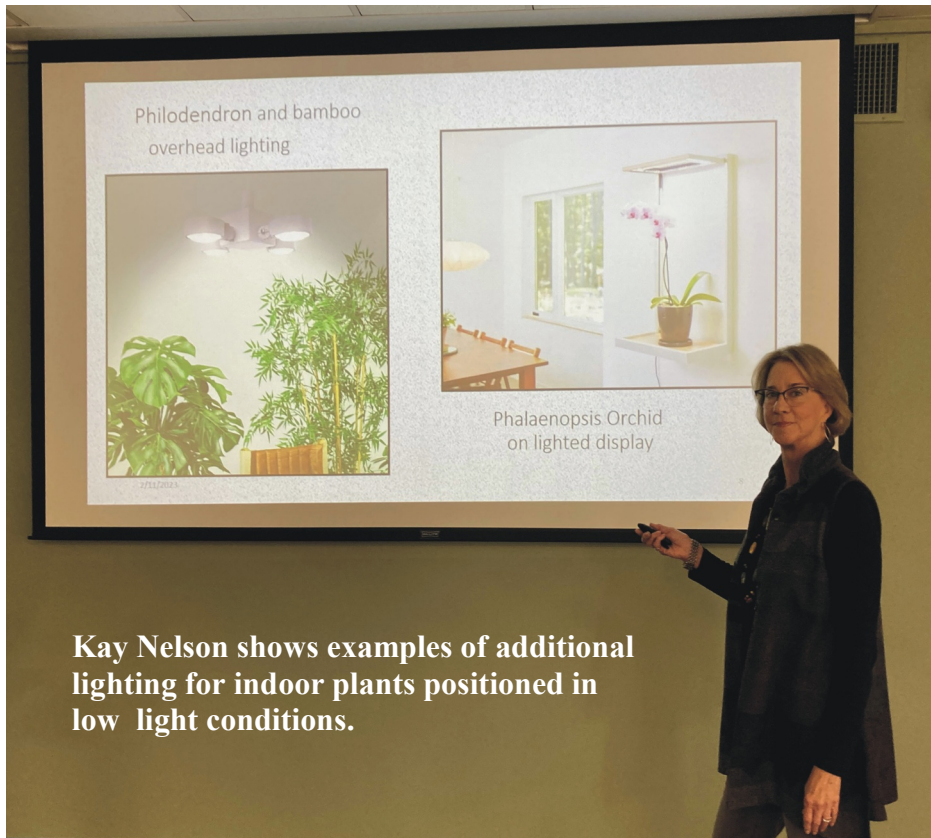
- ◆ Encourage homeowners to turn a small patch of lawn into a proper native wildflower garden that will feed wild bees from spring through fall and be far more attractive than a shaggy lawn full of weeds,
- ◆ Stop applying herbicides and pesticides to your lawn,
- ◆ Plant native trees/bushes that provide more food for pollinators than any lawn could,
- ◆ Incorporate native plants into your existing gardens.

The point is that there are a lot of ways to support pollinators that will have more impact than keeping the lawn mower under lock and key for a month.

HCMG Gardening 101 Series

All About Indoor Plants with Kay Nelson

How can gardeners get their “plant fix” in dreary February? Indoor plants!



Kay Nelson shows examples of additional lighting for indoor plants positioned in low light conditions.

**Photo and article by
Vickie Killeen, MG**

HCMG’s Gardening 101 Series at Kerrville’s Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library focused on varieties, benefits & care of indoor plants at the February 11 program. Local gardeners were able to get expert advice and ask questions of Kay, our featured speaker, who has a degree in horticulture and recently retired from a career in owning & managing an indoor plant service company. Take-home handouts provided re-enforcement of the lecture principles as well as access to additional resources.



Our free series, open to the public, focuses on a new topic each month. Patty Zohlen is series chairman. Contact the library’s reference desk at 830-258-1274 for upcoming programs or check your weekly HCMG E-Minder.

Tish Hulett, Darla Cluster, Patty Zohlen and Lisa Cantini were part of Kay’s gardening audience.

**HCMG Monthly Meeting
February 8, 2023
HCYEC**

Call to Order (Please Silence Your Cell Phones)

Pledge of Allegiance – was recited by the group.

Invocation – Rachel Garrison delivered the invocation.

Welcome/Opening Remarks – Dave Kinneberg opened the meeting and asked if there were any guests present. Four mentors for the 2023 class introduced their respective mentee.

Verification of Quorum –Rita Aliperto verified there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes from January 4,2022 Meeting– Anne Brown moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Barbara Castillo.

Treasurer’s Report – Rachel Garrison explained line items on the report. There were no questions or comments from the group. Dave mentioned that the HCMG 2022 finances were audited last month. The audit committee did not discover any issues and the annual audit passed with flying colors.

Business Items

New Ag Agent – Dave introduced Mike Morris, the newly hired Kerr County Ag Extension Agent. Mike spoke about the hiring process and how it was explained to him about the exemplary reputation of the HCMG. Everyone was complimentary about our group, including former agent, Roy Walston. Mike offered his assistance with whatever we need and stated his door was always open.

New Member! Kaysi Craig has now been certified as a HCMG. She was not present to accept her certificate and name badge.

February Directors Meeting– Dave attended the TX MGs directors meeting. He reported our dues will be increasing from \$2 to \$5 annually. They will be creating a scholarship fund like the one HCMG currently offers. There will also be micro-scholarships that will be awarded to MG groups for projects that help educate the public. In addition, TX MG will contribute

to a professionally managed endowment fund to increase their return on assets. Dave asked that those interested in taking Advanced Training classes check the TX MG website for more information. We can send 2 candidates to this training.

Standing Committee Reports

Education – Donna Bellis stated that the 2023 classes start next week. There are 25 interns and 13 on the waiting list. She needs facilitators for the March 23rd and 28th classes. She also needs rose cuttings, bulbs, begonias, and African violets for the propagation class. Please contact Donna if you can provide anything she requested.

Public Programs – Ray Tiemann spoke about the Plantastic seminar on February 24th in Fredericksburg. He brought information and offered several ways to register for the class.

Demonstration Garden – Jackie Skinner spoke about the transformation the Demo Garden will make soon. She is asking for volunteers to help the Demo Garden committee with help in making that happen. There will be a clean-up day on Friday, March 10th at 9am and a mulch spreading day on Wednesday, March 29th at 9am. You do not need to be on the committee to help.

Greenhouse/B&B – Anne Brown reported that 640 plants were potted, and they are on their way to 1,800 to 2,000 plants. The B&B sale has been advertised on our website. Please mark your calendars for Thursday, April 6th Spa Day; Friday, April 7th Move Day; and Saturday, April 8th Sale Day. We will be staffing a little differently this year. From 7 to 9am, we will be working with the folks standing in line, providing them with sale information. If anyone has garden related items they wish to donate toward the garden shed, please email Patti Schlessiger. No books, please.

Other Announcements

Committee Chairpersons – Bob Huff has resigned as Special Projects Coordinator. Dave thanked Bob for the great job he did over the years. This position entails making certain that any projects we take on meet the requirements of HCMG. The information gets passed on to the Executive Committee for approval. Liz Althaus resigned as Membership Chair.

Continued on page 9

Minutes continued from page 8

Dave thanked Liz for her past work. Barbara Castillo will chair the committee with the assistance of Jodi Tipples and Rae Raiford. Background screening data has been submitted to TX MG on 20 members who are due for a new background check. Look for an email from Sterling Volunteer and follow the instructions on the link. This must be done within 72 hours of receiving the email. The Public Relations Chair position remains vacant. Vickie Killeen will train the new chairperson (s). Dave outlined recent articles in local publications highlighting HCMGs.

Anything Else?

Rae Raiford is asking for volunteers to help with an event at Tom Daniels Elementary on March 10th. The event will educate grades 3 and 4 (8-, 9- & 10-year-olds). Please contact Rae for more information.

Patty Zohlen has updated the membership handbook and emailed it to the membership as well as posting it on the website.

Jackie Connelly is requesting any photos you may have of MGs working at projects. She will post them for the public to see.

Adjournment

Photo Credit:
 Vickie Killeen

**Respectfully submitted,
 Rita Aliperto, Secretary**

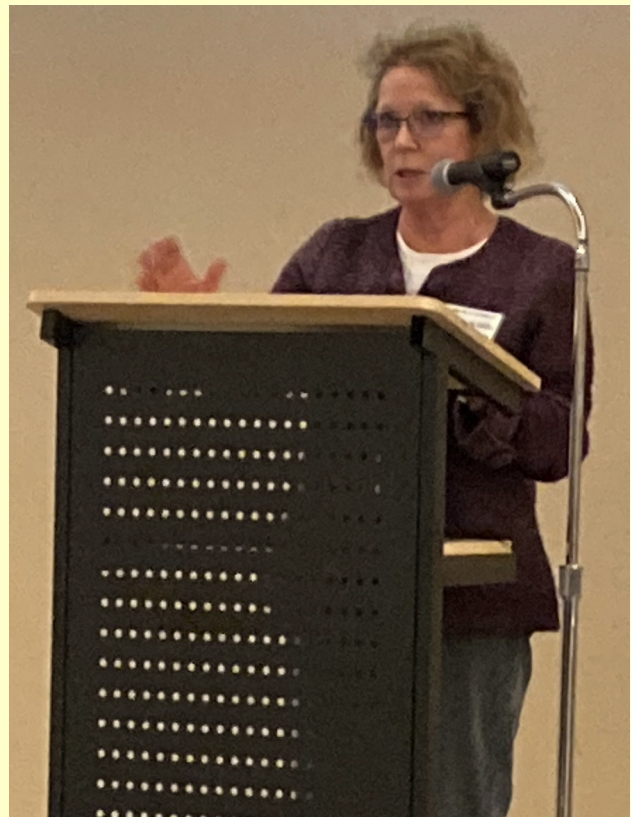
Next Meeting: March 1, 2023 HCYEC

Biography for Kim Ort

After retiring from an engineering career in the technology industry, Kim Ort joined the Texas Master Naturalists Hays County Chapter in 2011. Inspired by nature and a thirst for knowledge, Kim pursued a MS in Wildlife Ecology at Texas State University. Her thesis research was The mating evolution of *Craugastor Augustii* and *Eleutherodactylus Marnockii* in karst geology of Central Edwards Plateau.



Our new Kerr County Extension Agent Mike Morris stopped by to say a few words to the members.



Barbara Castillo has volunteered to chair our Membership Committee.

**Hill Country Master
 Gardeners 2023
 Executive
 Committee**

Dave Kinneberg
President

Rae Raiford
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

Newsletter Editor
 Pat Wolters

Associate Newsletter Editor
 Patti Schlessiger

Special thanks to
 Judy Beauford for
 proofreading

Photographer
 Vickie Killeen

Submissions to
Pat Wolters, Editor

Patwolters2865
 @hotmail.com

News from the Kerrville Garden Club

By Vickie Killeen, MG

HCMG Jackie Skinner was the featured speaker at the February meeting of Kerrville Garden Club. Ornamental Grasses were discussed as potential Hill Country additions to local gardens. The program focused on specific grasses that tolerate our weather and soil as well as offering some deer resistance.



Kerrville Garden Club Horticulture Chairman Jackie Skinner (left) answers questions for HCMG Barbara Castillo, a club guest, about ornamental cabbages & kales as well as snapdragons, plants that are suitable for adding color to winter gardens.

