

March 2024

Volume 22 Issue 3

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**Wednesday
March 6, 2024
HCYEC**

**Meeting 1:00 pm
CEU 2:00 pm**

**"Good Bugs and
Troublemakers."**

Ray Tiemann

Bio on page 6

"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

Birding in our Gardens

After our meeting this week and listening to our presenter, Katy Kappal, discuss plans for a Bird City here in Kerrville, I have to say I have become very excited about the opportunity! I have become a bird watcher enthusiast since moving to Kerrville 2.5 years ago. I fell in love with the beautiful red cardinals, the tufted titmouse, great horned owl, the golden-fronted woodpecker, and the sassy little house wrens to name a few.

The entertainment is delightful; every afternoon the red cardinal likes to say: "beers, and beers, and beers!" until I think that sounds like a good idea and go get one, and the owl says, "who, who, who?" and I tell him it is me again! It is fun to watch them bathe in the bird baths, arguing over a branch or bird house, and dive bombing the squirrels when they want to take advantage of the feeders alongside the birds. However, after two winters I became smarter in how I attracted my birds; I feed them from late November until early/mid-March and then once the insects are back, the gourmet food is gone and I my feeding schedule drops to about 20% of winter's schedule. Why, because birds in the yard have plenty of insects to eat in our yards and gardens. Not only are the birds well fed by our little pests, but our trees and plants benefit from the pest control and the plant management as well. So, how do we as gardeners support this and encourage our properties to thrive while also becoming bird havens?

We all know that to sustain life, there needs to be food, water, and shelter. Priming our properties with provisions for same for our birds and our pollinators will go a long way in a world where balance can be elusive. Fortunately, mother nature has provided us with flowers, bushes, and plants that attract birds to our properties. Some of these plants, Elderberry and Spicebush, are two woody shrubs that grown from 6-12' tall and provide food and shelter.

Continued on page 4





Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace, MG

This time of year, I start focusing on the spring garden. Winter is still in full swing. The days may be warm but the nights are still cool. Frost is still a concern. The last cold front that blew through cost me all but one cabbage plant. This last cabbage plant reminded

me of a few years back when a similar cold front wiped out my winter garden that year, all except for a few collard plants that survived. These collards flowered and produced seeds the following summer. It turned out that collards are bi-annules.

Bi-annules are those that grow the first year, goes through the winter then produces flowers and seeds the next. I collected seeds from those collard plants the next summer, just as I plan to do with my lone survivor cabbage. This was the beginning of my interest in seed saving and started me down the trail of Heirloom vegetables.



Lone Survivor



Collard Seed Pods

Cabbage has always been a family favorite. It does well in cooler temperatures. Late fall or early spring is a good time to plant them. Winter is always a good time to plant cabbage, collards, mustard greens, kale and other leafy greens. There is a plant called "Corn Salad" that handles cold very well. I have only found this plant once at one of our local nurseries. This is one I will be searching my seed catalogs for the seed. Most folks don't plant winter gardens, but if you like greens, this is your time to shine. The problem with most greens is temperature, they don't like heat. When temperatures spike up into the upper 80's and 90's, most greens will "Bolt", that is they will shoot up seed heads and the leaves will turn bitter.

Most of these leafy greens can grow quite large and should be constantly

thinned back. They are heavy feeders as well. You need to thin them often and feed them on a regular basis. They like rich soil and lots of compost and mulch. My wife and I went to Alaska a few years back during the summer. The gardens I saw were magnificent. We stopped at one place that had large plots of the leafy greens that I generally grow during the winter. All the plants that I grow in the spring and summer, they grow in green houses. In Alaska during the summer, day time temperatures were in the 60's and 70's but the night time temperatures still fall into the 30's. They do things a little differently Alaska than we do in the Texas Hill Country.



Alaskan Garden



Here We Grow Again!

On the last day of January, a dedicated crew of volunteers potted 800 new plants for our spring sale.

By Vickie Killeen, MG



Clockwise from above:

Bill Haney and Bernard Warren fills buckets with potting soil & fertilizer mixture while Delane Caesar Sykes, our new transfer from Tyler, clears empty pots & trays from the potting area.

Thanks to the previous day's hard-working volunteers, Jackie Connelly, Sandy Martin, Julie Lewis and Debbie Bacon are able to quickly transfer new plants into pots filled with soil.

Barbara Castillo and her newly potted Blue Flax.

Patti Schlessiger finds a quiet corner in a busy greenhouse and pots newly-arrived Trailing Purple Lantana.

Transplanting a flat of Moss Verbena will keep Christine Snyder busy.



Here We Grow Again continued

Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen



Left:
Janice Walker adds plant labels to newly potted plants while volunteers are busy potting.

Right:
Aimee Tennant, Suzy Floyd and Dee Dunton enjoy the morning sun while potting.



President's message continued from page 1

Elderberry fruits in mid-June and Spicebush fruits in the fall—two plants to help birds during the breeding season and also to prepare for migration. Elderberry attracts over 120 species of birds and Spicebush also attracts and hosts two species of swallowtail butterflies. Birds love the shelter and protection that woody shrubs provide as well. Flowers such as coneflower and coreopsis are two flowers that not only beautify your garden, but provide seeds that Texas birds and pollinators enjoy throughout the season as well.

For more information, here is an article I enjoyed: <https://www.birdzilla.com/gardening-for-birds/texas-native-plants> and Texas A&M, Audubon, and the Bird City of Texas are also good starts for planning your bird sanctuary. Last, but not least, just add water! Bird baths and water features are always nice in the backyard and the birds love them; however, when all else fails, my dogs' water dish is a huge hit with the birds as well.



I hope you'll join me and enjoy the beautiful songs of the songbirds, the predatory flight of the birds of prey, and the intricate social structure of our winged friends during the year—they really have increase the joy I have when working with my plants and my plants benefit from it too! How can you beat that!

Featured Project: Schreiner University Rainwater Harvesting System

By Rita Aliperto, MG

Schreiner University (SU) has quite an impressive water catchment system thanks mainly to Master Gardener Anne Brown. While giving a class on rainwater harvesting in 2022 at the Butt-Holdsworth Library, Anne was approached by a professor from SU eager to find out the feasibility of such a program at their campus.

Anne met with two professors who were beyond enthusiastic about this project. Armed with some grant money, the project was approved by SU, Hill Country Master Gardeners (HCMG), as well as the Kerr County Extension Agent at the time, Justin Klinksiek. With the expertise of Master Gardener Pam Umstead, the project became reality and was off and running.

A 20,000-gallon rainwater catchment system was installed to irrigate a nearby vineyard on the campus, and a 10,000-gallon system was installed to irrigate the 18 raised garden beds with driplines.

Both systems caught rainwater from nearby building rooftops. Although the site is still a work in progress, the HCMGs were responsible for a very successful rainwater harvesting system. The University has big plans of grandeur in the future to develop the site into a venue for various functions, so the garden beds aren't being utilized to their full potential yet. Sadly, they are sitting there without anything growing. Currently, the University is grappling with who will take care of the garden beds in the summer since all the students are on break. Personally, this Master Gardener thinks a lot of vegetables could be grown and harvested between August and May when the students are there and able to tend the garden... just sayin'.

On a much, much smaller scale, HCMG retrofits 55-gallon rain barrels for rainwater harvesting. If you're interested in helping to assemble rain barrels, please contact Anne for the next workday. The barrels sell for \$70 to the public and \$40 for Master Gardeners. The Upper Guadalupe River Authority offers rebates for barrel purchases to residents of Kerr County. Upon purchase, the buyer is provided with the necessary rebate information.



Above: Rainwater catchment system



Right: Raised beds



Roll Out the Barrels!

Valentine's Day was a good day for converting food-grade storage barrels into rain water harvesting containers. The barrels will be available at our annual Blooms & Barrels sale on April 13.

Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen

Left: Mary Contois keeps those wayward barrels in line!



Rain Barrel Project Coordinator Anne Brown assists 2024 student Holly Green with barrel assembly.



Helping with the conversion was Brian Schroder.

Ray Tiemann is a member of the 2019 Master Gardener Class. He took the class after retiring in 2018 as a Lutheran pastor after 39 years of full-time ministry. He currently still does part-time visitation ministry to homebound and nursing home members in his home congregation of Bethany Lutheran in Fredericksburg.

Ray has served as the Public Program chairman several years, but last fall he decided to take the Advanced Training course in Entomology. After 32 hours of online learning, he needed to do a 20+ hour project in order to receive a certificate of completion. His presentation to us today is that project, which he presented at the Plantastic Gardening Seminar in Fredericksburg on February 23rd.

More Plants!

Our greenhouse team is well on its way toward filling our greenhouses. Thanks to a great turnout of volunteers, the February 16 potting party finished early. The enthusiasm of our new students is much appreciated!

Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen



Above: student Caroline Meurer watered newly potted plants. Watering after planting helps settle the soil and collapse air pockets. Right: A table of volun-



teers exchanged gardening tips while potting up new arrivals. From left: Cindy Anderson, Holly Green (2024 student), Tina Pierson (2024 student), Caroline Meurer (2024 student), Darla Cluster, and Becca Taylor (2024 student). Not shown: Dee Dunton.

Master Gardener Plant Biology Class with Brenda Fest



When the new class of master gardener students were asked to dissect a flower by Brenda, they illustrated the parts to perfection!

Photo Credit:
Janice Walker



Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

Taken from the Old Farmer's 2024 Almanac, Robert B. Thomas

Although the holiday originally started as a Christian feast day celebrating the life of St. Patrick and the spreading of Christianity to Ireland, today it is a day of revelry and a celebration of all things Irish. Don't forget to wear green!

Why is the Shamrock associated with St. Patrick's Day?

People wear a shamrock on St. Patrick's day because legend says, St. Patrick used its three leaves to explain the Holy Trinity in his teachings. (The Trinity is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as three divine persons who are one divine being (God.)



Note: The symbol of St. Patrick is a three-leaf shamrock, not a four-leaf clover. However, long before the shamrock became associated with St. Patrick's Day, the four-leaf clover was regarded by ancient Celts as a charm against evil spirits. In the early 1900s, O.H. Benson, an Iowa school superintendent, came up with the idea of using a clover as the emblem for a newly founded agricultural club for children in his area. In 1911, the four-leaf clover was chosen as the emblem for the national club program, later named **4-H**.

More St. Patrick's Day Facts, Fun and Folklore

- Blue was the color originally associated with St. Patrick, but green is the new favorite.
- The first St. Patrick's day parade in American colonies was held in New York City on March 17, 1762.
- St. Patrick's Day is the traditional day for planting peas, even in the snow!
- Cabbage seeds are often planted on St. Patrick's Day (editor's note: somewhere but not in Texas), too, and old-time farmers believed that to make them grow well, you needed to plant them while wearing your night-clothes!



Joke of the month:

Q. Why should you never iron a four-leaf clover?

A. You don't want to press your luck!

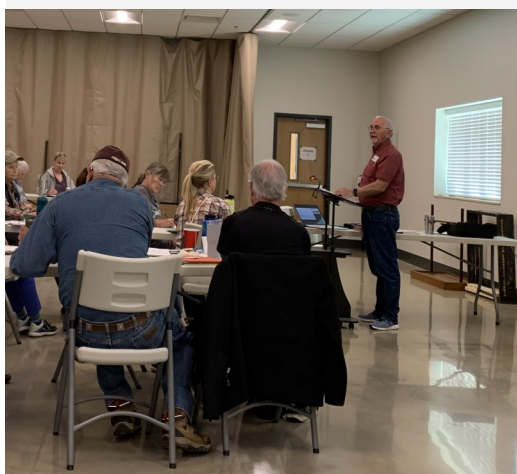
6th Annual Plantastic

Vegetable Gardening Seminar at Gillespie County Agrilife

Beth McMahon, Gillespie County Horticulture agent, with the help of Master Gardeners hosted around 100 attendees at the annual event. The Key note speaker, Dr. Joe Masabni, presented on Organic gardening and Hydroponics. Beth McMahon covered Alliums, Onions, Garlic & More and Conserving Water. Master Gardeners covered the following topics: Donna Bellis: Vegetables for Heat, Allen Mace: Growing Tomatoes and Gardening Disasters, Rae Raiford: Growing Herbs, Ray Tiemann: Good Bugs & Troublemakers, Pat Wolters: Permaculture Ecosystem.



Above Right: Dr. Masabni with the hard-working hospitality ladies: Donna Bellis, Raeann Reid and Sheridan Stringer.



Above Ray Tiemann presenting on bugs.
Right: A great lunch with Beth, Donna, Allen, Ray and Rae.

Photo Credit: Pat Wolters



**Hill Country Master Gardeners
HCYEC
February 7, 2024**

Call to Order (Please silence your cell phones)

Welcome/Opening Remarks – Sheryl Landrum welcomed the group and had four of the 2024 interns introduce themselves.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the group.

Invocation – Rachel Garrison delivered the invocation.

Verification of Quorum – Marge Muniz verified a quorum had been met.

Approve Minutes from January 10, 2024 Meeting. Brian Strickland moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Rae Raiford. Motion carried by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report – Jackie Connelly presented the Treasurer's Report and explained items on the report. There were no questions or comments from the group. Jackie also reported that the signing signatures have finally been updated at both of the banks.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Logo Wear – Melayne Arnold stated she is now working with a new vendor. They are working to put together a new order form to be included in the 2/18 eMinder. Orders need to be completed by 3/10. There were several inquiries into the types of items to be made available.

Plantastic Seminar – Raeann Reid spoke of the upcoming seminar to be held Friday, February 23rd in Fredericksburg from 8:30 to 3:35. Cost is \$40, which includes lunch and \$30 without lunch. She noted that using the QR code on the flyer will take you right to the registration form.

Landscape Design School – Sheryl Landrum noted she will be attending the upcoming class to be held in College Station

February 12-13. It is one of a four part series. Cost is \$135.

B&B – Jackie Connelly reported currently there are over 1200 plants. A current list of all the plants for the B&B is available on the HCMG website and will be updated as needed. Spa Day is 4/11, Move Day is 4/12, and Sale day is 4/13. Cashiers are in place. Tic Checkers are needed and should get with Melayne Arnold. Sue Hall will again be the main inside greeter, but we still need early outside greeters for those customers who line up early. The sale time is from 9am until 1pm, or until everything is sold out.

2025 Changes – Sheryl Landrum noted in 2025 there will be an increase of the continuing education class requirement from 6 to 10 hours. She also noted the dues that HCMG sends to the state increased by \$3, (\$5 per member) and that our current dues of \$20 also includes a mandatory background check which occurs every 3 years for our members.

Director's Meeting – Rachel Garrison reported at the February meeting that she and Anne Brown attended as our Directors for HCMG. Items noted were: the creation of a new position of a State Ambassador; creation of a scholarship fund to currently support two scholarships; creation of two grants of \$500 to be given in September/October to support projects by various Master Gardener organizations; inclusion of plant pathology and organics disciplines to be included in the 14 other advanced disciplines. The 2024 Virtual Conference is to be held 4/22 through 4/24. Texas is to be the host for the International Conference in 2025.

Standing Committee Reports

Education – Donna Bellis stated there are 22 students for the new class. She needs a few facilitators to assist with the field trips, 3/26 to Fredericksburg and 3/28 to Boerne. Graduation is set for April 3rd which will include the pot luck ***Continued on page 11***

Minutes continued from page 10

to be setup in the large classroom at HCYEC. Again, she asked for representatives of the projects to do a short 5-7 minute presentation during the classes. Project leaders are also encouraged to setup a table at the graduation pot luck.

Membership – Barbara Castillo reported that 21 of the background checks have been completed with 1 remaining incomplete. She noted this was the first time this background process had been applied after implementation. A&M will now be working out the bugs to streamline the process from Sterling to Agrilife reporting.

Demonstration Garden – Dave Kinneberg reported he and Bee Evans are prepping for the Demo Garden meeting on February 26th at 2:00 pm in the Extension Classroom. A general work day will be planned for early March.

Greenhouse – Kay Nelson reported that there has been a lot of activity in the greenhouses with potting and watering. Watering slots toward the end of February still need to be filled. A new pot party is scheduled for Friday, February 16 at 9 am. Check VMS to see times available to assist in the greenhouse.

Research Desk & Rain Barrels – Anne Brown reported that we have three (3) 2023 interns working to complete their research desk hours. She currently is updating the Research Desk Manuals. On February 14th they will be getting 48 rain barrels ready for the B&B.

Other Announcements –

Keeley Porter stated that due to the changes at Kronkosky Garden, items are moving to the Cultivar Farms and there were iris' available for the taking after the meeting.

Patty Zohlen reminded us of the new HCMG 2024 Handbook. She sent an email with the attached handbook and they are also available online under Documents in VMS.

Brian Strickland announced he has changed his status to 'Retired.' He gave well wishes to the new interns and his heartfelt gratitude to the Master Gardeners.

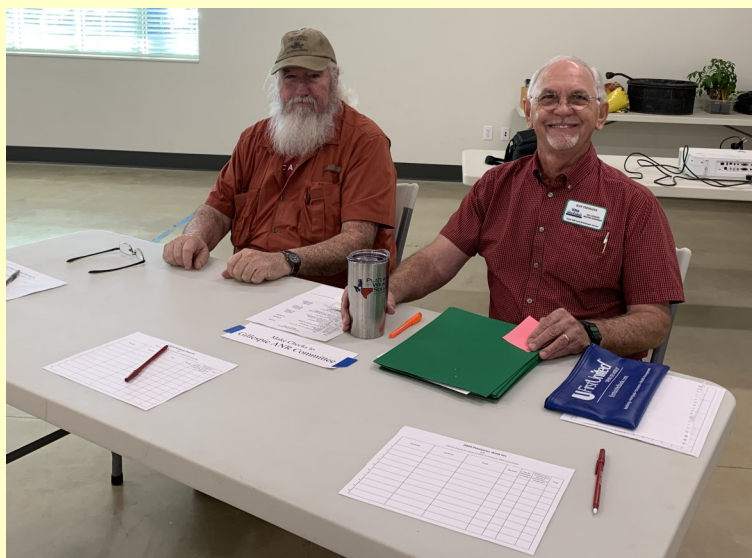
Katy Kappel from the Bird City Kerrville Initiative presented their objectives and requested our support as a partner in their initiative. More information is available at kerrbirdcity.org.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 2:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marge Muniz
Secretary

Next Meeting: March 6, 2024 at 1:00 pm in the HCYEC



Allen Mace and Ray Tiemann register participants at the Plantastic Seminar.

**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



<https://txmg.org/2024-conference-information>

(copy and paste the above web address in your browser)

Registration Deadline is April 16, 2024