

May 2018

Volume 16, Issue 5

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**HCMG will meet on  
May 2, 2018**

**Location:**  
**Kerr County**  
**Youth Event Center**  
**1:00 - Meeting**  
**2:00 - Program**  
**"Seeds, the Fruit of the Matter"**

(details on page 2)

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## Blooms and Barrels



Above: Pam Umstead, Jackie Connelly, B&B Chairperson, and Jerry Christensen

Below: Guests were allowed in the building but no buying until 9:00 a.m.

Left to right: Diane McMahon, Liz Althaus, Bernadell Larson, Patti Schlessiger, & Dee Dunton get ready to take the money.



**Group shot before the doors are opened**





### **HCMG 2018, Calendar of Events** prepared by Raeann Reid

*Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional. We list events for those wishing to attend other educational offerings, not all events are eligible to fulfill CEUs credits toward annual recertification.*

*Please verify the event with the provider.*

**May 1, NPSOT Boerne**, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Michael Eason, author of newly released "Wildflowers of Texas" field guide and conservation botanist at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens will discuss his book. Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium. Visitors welcome.

**May 2, Hill Country Master Gardeners**, 1:00 p.m. business meeting. 2:00 p.m. Susan Longacre, Master Naturalist, will present "Seeds, the Fruit of the Matter" about collecting native plant seeds. Hill Country Youth Event Center. HCMGs and interns.

**May 5, NPSOT Fredericksburg**, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Native Landscape Certification Program. Instructors Kathy Lyles and Chris Anderson will present Level 1: Introduction to Native Landscapes, including a classroom session and two-hour plant walk. Limited class size, register ahead, \$35. For class details and to register go to <https://npsot.org/wp/nlcp/>. For location and class-specific questions, contact Chris Anderson, NLCP Host Chapter Program Manager, [sligo.canine@gmail.com](mailto:sligo.canine@gmail.com), 830-998-8559. Central Texas Electric Cooperative conference room.

**May 12, Cibolo Nature Center and Farm**, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Compost Queens, a family-owned food waste collection and compost service, will present a program on residential and commercial composting methods and systems, \$15 per person. To register online and for more details click on the event in the calendar on [Cibolo.org](http://Cibolo.org) website. Herff Farm Teaching Barn.

**May 15, Kerr County Cactus & Succulent Society**, 7:00 p.m. Program to be announced, Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library. Always confirm date, time and location. Visitors welcome.

#### **Addresses for Events Listed Above**

Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water St, Kerrville  
Central Texas Electric Cooperative, 386 Friendship Ln, FBG

Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium, 140 City Park Rd, Boerne

Fredericksburg High School, 1107 S State Hwy 16, FBG  
Herff Farm, 33 Herff Rd, Boerne

Hill Country Youth Event Center, 3785 Highway 27, Kerrville

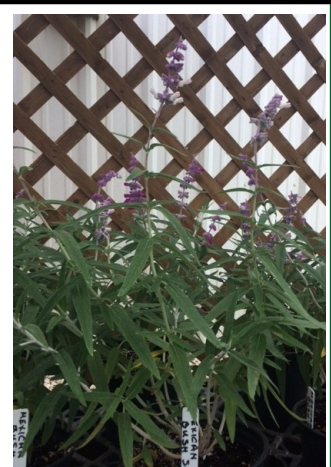
Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam St, FBG

**May 22, NPSOT Fredericksburg**, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Susan Sander, founder of Riverside Nature Center and current Education Advisor at Bamberger Ranch Preserve, will present "What Birds Have Taught Me about Plants." Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

**May 24, Fredericksburg ISD Continuing Education Program**, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Jim Stanley, author and Hill Country Master Naturalist, will present "Knowing Your Land from A to Z" about caring for and conserving your piece of Hill Country heaven. \$10; register with Joanie Kramer at 830.997.7182 or [joaniek@fisd.org](mailto:joaniek@fisd.org). Fredericksburg High School Library.



**Before**



**After**

Check out the before and after pictures of the Mexican Bush Sage. Now you can get an idea of the amount of care and work it takes to get the plants ready for the B & B Sale.







## Hill Country Veggies

May 2018

By Allen Mace

This has been an interesting spring to say the least. When that northern chip monk saw his shadow and declared six more weeks of winter, he wasn't

joking. Of course we got our own thing going in Texas. Years ago in the mid 90's, I had a frost on the 15th of April and lost all my vegetable plants and had to start over again. It almost happened again this year. In Comfort, we got close. Such is gardening in the Texas Hill Country.

Several years ago, I first heard of a concept called a "Key Hole Garden". It's basically a round raised bed garden with a compost bin in the center of the bed. The one in the article was about ten feet in diameter with a compost bin in the center. A small wedged shaped walk way gave access to the center compost bin creating what looked like an old styled "Key Hole", thus the name 'Key Hole Garden'. The bed was about 3 to 4 foot tall. They filled the bed with multiple layers of cardboard and newspaper and anything else that would break down into compost, then added soil for the last foot or two. I've been wanting to build one ever since.



**Drain field**

This year I decided to try my own version of a "Key Hole Garden". I had a 300 gal water tank that I was not using so I decided to use it. I needed to create a way for the soil to drain, but I didn't want to drill holes in the tank. There is an inch and a half drain hole on one side of the tank so I pulled the plug and put it on the downhill slop. Next I filled in the bottom of the tank with about 5 to 6 inches of 1 to 2 inch



**Weed cloth**

gravel. This should allow the water to flow through the gravel down to the drain hole. I put a few layers of weed cloth on top of the gravel and this should

keep the soil from filling in around the gravel in the drain field. At this point, to be true to the concept, I should have laid multiple layers of card board and newspapers before I added the soil, but I didn't. I have about 2 to 2 1/2 foot of soil in the bed. I made a wire cage and placed it in the middle as I was filling the tank with soil. After I was finished, I started adding vegetable scraps from the kitchen and watered everything in. A few days later I planted some yellow squash and have since added some bush beans.



**Compost cage**

Experimenting with new concepts have always been of interest to me. I have no idea how this will work out, but it will be interesting watching it develop this year. To really kick into gear, I should add some drip irrigation, well maybe.



**Finished "Keyhole" garden**



## Spring Cleaning!

Preparing for Garden Visitors during Annual Blooms and Barrels Sale.



1. Hard freezes have taken their toll on the garden perennials, but Kerry Brittain knows how to get them back into shape.

2. Lloyd Kneese uses a power trimmer to spruce up cold damaged ground cover while Carol Brinkman heads to the tool shed and Wil Rolfe disposes of trimmings.



3. Sandy Martin and Wil Rolfe make sure our bluebonnets are free of pesky weeds.

**Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen**

4. The friendship among Edna Platte, Jackie Skinner and Chris Davis strengthens as they share gardening chores in our shade garden.

5. Carol Brinkman and Wil Rolfe discuss cleanup while Joe Goette clears the walkway.







1



2

## More Spring Cleaning.....Photo Credit: Vickie Killeen

1. Our new graduates were essential in getting the garden ready for visitors. Karen Buck, left, contributes volunteer hours by helping HCMG Cindy Anderson mulch the beds at the extension office entrance.
2. Doing much of the heavy lifting are HCMG Kerry Brittain, left, and Fernando Gonzales, a graduate of the Class of 2018 the day before. Nine yards of mulch were spread throughout the garden in one busy morning.
3. Among the eager, early arrivals on Mulch Spreading Day was new graduate Susan Roberts. After a night of thunderstorms, the damp mulch required extra effort to get it spread properly.
4. Sometimes it takes teamwork! Fernando Gonzales and Chris Davis, another new graduate, combine forces to get a wheelbarrow loaded with mulch over the curb and into the bed. Meanwhile, Susan Roberts gets down and dirty, spreading mulch with her hands among tightly spaced perennials.
5. Raeann Reid (in cool knee pads and a wide-brimmed hat) helps Janell Dahms expose new growth and clear away winter damage while, in the background, volunteers work on the pathways.



3



4



5





### And even more Spring Cleaning!

1. Kerry Brittain and Joe Goette
2. Anne Goette
3. Karen Buck all decked out to clear the deck
4. Cindy Anderson, Janet Welty and Fernando Gonzales
5. Susan Roberts dressing up a bicolor Iris
6. And then there was Wil
7. Chris Davis looking cute and capable



Photo Credit:  
Jackie Skinner





## Hill Country Master Gardener Graduates 2018



Photo Credit:  
Jim Latham

Front row: Betsy Scheffe, Karen Buck, Susan Roberts, Jeanette Ma-sek, Kathy Harris & Anne Goette

Back row: Janet Welty, Johnathan Johnson, Donna Bellis, Janell Dahms, Christine Davis, Claire Nelms, Dennis Davidson, Fernando Gonzales & Joe Goette.

Beautiful cakes made by Lydia Jones



Anne Brown & Fernando Gonzales



Dusty Gilliam, Claire Nelms, & Lydia Jones, Education Chair





# Graduation Day

Photo Credit: Jim Latham





## Texas Master Gardeners Association Annual Conference Texas A&M University April 4-6, 2018



1

1. Clockwise from left: Kathy Lewis, Joyce Studer, Shirley Smith, Kathie Guenther, Patty Zohlen, Pam Umstead, Pat McCormick, Nancy Person, & Raeann Reid

2. Kathy Lewis, Raeann Reid, and Pam Umstead with David Gibby, founder of the Master Gardener program 40 years ago.

3. Pam Umstead with arrangement she made in the Floral Centerpiece workshop.



2

4. Shirley Smith trying to identify this brassica.

5. Shirley Smith and Judy Beauford taking a break at the conference.

**Photo Credit:  
Judy Beauford  
&  
Pam Umstead**



3



4



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Cindy Anderson

## Hill Country Penstemon: an especially NICE flower for spring

NICE is an acronym for “Natives Instead of Common Exotics,” a program designed to introduce people to great native plants that are currently available locally to use in place of non-native (exotic) species. Plants that are exotic, or not native to a local region, may fill a need, but often offer nothing in the way of food or habitat for key wildlife species. Native plants, on the other hand, provide nectar for insects, shelter for birds, and food for wildlife. “By putting the spotlight on one native plant each season,” says Clarence Reed, president of the Kerrville Chapter of NPSOT, “we hope to increase the public’s knowledge of beneficial native plants. This will increase demand for them, which will encourage the nurseries and wholesalers to provide more of them. Native plants,” he continues, “offer so many advantages – including drought tolerance, pest and disease resistance – and they thrive in our shallow, rocky, alkaline soils.”



### The Hill Country Penstemon

This spring (which begins Tuesday, March 20,) the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are featuring the Hill Country Penstemon (*Penstemon triflorus*) at four local nurseries as their NICE plant of the season. This stunning native perennial is arguably the most beautiful Penstemon in the Hill Country. It can grow up to 2 feet tall and blooms in spring, sending up spikes of large deep rose (and sometimes white to purplish) flowers, which are very attractive to hummingbirds. The foliage is a deep, glossy green. Hill Country Penstemon – also known as Scarlet Penstemon and Heller’s Penstemon – can be found in dry, rocky to limestone soil of the Edwards Plateau. Though found as far north as Gillespie County and as far east as Kendall and Bexar counties, it apparently is most abundant in Uvalde, Real, Bandera, and Edwards counties.

The flower has a five-lobed opening more than an inch long, containing dark lines inside the flower called “guidelines,” which lead hummingbirds and bees to the nectar stored deep within the blossoms. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center says this flower attracts especially large numbers of native bees. It blooms most often during April and May.

It can be planted in full or filtered sun, and well-drained soils. It is hardy down to 10° F. Like all Hill Country natives, it needs little water once established. It reseeds readily. Allow the dried blooms to stay for a while before tidying up the garden, in order to let the seeds fall to the ground. In this way, with luck and some timely rainfall, the plant may increase its numbers next year.

Joyce Studer, a member of the Fredericksburg Chapter of NPSOT and the NICE representative for that city, said “I can’t wait to see Hill Country Penstemons blooming all over Fredericksburg. And I, personally, am happy to see this program return to Fredericksburg, as this was one of the ways I found out about the Native Plant Society.

**Continued on page 11**



### Hill Country Penstemon continued

The local NICE nurseries (including our new one in Fredericksburg) are scouring the market in order to have this beautiful plant available to the public this spring. 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 the Kerrville area:

**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, Kerrville (830) 896-0430

And, our newest member of NICE:

**Friendly Natives**, 1107 N. Llano Street, Fredericksburg, (830) 997-6288

### 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, 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.

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.



Special thanks to the  
**Hospitality Committee**  
who prepared and  
served a delicious meal  
to the master gardeners  
and vendors



#### Committee Members:

Above left: Betsy Scheffe, Linda Proffitt, Deborah Lea, Becky Northcutt, Nancy Person, and Janet Welty.

Enjoying the food: Joe Goette, Anne Goette, Shirley Smith, Pam Umstead, Caryl Hartman, and Allen Noah.





## **HCMG Monthly Business Meeting**

April 4, 2018,

Hill Country Youth Events Center

President, Jackie Skinner called the meeting to order.

Dennis Davidson lead the members in the pledge.

Allen Noah gave the invocation.

Patti Schlessiger verified a quorum was present.

Treasurer's Report – Bernadell Larson handed out copies of the Treasurer's Report, as of March 31, 2018. They were approved.

Approval of March, 2018 Minutes-Anne Brown moved we accept the March minutes, and Tom Collins 2nd the motion. The minutes were approved.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

### **New Business**

- Change July Meeting Date, or Cancel? Frank Dunlap moved we change the date, and Carl Lukenbach 2nd the motion. The new meeting date was changed to July 11th. The motion carried.
- Proposed Vegetable Competition-Several members were interested in competing. They will be growing potatoes, green beans, onions and tomatoes. The vegetables will be judged at the July 11th meeting.
- Cultivar Farms Field Trip – Saturday, April 28, 10:00 a.m. – Judy Beauford told members interested in going on the field trip need to meet at the AgriLife Office by 9:00 to carpool.

### **Announcements**

- Reservations at Hill Country Youth Events Center-The Secretary will be the contact person, with the Vice-President as the alternate.
- Blooms & Barrels Update – Anne Brown asked for volunteers to help on Thursday for Spa Day, Friday for plant moving day and Saturday for Blooms and Barrels Plant Sale. Members need to be at the Ag Barn by 8:30 for orientation. Park in the back of the barn. If members want to purchase plants ahead of time, they are allowed five plants. If you have wagons, bring them for the plant sale. Jane Rackley talked about the shed, and asked for gently used items to sell at the plant sale. Carroll Edwards is collecting items.
- Research Desk Procedures/Calendar – Melayne Arnold will be having two training sessions. One on April 5th at 9:00 and the second one on April 11th at 9:00. Sign-up on VMS if you want to

attend.

- Herff Farms Market Days – Ginny Frederick requested volunteers to man the information table each week at Boerne Farmers Market (Herff Rd.). She also asked members to visit the Farmers Market the day of the Cultivar Farms Field Day.
- HCMG Newsletter – Jackie Skinner asked members to provide photos from their work projects or events. Please include comments about the photo and names of those in the photos. Members are also encouraged to write articles for the newsletter.
- Photo of Transfers from Bexar County—it would be nice to have a group picture of all of the recent transfers to the HCMG
- Final Report on 2018 Student Training – Lydia Jones had the students introduce themselves and tell the areas they are interested in volunteering. Fifteen students graduated.
- Student Volunteer Opportunities Session-Most projects successfully obtained volunteers for their area.
- Special Project Chairman-Bob Huff has volunteered to serves as the Special Project Chairman.
- Greenhouse Chairman Trainee(s) – Anne Brown said Janell Dahms and Fernando Gonzalez have volunteered to train for Greenhouse Chairman.
- Update on Greenhouse Specialist Class –Jackie Connelly reported the class will be held on May 23-25, 2018. Forty Four people from 27 counties have signed up to attend.
- Current News from the Demonstration Garden-Mulch was delivered and has been distributed.
- Information Booth Supply Manager-Donna Bellis has volunteered to manage the supplies.
- Frank Dunlap asked for volunteers at the plant sale to man the information booth. He also needs help on April 21st at the Riverside Nature Center.
- Extra Copies of Magazines (from March Meeting)- You may take one.

April CEU Speaker – Jim Stanley, “Tree Identification”-Jim Stanley gave an interesting and informative presentation.

Our June meeting will be a brown bag lunch at Glory Community Gardens. Details to follow.

Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted by  
Patti Schlessiger, Secretary





# Spa Day







Blooms  
&  
Barrels





**Hill Country Master  
Gardeners 2018**

**Executive  
Committee**

Jackie Skinner  
*President*

Wil Rolfe  
*Vice President*

Patti Schlessiger  
*Secretary*

Bernadell Larson  
*Treasurer*

Debra Rosario  
*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

*Event Page Editor*  
Raeann Reid

*Webmaster*  
Debra Rosario

**Submissions to**

Newsletter.editor.hcmg@  
gmail.com

**Blooms and Barrels offers more than the sale of plants**



1. **Children's Activities:** Kim Courtright leads the children in gardening related fun.
2. **Classes:** Connie Townsend lectures on growing tomatoes.
3. **Garden Shed:** Caryl Hartman and Caroll Edwards sold donated gardening items.
4. Vickie Killeen is caught taking a picture of Christine Davis, Donna Bellis, Raeann Reid and Janell Dahms before the start of the sale.

**A special thanks to the many  
photographers who shared their  
B&B pictures**  
(you'll be seeing more in future newsletters):

**Dee Dunton  
Jim Latham  
Vickie Killeen  
Debra Rosario  
Pam Umstead**

