

November 2020

Volume 18, Issue 11

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**HCMG In Person at
Expo Hall at HCYEC (wear
masks and social distance)
Another option is
Online Zoom meeting**

**November 4, 2020
1:00 p.m.**

**Program: 2:00 p.m.
Bees
Rick Fink**

Bees are the work and love of Rick Fink, Beekeeper. As well as keeping bees, Rick has a bee consultant and bee removal business in the Hill Country. If you come to the live meeting you will also get free samples of Rick’s honey .



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President’s Message

Rachel Garrison

“Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine to the mind.” — Luther Burbank, botanist

A friend recently told me that life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes. This seems so true to me. There’s no denying the fact, I’m getting older. The weeks rush by and pages fly off the calendar. As soon as I finish one newsletter article, it is time to think of a topic for the next one. As I was considering what to write about this month, all I had to do was look out the window for inspiration.

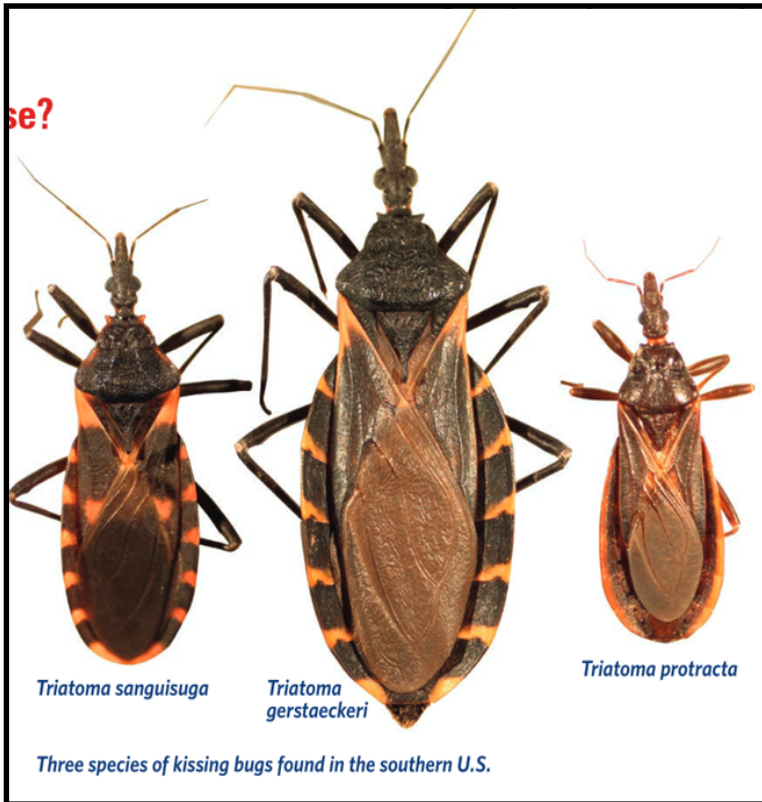
Many of you know that we recently moved. We built with the intention to downsize, both in square footage of the house and property. Rather than several acres, we now have a postage stamp size yard. We traded the challenge of a large expanse to plan, plant, and maintain for a new challenge. With very little space, the new consideration is to incorporate only those plants we love that will thrive in the limited space and environment. After meeting with the landscaper, we were able to give him a list of plants that would attract pollinators, be unattractive to deer, and would do well considering the space and environmental conditions.

With all the headaches of planning and moving, there was one area along the back perimeter of the property that we didn’t include in our formal landscape plans. There is a stone wall, 4 feet tall, that separates our property from the green belt behind our house. The wall includes steps to access the green belt from our back yard. We added a wrought iron fence and gate for the steps between the top of the wall and the green belt. The fence was installed in anticipation of adding a dog to our household.

The space between the fence and the stone wall is only about 18 inches. The landscaper added some prostrate rosemary in the space to trail over the wall. He also planted something he called “primrose” in the space.

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Kissing Bugs and Chagas Disease

By Susan Mills, MG

Reminder to all neighbors, especially those with dogs, to be on the lookout for “kissing bugs” (photo left), which carry a parasite that can cause Chagas disease in humans, dogs, and other domestic and wild animals. In dogs, infection with the Chagas parasite can cause severe heart disease, as well as other complications. I wanted to remind you all that we do have these infected bugs in Cool Water Ranch, a Fredericksburg subdivision as my dog, Zoey, got a hold of a bug and is now infected with Chagas disease. Treatment in dogs is considered experimental, but she is under the care of a vet out of San Antonio who specializes in Chagas disease, and since it was caught early, her prognosis is very good. (If anyone

wants more information on the treatment, feel free to contact me separately). Note: if you find a bug and aren't sure if a bug is a kissing bug or not, I've had some luck googling “bugs that look like kissing bugs” and it will bring up photos of some insects that are commonly confused with kissing bugs.

So here is a recap of the highlights and some links to additional material, if you are interested.

- ◆ Kissing bugs are commonly known as cone-nose bugs or chinchas.
- ◆ Kissing bugs feed on blood during the night, and they are called kissing bugs because they prefer to bite humans around the mouth or eyes.
- ◆ Dogs can also become infected through the consumption of infected bugs.
- ◆ There is a lot of good information on kissing bugs and Chagas disease in both dogs and humans on the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension website at <https://kissingbug.tamu.edu>.



Kissing bug bites

Kissing Bugs continued from page 2

Be sure to look at the **FAQ** for additional information and resources, such as how to control kissing bugs - a few tips are repeated below:



- ◆ Kissing bugs are nocturnal and may be attracted to nighttime lights. Because adult bugs fly towards lights, it's recommended that lights be turned off at night around houses and kennels.
- ◆ Destroy trash piles, bird and animal nests and burrows.
- ◆ Control and exclude rodents and birds from the house.
- ◆ Seal exterior cracks and openings into buildings and keep chimney flues closed tightly. Inspect and seal any openings from crawl spaces into the house sub-flooring.
- ◆ Check pets for signs of bugs feeding and examine pet houses.
- ◆ Insecticides can effectively control kissing bugs. Treat room corners and edges, window and door frames, pet houses, and other suspected entry points with a pesticide labeled for this purpose.

The website also contains guidance on what to do if you find a kissing bug – please go to the site for the full story, but the most important part is ***do not ever touch a kissing bug with your bare hands! The T. cruzi parasite occurs in the feces of kissing bugs, and their bodies may be contaminated.***

A glove or small plastic bag may be used to catch the bug to avoid direct contact with the bug. The bug may be stored in a sealed plastic bag, in a vial, or other small container. All surfaces with which the bug came into contact should be thoroughly cleaned with a bleach solution.

Kissing bugs found in Texas that may have bitten a person can be submitted to the **Texas Department of State Health Services** for testing. If you find a possible kissing bug, please write down the date, time of day you found it, where it was caught (indoors or outdoors), and any possible interactions (bites) it may have had with people or animals.



Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace

Last spring, I had the opportunity to speak to the intern class. I did a short presentation, sort of an introduction to vegetable gardening. I spoke a few minutes about different types of pest and varmints that one might encounter while working among your plants. One pest that can be potentially dangerous are snakes. I live in the country and encounter snakes several times a year, but I know there are more out there. I probably do not see them as often than I do see them. They can conceal themselves very well.

Copperhead snake



About two weeks ago, my dog's throat was swollen. I took her to the vet and the vet found two small puncher wounds under her chin. She had been bitten by a snake. I went home and started looking through the back yard and found the body of a dead copperhead snake. Long story short, the dog has recovered, and she is back to normal. From where the body of the copperhead was found, to my vegetable garden, is about 20 to 25 feet away. It is safe to assume that this copperhead, at some point, has been in my garden. I just wanted to share

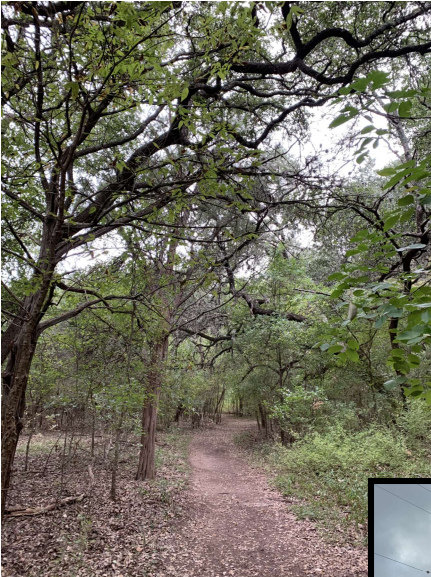
this as a warning, to be observant when you are out working among the plants in your gardens. They are out there, and they are among us.

Please be careful. They blend in well with leaf litter.

Snakes are moving around and starting to look for places to den for the winter. Garden sheds and wood piles are areas where they might be found. It seems that every year or two, I will find a large rat snake in my shop or feed room. Mice like the feed room and the snakes like the mice. Every now and then, I will hear a story about someone being bitten in their house. I always say that where a mouse can go, a snake can follow.



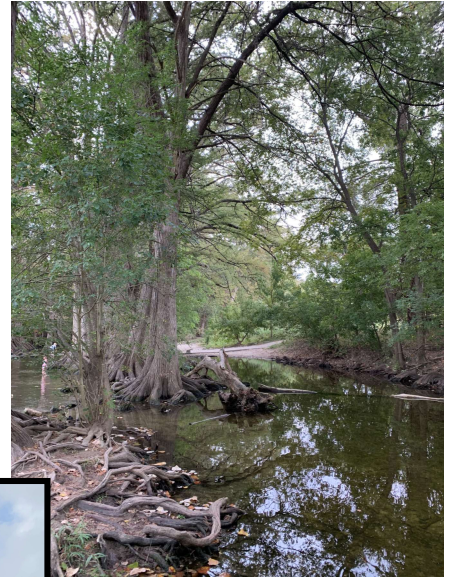
Copperhead in leaf litter



Woodland Trail



**Hiking the Trails at the
Cibolo Nature Center
Boerne, Texas**



Cibolo Creek Trail



Picnic under the Mustang Grapes



Photo Credit: Pat Wolters



Beautiful Tree in the prairie



Marsh Trail



Grape Arbor leading to Pavilion



Prairie Trail



Another Plant from Blooms & Barrels

By Pat Wolters, MG

The yellow flowering bush is *Cestrum*. I purchased it two years ago at B&B. Aggie Horticulture states the following concerning ***Cestrum*** (*Solanaceae*). Clusters of showy, yellow tubular flowers, late spring to fall. Flowers and fruit attract birds, including hummingbirds. Fast growing. May freeze back in heavy frosts, but recovers quickly. Responds well to pruning and regular watering. Sun or Part Shade.

All of this has proven to be true except for the fact that this bush doesn't really want part shade. You can see how it is desperately trying to grow out from under the roof of my house. I'm afraid it will take over the path. You don't see the boards that I placed under it trying to push it back to grow upright.

News from the Demo Garden

From Jackie Skinner: Frank Dunlap and Marge Muniz are conducting research on our planned butterfly garden. Frank will be creating the design. We hope to have the space cleared before winter sets in, and possibly begin construction.

From Tom Collins: Stopped at the demo garden and was amazed at the number of butterfly species and individuals. Below is my list that I also posted to the iNaturalists web site (link below) highlighting the Demo Garden.

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=any&user_id=tcollins&verifiable=any

Pipevine Swallowtail -3
 Western Giant Swallowtail - 1
 Large Orange Sulphur - 15
 Southern Dogface - 2
 Sleepy Orange - 1
 Variegated Fritillary - 1
 Gulf Fritillary -3
 American Snout - 25
 Common Buckeye - 2
 Monarch - 1
 Queen- 5
 Fiery Skipper- 5
 Sachem - 1
 Eufaula - 1





HCMG Monthly Business Meeting

October 7, 2020

Hill Country
Youth Event Center & Zoom
Agenda

Call to Order (Please silence your cell phone.)

Pledge of Allegiance-
Rachel Garrison

Invocation -
Rachel Garrison

Verification of Quorum –
Donna Nutt

Approval of September 2, 2020 Minutes - approved

Above: Melayne Arnold & Rachel Garrison preparing the flag for the pledge of allegiance
Below: Donna Nutt and Jackie Connelly at registration

Wear a Mask

Wash your Hands

Watch your Distance

Executive Committee Reports

Treasurer’s Report – Jackie Connelly

Standing Committee Reports

Demo Garden – Jackie Skinner- Jackie announced that the Demo Garden has successfully achieved designation as a Monarch Way station. She also asked for volunteers to “adopt” sections of the Demo



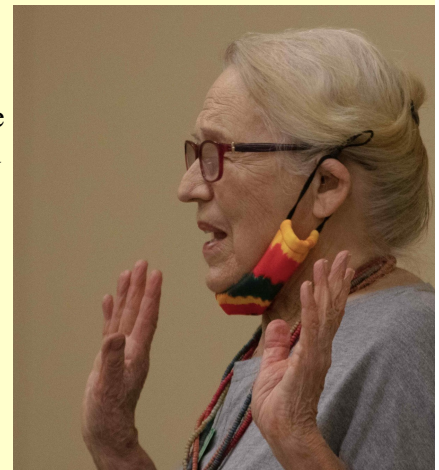
Garden and someone to take over mowing the turf grass in the demo garden.

Education - Rachel Garrison - Rachel mentioned the 2021 MG class needs an instructor for the Earth Kind class and for the Herb class.

Green House – Fernando Gonzalez - Fernando thanked the volunteers for their help with the maintenance of the greenhouse and thanked Janelle Dahms for serving as co-chair and for her help planning the B&B sale. He did make a request for volunteers to join the B&B committee to plan the 2021 sale.

In-House Programs – Edna Platt- Edna said she is retiring as chair of In-House continuing education

programs as of December 31. She mentioned she had already secured CEU speakers for the first three months of 2021. She said the November CE would be on bee-keeping



Junior Master Gardener -Rachel Garrison— Rachel reminded the group that the Jr. Master Gardener committee needs a replacement chairperson.

Research Desk – Mark Schultz - Mark announced that a digital inquiry system is almost ready to roll out. Mark said he’ll need data entry volunteers in approximately three weeks and that the data entry can be done remotely.

Photo Credit:
Mark Shultz

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New Business

Nominating Committee Report - Patti Zohlen - Patti thanked Rachel for her assistance in producing a slate of candidates for the 2021 Executive Committee. She thanked the current Executive Committee for their service. She presented the slate of officers for nomination, and asked for nominations from the floor. There were none. Then she asked for a vote to accept the slate. Motion was made by Melayne Arnold and seconded by Shannon Barker. The membership voted to accept the slate as presented. The nominations are:

President-**Anne Brown**

Vice President - **Patti Schlesinger**

Treasurer - **Jackie Connelly**

Secretary - **Donna Nutt**

Volunteer of the Year –Rachel Garrison – Rachel asked members to submit nominations for volunteer of the year by 11/15/2020. She asked for a paragraph or two in support of the candidate.

Christmas Charity to be announced at November Business Meeting – Bandera County – submit suggestions to Executive Committee by October 31 - Rachel reminded the group that nominations for the Christmas charity need to be submitted to Rachel by Oct 31. This is Bandera County's turn in the rotation. Sue Hall asked if we could repeat a charity. Rachel said that it would be okay.

Announcements

Certificate Presentations-Rachel Garrison - Rachel awarded a Master Gardener certification to Luci Nicely (see picture on page 9).

New Project in Kerr County, Signs of Hope – Rachel Garrison - Rachel announced that Signs of Hope, a new, approved project needs volunteers to help establish a fall garden and raised beds. She said to contact Bob Huff for further information.

Christmas luncheon- Rachel Garrison - Rachel mentioned the Christmas luncheon is just two months out. She asked for a hand vote on the question of Christmas luncheon at Riverhill. Riverhill has offered round tables that usually seat 8 individuals and can expand the size of the room to accommodate social distancing. We would request 6 per table.

Bring 2 checks payable to HCMG to November Business Meeting

- 1) 2021 dues and signed Volunteer Agreement, deadline 12/31/20 - \$20
- 2) Christmas Luncheon at Riverhill Country Club, 12/2/20, reservation deadline 11/20 - \$20

Sue Hall asked if membership agreements are online and Jackie Connelly said yes. Jackie responded to Shannon Barker that checks could be dropped in Treasurers box at extension office. Jackie said two separate checks would be easier to account for. Rachel said agreements and checks

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President's message continued from page 1

I didn't pay much attention to this as it was not in the original landscape plans and I was preoccupied with everything involved in the move.

Now that things have settled down a bit, we've had time to sit on our back patio and enjoy the view of the greenbelt and our small yard. The "primrose" plants are especially pretty, but I didn't think the landscaper was correct in calling the plant primrose, so I had to do some internet research to find out more about them.

When most Texans hear primrose, they think of the pink wildflower that is so prolific in spring and early summer. The plant in my yard is *Caylophus Berlandieri*. Common names for this plant include Square Bud Primrose, Sundrops, Texas Primrose, and Berlandier's Sundrops. It is native to Texas and northern Mexico. A drought tolerant, tough perennial, landscape ground cover, it grows 3 feet wide and 1 foot tall. The evergreen foliage is fine textured and is said to trail over a low wall making it the perfect plant for our spot. It also does well in sunny rock gardens, between stepping stones, or as an accent in front of taller plants. The blooms are bright yellow and are described as little drops of sunshine. It flowers from early spring through summer. Since it is now mid-October and mine are still blooming, one might claim that they bloom into fall, as we continue to have some 90-degree days in October in the Hill Country. The flowers attract bees, butterflies, and birds.

This primrose wasn't in my plan, but I'm so happy to have it in my landscape. It truly is a little drop of sunshine that brightens my day. Sometimes lack of planning provides happy accidents.



Left: Luci Nicely receiving MG certificate from Rachel Garrison

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will be accepted at the November meeting or at the office. Jackie said the agreements are not only on VMS, they're also available at the office in a membership file.

Adjournment

Submitted by Donna Nutt, Secretary

**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

C.E.A. Advisor
Angela Fiedler

**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

Submissions to
Newsletter.editor.hcmg
@gmail.com

**Pictures of Garden
Disasters Wanted!**

Beth McMahon is looking for pictures of vegetable garden disasters for next year's Plantastic Vegetable Gardening Seminar program (On February 6, 2021) Names will not be revealed! The goal of this pro-



gram is to help others learn from bad mistakes. Potential pictures could be of deer eating everything, the hail this year, late freezes, it's August and you still haven't gotten a tomato off your perfectly healthy tomato plant, grasshopper invasion, armadillo dug up your potato seeds (Beth's garden, but too distraught to take pictures), armyworm invasion, powdery mildew everywhere, sprayed the wrong pesticide, dicamba attack, something you never figured out but killed everything. These pictures will be used in the presentation, so other people will see them, but your name will not be revealed.

Send pictures to Elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu

Thank you!

Beth,
Elizabeth McMahon, CEA-Horticulture, Gillespie County
830-997-3452



Fall is a wonderful time to get outside and the Hill Country has so many wonderful trails to hike. Right: Cypress Trees at Cibolo Creek.



Photo Credit: Pat Wolters