

November, 2023

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November 1, 2023

HCYEC

Meeting 1:00 pm

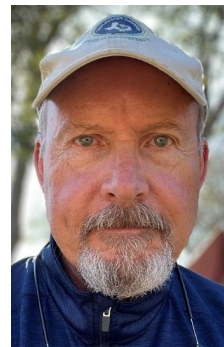
CEU 2:00 pm

**"The Wildlife Value
of a Messy Garden"**

**Sharon Hixson
Synopsis of
presentation &
Bio on page 4**

"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



There have been a few changes to HCMG during my two years as president. Some I saw coming and others took me by surprise.

So, what has changed? For one thing, we have several new committee chairs. Kay Nelson is now in charge of the greenhouses. Tamara Ruby and Rachel Garrison are our hospitality co-chairs. Rita Aliperto oversees community projects. And Barbara Castillo is our membership chair. In addition, Bee Evans and I co-chair the demonstration garden committee, Tex Lang is leading our public relations effort, and Pat Wolters and Rae Raiford will take over the education committee when Donna relocates.

These folks deserve our thanks for volunteering for positions of responsibility. My principal concern when I became president was finding people to lead our committees. COVID had created a "gap" in the new-member pipeline, and, with fewer members, there were fewer people to fill open positions and replace retiring chairs. We've made progress in the past two years but still need help with the research and B&B committees.

There have been other changes besides personnel. TMGA now requires us to use their new procedure for background checks. This was partially implemented last year when individuals submitted their own information. Thanks to the membership team, the transition went smoothly. Starting this fall, people must complete a training course before they can enter their background data. The course is designed to make us better volunteers and, from what I have heard so far, accomplishes that. Applicants to the 2024 class will be the first group to go through the entire training/background process.

Speaking of the 2024 class, the education committee now handles applications in a different way. Changes were made to emphasize to incoming students the importance of community service and the calendar was shifted so that background checks could be completed well in advance of the beginning of class. In addition, "meet and greet" sessions were scheduled to allow us to get to know the applicants and allow them to get to know us.

Our October general meeting was held in Medina as part of a field trip to two local nurseries. From the feedback I've received so far, members enjoyed the field trip and want to see a similar event next year. Let's do it! Send suggestions for places to visit to the executive committee so we can start making plans.

Continued on page 7



Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace, MG

This month just seems to be flying by. It's going to be the Holiday Season soon, then we'll be gearing up for spring again. It seems that the older I get, the faster time goes. I'm glad that summer is over. This was one for the record books and I for one hope it stays there, never to be seen again.

Last month I had picked up a few plants, cabbage, broccoli and Swiss chard, from a local nursery. I thought that there was little danger of insects because of the hot summer. I was disappointed to find out that those little critters were in fact alive and well and very hungry. I choose to believe that these pests were here waiting for lunch. But; I will be spraying any transplants that I purchase from nurseries from now on. This is not the first time this has happened.

I decided not to try a fall garden this year because of the heat, but I will be planting a few things for a winter garden. According to the Farmers Almanac, they are forecasting below normal temperatures with more storms than usual. That being said, I'll throw the dice and see how they land. I picked up, for this winter, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Collards, Broccoli and Swiss Chard. These should be able to withstand cooler weather and some lite frost. In the event of a harder freeze, I'll have to cover then with some plastic or lite blankets.

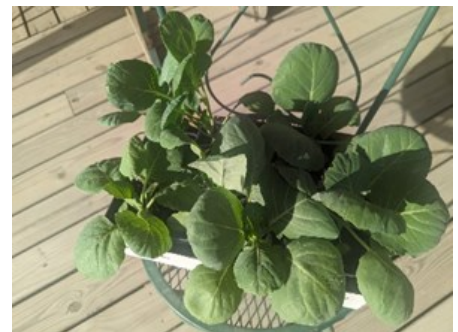
Other crops that should work this time of years would be Kale, Mustard Greens, Cauliflower, Spinach and Kole Robbie. Root crops such as Beets, Turnips, Parsnips and even Carrots will grow throughout the winter. One green that I found a few years ago, Corn Salad, did very well and survived a few hard freezes. I have yet to find it again. I'll have to look for seeds in the catalogs and see what I can find. There are different varieties of lettuce that will grow during the winter as well. Just because it will grow, plant what you would like to eat. Remember to amend you soils and water and fertilize your plants.



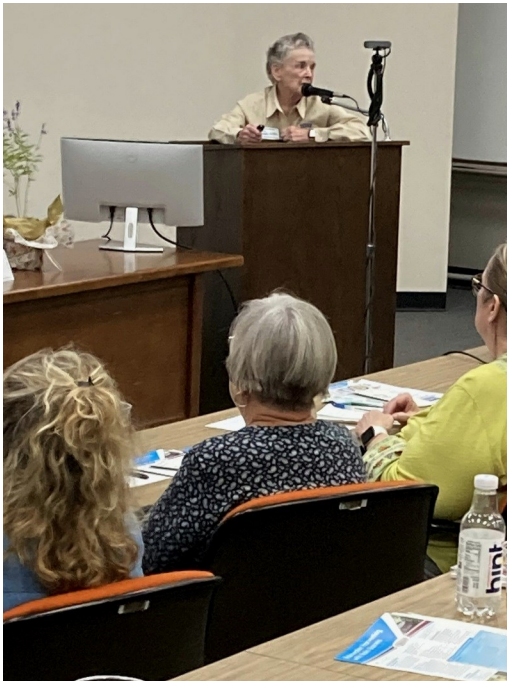
Swiss Chard



**Brussel Sprouts &
Broccoli**



Cabbage & Collards



HCMG Anne Brown Speaks to a Full House at UGRA's "Waterwise Landscaping" Seminar

By Vickie Killeen, MG

More than 95 gardeners attended a September 22 program on "Waterwise Landscaping: Conservation in Your Backyard" sponsored by the Upper Guadalupe River Authority.

With Kerr County in Stage 4 water restrictions, gardeners were eager to learn how to best conserve our most precious resource – water. Topics ranged from the importance of using the "right plant in the right place" to rain water harvesting to efficient drip irrigation to the impact of our prolonged drought on native plants, especially our Hill Country tree canopy.

Attendees asked for additional advice on the benefits of collecting rain water.

As an A&M-certified Rain Water Harvesting Specialist, Anne's program included the benefits of using Hill Country native and adapted plants and rain water collection systems. A panel discussion concluded the day long program with the audience asking questions of the featured speakers.



Above left: Reservations for the seminar filled up quickly. A wait list was created for any last minute cancellations.

Above right: Anne's program focused on encouraging rain water harvesting and selecting plants that flourish in our specific growing conditions.

Blue Barrels are Back in Stock!

By Vickie Killeen, MG

A dedicated crew of barrel washers clean newly-arrived recycled rain barrels. Home owners can collect rain water with less chance of algae growing in the preferred dark-colored barrels. Many gardeners paint their barrels to blend into their landscape or to serve as yard art.



Above: The washing crew gives the barrels a good scrubbing. Left to right: Karen Fuller, Dee Dunton, Aimee Tennant, Rae Raiford, Debbie Bacon and Darla Cluster. Right: Darla Cluster and Bernard Warren remove labels from the recycled barrels prior to washing. Labels that are permanently attached will be painted over with blue paint after cleaning.



Synopsis of CE presentation: Gardens are alive. No matter what time of year, if you quietly listen and watch, you will notice the plethora of activity. From budding flowers in the spring to the rustle of withered seedheads in the fall, our gardens are supporting animals of all shapes and sizes. Here's a secret not all gardeners know—if you choose to be a messy gardener in the fall and winter—the wildlife value of your garden soars. This program discusses the benefits of a messy winter garden, suggests ways to create a dramatic winter landscape, and how to make “messy” look good.

Sharon Hixson Bio: Sharon and her husband moved to the Hill Country from California in 2008. In 2010 she took the Hill Country Master Naturalist classes and also became involved in the native plant sales at Riverside Nature Center. She began coordinating the plant sales in 2015. She helps to maintain the Kerrville chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas demonstration gardens at Riverside Nature Center. She is currently serving as secretary on the Kerrville Native Plant Society board. She is a team member for the Hill Country Master Naturalist's Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) and also a team member for the Pollinator Garden Assistance and Recognition Program (PGARP) which is co-sponsored by the Hill Country Master Naturalists and the Kerrville chapter of the Native Plant Society.



Lisa Cantini, Darla Cluster, Anne Brown, Susan Thomas, Barbara Hoffman & Vickie Killeen stayed busy all morning.

Kerr County's Emergency Preparedness Expo

By Vickie Killeen, MG

The Hill Country Youth Event Center hosted Kerr County's first Emergency Preparedness Expo on September 30 with great success. Hundreds of citizens visited more than 30 exhibitors who provided information on how to prepare for, recover from, and mitigate disasters - both natural and man-made.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Hill Country Master Gardeners and Glory Community Gardens were popular side-by-side attractions offering information on growing & preserving food, rain water harvesting and wildfire prevention landscaping. At least 396 visitors interacted with Hill Country Master Gardener volunteers during the day-long event.



The afternoon shift was calmer, allowing our volunteers a minute to pose for the camera. Left to right: Linda Lockhart, Janice Walker, Kay Nelson & Rachel Garrison.



A good guy in a white hat, Kerr County Extension Agent Mike Morris, manned the Texas A&M AgriLife booth.

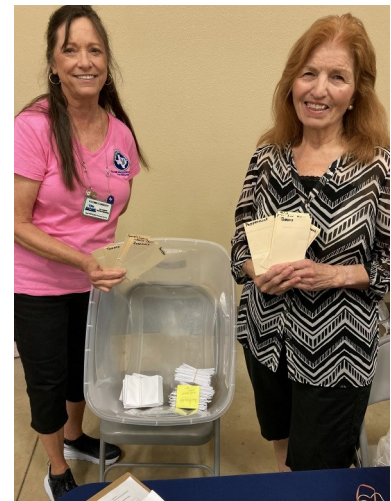


Pam Umstead took the busy morning shift at the Glory Community Gardens booth

How Do You Stop Gardeners in Their Tracks?

Give them seeds!!!

Rachel Garrison & Mary Contois took a jumbled bin of seed packets and created order for our visitors. By the end of the Expo, all that was left were empty packets awaiting the next crop of HCMG harvested seeds!



October HCMG Meeting and Field Trip

Master Gardeners toured the Medina Garden Nursery, then ate lunch and held the monthly meeting at the River Oaks Courts in Medina. After lunch they toured the Natives of Texas Nursery.

Photo Credit: Patti Schlessiger

