

October 2022

Volume 20, Issue 10

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Wednesday
 October 5, 2022:
 HCYEC

Meeting 1:00 pm
 CEU 2:00 pm

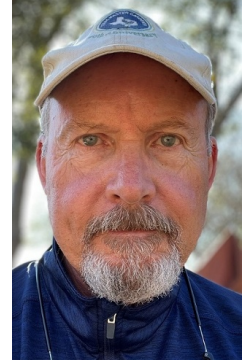
**Fall Tour of the
 Demonstration
 Garden**



“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



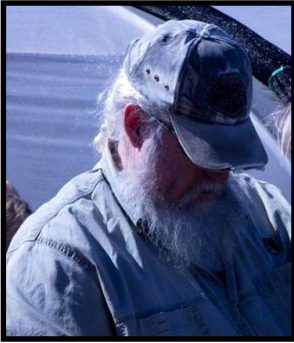
As we look back on twenty successful years, are there any changes we should make going forward? A while ago, a MG suggested we rotate the location of our monthly meetings through the various counties we represent. Officially, HCMG officially includes four counties: Kerr, Gillespie, Kendall and Bandera (and we have had members and projects in others). Is it fair that our monthly meetings are only held in Kerrville?

After doing some preliminary legwork, I know there are venues in other counties that meet all the requirements for a general meeting. A great example is the new extension facility in Fredericksburg. According to the Bandera extension agent, there are two possible venues near their office and, although I haven’t yet spoken to the Kendall extension agent, I am sure we can find a place in Boerne. The question, then, is what do we want to do? I see four options.

Option 1: Don’t make any changes; hold all meetings in Kerrville. Historically, ten months of the year we meet in the HCYEC. In December and January, we move to other Kerrville sites for various reasons. Last year, for example, we met in the Riverhill Country Club in December and the Diertert Center in January. I think it is clear why HCMG has chosen this approach. Most HCMG members live in the immediate Kerrville area and Kerrville is centrally located. People in Gillespie County drive 30 minutes south, those in Bandera drive 30 minutes north and members in Kendall, 30 minutes west.

Option 2: Designate one month a year for an “away” meeting. In the same way we set aside December for the holiday luncheon, the “away” meeting would be held in an appropriate facility in another county and the CEU activity could focus on a special resource nearby. For example, after a general meeting in Boerne, we could tour the Herff Farm. We could publicize this meeting in local papers and possibly attract people who are unfamiliar with HCMG. Basically, we would have an annual “field trip.”

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Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace, MG

I must admit that my gardening enthusiasm has returned this fall. The rains have returned, for now, and the heat seems to have been broken. It's beginning to look and feel like Fall, and I am a happy camper.



Squash and Sweet Potatoes

The butternut squash has started producing new fruits. The volunteer spaghetti squash is putting out more fruit as well. The sweet potato plants have gone nuts as well. I'll be digging them up soon, my fingers are crossed. The old tomato plants just looked too pathetic to keep, so I pulled them up. But wait, no really wait, I found some transplants at a local big box store one day. I thought, "hmm", lets go for it and I brought



Traditional Pot Left, Wicking Pots Right



Trimmed

a few home. I brought the tomato seedlings home and transplanted them into 6" pots to grow the roots out. After 2 to 3 weeks, I transplanted them once again into the wicking pots that I had made last Spring. I had a few large pots left over, not wicking pots, so back to the store for a few more seedlings. I thought, let's do an experiment, wicking pots vs. traditional pots. The control factor will be that each plant will be planted the same.



The Game Begins

- 1) Water down the soil in the pot.
- 2) Add the same fertilizer to each hole dug in the middle of the pot. The fertilizer being, a pinch of Organic Tomato-tone (3-4-6) and a pinch of SEA-90 Agricultural Mineral, which contains 90 minerals and trace minerals and 50,000 organic compounds as per the label.
- 3) Trim off the lower branches of the transplants leaving only the top 3 or 4 branches.
- 4) Bury the lower part of the trimmed seedling to the just under the 1st branch. Tomatoes will produce roots where ever the stem touches soil. This is why I trim the lower branches and plant the stems deep.
- 5) Water in the plants.
- 6) Let the games begin.

I am watering every few days, now that the temperature has cooled down some. Rain water is always better than well water at my house, it's a pH thing. We have caught a few nice rains the past few weeks and things are looking up again.

HCMG 20th Anniversary Celebration



Anne Brown is accepting the Emerita Award for Tommie Airhart, MG from retired Agrilife Agent, Roy Walston

Hill Country Master Gardeners began in 2002 with 20 students in the first class. Today we have 103 Master Gardeners and 16 Interns representing 5 counties in the Texas Hill Country.



President Dave Kinneberg with Janell Dahms

President's message continued

Option 3: Meet in each county at least once a year (three "away" meetings) with the remaining meetings in Kerrville. For example, May could be "Bandera" month, July "Kendall" month and September "Gillespie" month. Again, holding routine meetings in other counties might make HCMG membership more attractive to people living in those counties.

Option 4: Rotate to a different county every month. This option is the most complex logistically and would be hard to plan. As the person responsible for arranging for CEU speakers, it would make my job much more interesting. However, we can make it happen if members so desire.

Deciding where we meet is an issue that should be put to a vote; the decision will significantly impact many people. I would like to discuss these options (and any others than members suggest) at the October general meeting and select the most promising options for a vote at the November meeting. Coincidentally, I recently attended a monthly meeting of one of our sister associations in which the president reported that members were requesting more activities in various counties. Perhaps our membership feels the same way. HCMG has survived for twenty years by meeting the needs of our members and the community. While change for the sake of change is not desirable, we must evolve to keep HCMG accessible and rewarding.

HCMG Welcomes Newly Certified Members from the Class of 2022



20th Anniversary Celebration

From Left: Randy Simmons (President 2008-2009) and wife, Rachel Garrison (President 2019-2020), Debbie Castillo & Barbara Castillo

Photo Credit: Pat Wolters



20th Anniversary Celebration

Photo Credit: Pat Wolters

1. Barb Banks, Raeann Reid, Sheridan Stringer & Kathy Lewis.

2. Hospitality Chair, Linda Proffitt

3. Roy Walston, Patti Schlessiger, Jackie Skinner, Jodi Tippens & Rita Aliperto

4. Rita Aliperto

5. Tex Lang, Lisa Cantini & Kay Nelson

6. Kara Grant, Meg Scott Johnson (drove all the way from Houston) and Pam Umstead





20th Anniversary Celebration

1. Mary Mechler, Becky Leal & Cindy Anderson
2. Diane McMahon & Linda Fawcett
3. Allan Perry, Phil Roberson, Ray Tiemann, Carl Luckenbach & Jerry Christenson
4. Tish Hulett, Aimee Tennant & Donna Bellis



1

20th Anniversary Celebration

1. Bee Evans, Marge Muniz, Dee Dunton & Patty Zohlen
2. Michael Bell, Sandy Corbin, Pat Corbin & Brian Strickland
3. Joan Leach & Karen Fuller
4. Melayne Arnold & Jackie Connelly



2

Photo Credit:
Pat Wolters



3



4

American Beautyberry: a spectacularly NICE plant for fall

Showy clusters of glossy purple berries (sometimes white) are the most striking feature of this Texas native shrub.



By Cindy Anderson
Native Plant Society
of Texas & Master
Gardener

Texas is a large, diverse state and plants that work for one region may not always be the best choice in a different region. The Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) created the N.I.C.E. Native Plant Partners program to help nurseries offer natives that are right for the local environment. Two local chapters of NPSOT, the Kerrville and Fredericksburg chapters, implement this program by choosing one native plant to promote each season – in cooperation with wholesalers, in order to assure availability – and in cooperation with participating local nurseries.

The N.I.C.E. acronym stands for “Natives Improve and Conserve Environments.” The goal of the program is to introduce people to great native plants that are available locally to use in place of non-native species.

WHY PLANT NATIVES?

The home page of the state website, NPSOT.org, says:

- Native plants are drought tolerant, naturally conserving our precious water resources.
- Native plants provide habitat and food for birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife.
- Native plants don’t need special pampering or fertilizing.
- Natives are natural to their eco-system.
- Natives help us maintain biological diversity.

This fall season (which begins on September 22), the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are featuring American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), at six local nurseries as their N.I.C.E. Plant of the Season.

AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY

American beautyberry is a breathtakingly-beautiful Texas native shrub. It is found on the eastern edge of the Hill Country and all across East Texas, but is adaptable to many soils and habitats. While it can reach 9 feet in height in favorable soil and moisture conditions, it most often grows 3-5 feet tall and wide.

This shrub has a naturally loose and graceful arching form. In late spring to early summer, small pink flowers bloom, providing a nectar source for bees and butterflies. Then in late summer the beautiful clusters of berries emerge – magenta purple (sometimes white) “beautyberries” from which it gets its name. These berry clusters look spectacular as the leaves drop in autumn. The berries will persist through fall and winter in most cases.

Continued on page 9

During periods of prolonged summer drought such as we are experiencing this year, the shrub may temporarily defoliate and lose developing fruit. This author's beautyberry has not defoliated during our extreme 2022 drought, probably because it resides next to a birdbath which is refreshed daily with clean water, and is also in the shade of a large live oak tree. But its berries have not yet begun to plump out. The recent rains will hopefully help.

Both the seeds and berries of the beautyberry are important foods for many species of birds – particularly the Northern Bobwhite – but they are also a favorite of mockingbirds, woodpeckers and finches. Armadillos, foxes, opossum, squirrels, and raccoons like the berries, too.

Unfortunately, its foliage is also a favorite of white-tailed deer, especially when the plant is young and tender. So it should be caged here in Central Texas until it reaches maturity. There is some controversy over whether or not the fruit is edible for humans and pets. Since it is not listed on any toxic database, there is no great danger from eating a few berries – but the raw fruit has an unpleasant flavor, making it generally unappealing to humans and their pets.

The American beautyberry is best used under a shade tree in a garden setting. In full sun, the leaves turn a pale yellowish-green and the fruit appears sun-scorched. It will be a much lovelier shrub, with rich green leaves and colorful berries, when grown in shade or dappled sun. It makes an excellent understory shrub and should be planted where it will be seen and enjoyed. It does not require pruning – but it can be cut to 12" above the base each winter to encourage more branching, flowers and fruit. Or it can be left to mature naturally into a tall woody shrub.

There is some research suggesting that this plant also has mosquito-repelling properties. In the early 1900s, farmers crushed the leaves and placed them under the harnesses of horses to repel mosquitoes. They also rubbed the crushed leaves on their own skin to repel mosquitoes and other biting bugs. This is yet another good reason to add an American beautyberry to your landscape, perhaps near your back door or patio!

WHERE TO FIND IT

Our local N.I.C.E. nurseries have happily agreed to stock up on our Plant of the Season in order to have it available to the public. These independent nurseries carry only the best plants for our area, as well as high-quality soil amendments and gardening supplies.

Look for the “N.I.C.E. Plant of the Season” sign stake at these nurseries and growers in Kerrville, Fredericksburg, Medina, and Comfort:

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 (Harper Rd.), Kerrville, 830-896-0430

The Garden Haus, 31 Highway 87 North, Comfort, 830-995-5610

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

Medina Garden Nursery, 13417 Tx. Highway 16, Medina, 830-589-2771

Our chapter website contains articles of past N.I.C.E. plants, going back as far as 2009. To peruse the list, go to our website: npsot.org/kerrville, click on the “NICE!” tab, and scroll to the bottom of the page for the list of featured plants.

**Hill Country Master Gardeners
Monthly Meeting
September 14, 2022
Museum of Western Art Pavilion**

**Abbreviated General Meeting as part of 20th
Anniversary Celebration**

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation – Patti Schlessiger provided the invocation prior to lunch.

Welcome/Opening Remarks – Dave Kinneberg recognized special guests including the Kerr County Extension employees – Angela Fiedler, Lindsey Forster, Kim Keese and Jennifer Smith; retired Kerr Ag Extension Agent, Roy Walston; Beth McMahon, Gillespie County Horticulture Extension Agent; and Vicki Kelly, wife of Kerr County Judge Rob Kelly. Dave also thanked all committee members and volunteers who helped put this celebration together.

Verification of Quorum – Rita Aliperto verified a quorum has been met.

Approval of Minutes from August 3, 2022 meeting. A motion was made by Anne Brown and seconded by Jackie Connelly to approve the August minutes.

Treasurer’s Report – Rachel Garrison had posted the report on our website for review. Melayne Arnold moved the report to be approved. The motion was seconded by Jackie Skinner.

New Business – New Members! HCMG recognized three interns who have met the criteria for certification. Michael Bell, Becky Leal and Phil Roberson were presented with their certificates and name badges and given a round of applause (photos on page 4).

Standing Committee Reports

Programs – Ray Tiemann brought information cards regarding the *Learn your Lawn and Landscape* training on September 24th. He explained two ways to register for the class.

Glory Community Garden – Pam Umstead invited everyone to Music in the Park this Sunday for free music, food, and fun.

Other Announcements –

Nominating Committee – Dave announced that we now have a Nominating Committee consisting of Janell Dahms, Donna Bellis, and Barbara Castillo. Please let them or Dave know if you have interest in future officer positions.

Changes Coming with Background Checks – Dave said changes are coming and more information will follow.

Anything else? There will be an Education Committee meeting on September 22nd at 1 pm. Also, the fall tour of the Demonstration Garden will follow our October meeting. In the event of inclement weather, Beth McMahon will present classroom training.

CEU Presentation – The History of Hill Country Master Gardeners presented by Anne Brown and Roy Walston. Both speakers recalled year-by-year highlights from the last 20 years of HCMG. Members and past presidents reminisced about the “arm-twisting” that took place to get members to crack pecans at the Pecan Show. Another comment told how the 2007 convention hosted by HCMG was the best they’ve ever seen.

Special Award – Roy Walston presented retired member, Tommie Airhart, with Emerita status for being one of the co-founders of HCMG as well as her many achievements and contributions while an active member. Anne Brown accepted the distinguished award on Ms. Airhart’s behalf.

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20th Anniversary Celebration



Judy Beauford and Sue Hall



Imelda Horne and Rae Raiford with Thank you notes from Bandera Junior Gardeners

Minutes continued from page 10

Final Comments – Patti Schlessiger and Dave Kinneberg thanked the members who worked toward making this a successful celebration. Dave is looking forward to the 40th anniversary in 2042!

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
 Rita Aliperto, Secretary

Next Meeting: October 5, 2022, HCYEC



Connie Townsend & Sandy Martin

Hill Country Master Gardeners 2022

Executive Committee

Dave Kinneberg
President

Patti Schlessiger
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 & Website

Newsletter Editor
 Pat Wolters

Associate Newsletter Editor
 Patti Schlessiger

Special thanks to
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Monarch butterflies are now an endangered Species

By Natasha Daly



A beloved visitor to summer gardens is officially an endangered species. The migratory [monarch](#) butterfly—the iconic subspecies common to North America—was declared endangered today by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the global leading authority on the status of biological diversity.

The butterfly, known for its twice-yearly, 2,500-mile journey across the continent between its summer and winter grounds, has declined by between 23 and 72 percent in the past 10 years, according to the IUCN. Though the monarch has long been considered under threat, its listing on the IUCN Red List—the inventory of species’ conservation status—marks the first time it has been officially declared at risk of extinction.

“The threat to monarchs comes from a combination of factors. Habitat destruction over decades in migratory monarchs’ wintering grounds has taken a massive toll. The impact is felt by both the western population, which is found west of the Rocky Mountains and winters on the California coast, and the eastern population, which is found in the eastern U.S. and Canada and winters in Mexico’s fir tree forests. In summer habitats, pesticides used in agriculture have killed monarchs and also milkweed, the plant they lay larvae in. Climate change, too, is an increasing threat as dramatic weather events such as hurricanes and drought [become more common](#) along the butterflies’ southern migration routes.

The western monarch population, less studied and more at risk, has plummeted 99.9 percent in recent decades, from around 10 million in the 1980s to just 1,914 in 2021, according to the IUCN. The eastern population declined by 84 percent between 1996 and 2014.

Editor’s note: I was very upset to see a spray truck marked as Herbicide spraying along Upper Turtle Creek Road and Hwy 16 South in early September. I called Kerr Country Road and Bridge who said that truck belongs to TXDot. I will follow up on this and provide an update in the next newsletter.