

September 2018

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HCMG will meet on September 5, 2018

Location:
Kerr County
Youth Event Center

1:00 - Meeting
2:00 - Program

**"Herb Gardens with a
Texas Accent:
Mediterranean Herbs"**
Beth Potter Patterson



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President's Message

Jackie Skinner

Football coach Woody Hayes, once declared, "Nothing cleanses your soul like getting the hell kicked out of you." Mother Nature makes a routine of doing just that to all Hill Country gardeners. She blows the leaves out of the dust bin as we attempt to sweep our sidewalk. She

makes it rain when we need sunshine, and she blasts us with months of steamy-hot sunny days when we desperately need rain. If, by some miracle, our garden actually germinates seeds or grows tiny annuals, she'll send in the heavy artillery – ARMADILLOS – or skunks, or possums, or porcupines, or voracious insects, or in my case, a pair of Jackie Skinner's clumsy feet. She seems to delight in the crushing, digging up, consumption, trampling, and general beating down of small plants that ask only for a chance to become established. Of course, adding to the retinue of slam-downs, are the plant diseases. A universal contract states clearly that we may not grow plants without growing their complementary diseases. (After all, they are older and smarter than we are, so we may as well learn to coexist.) And then there are the self-introduced problems such as our cats chewing on the leaves or our dogs watering them or our grandchildren pulling them up by their necks and dragging them around like pull-toys. With so many negative forces aligned against us, "If there were nothing else to trouble us, the fate of the flowers would make us sad." (John Lancaster Spalding)

So, what are we doing here? Audrey Hepburn explained, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." Despite all the odds, all the failures, we just keep trying. One tiny victory seems able to buoy us on a sea of disappointments, and that is where we gardeners float our spirits. Right there aboard the deck of one tiny victory. The first green bud on a dormant branch quickens our pulses. The survival of plants we have moved in order to correct our landscaping screw-ups renews our confidence. When carefully nurtured bulbs and perennials begin to naturalize, we are empowered. Pouring salt on a slug to watch it dissolve evokes euphoria. Positive feedback...there's just nothing like it, even in sparsely parceled out doses. The more difficult success is to attain, the sweeter the pleasure.

"There seems to be some perverse human characteristic that likes to make easy things difficult," says Warren Buffett. In the case of gardening, it isn't always US that makes things difficult. That's what Mother Nature is for.

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.

September 1, 9:30 a.m.-noon. Get your organic garden started: create a garden plan, soil preparation and amendments, irrigation system design, plant selection, maintenance and gardening resources. \$15, register online www.cibolo.org. Contact Stephanie Patillo, farm@cibolo.org, 210.551.6722, for more information. Herff Farm Garden Barn.

September 4, NPSOT Boerne, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Shelly Maher, research scientist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, will present "Pollinator Basics" about the habitat needs of pollinators. Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium. Visitors Welcome.

September 11, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Beth McMahon, Gillespie County AgriLife Horticulture Agent, will present a program on tree selection. Gardens at the Ridge. Free

September 5, Hill Country Master Gardeners, 1:00 p.m. business meeting, 2:00 p.m. Beth Potter Patterson, Education Coordinator for the Texas Lavender Association and former President will present "Herb Gardens with a Texas Accent: Mediterranean Herbs" adapted for the Central Texas cook and crafter. Hill Country Youth Event Center. HCMGs and interns.

September 11, NPSOT Kerrville, 1:30 p.m. Michael Eason, freelance botanist and author will present "Wildflowers of Texas," showing images of rare plants and discussing the tales of tracking down some of these plants. Copies of his book will be available for sale for \$25 (cash or check). Riverside Nature Center. Visitors welcome.

September 12, Rose Garden Club of Medina, 2:00 p.m. Elinor Vandergriff, Daily Weather Observer and Recorder in Medina for NOAA since 2004, will present a program on Medina Weather 2004-2018 and the 2002 flood. Medina Community Center. Visitors welcome.

September 15 and 22, 2:00-5:00 p.m., Two-part organic gardening short course for beginner and intermediate vegetable gardeners on installing and maintaining an organic garden: hands-on experience preparing beds for planting, installing a drip irrigation system and planning a garden. \$30, register online at www.cibolo.org. Contact Stephanie Patillo, farm@cibolo.org, 210.551.6722, for more information. Herff Farm.

September 18, 10:00 a.m., Hunt Garden Club. Gwen Dewitt, co-owner and manager of one of Texas' heritage ranches and past holder of every office in local, regional and state garden clubs, will present "All About Awards." She will share her perspectives of how each community garden club contributes a piece to the larger American landscape and how awards inspire us to brighten our part of the picture. Hunt United Methodist Church. Visitors Welcome.

September 25, NPSOT Fredericksburg, 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Chris Anderson, Hill Country Master Naturalist and Friends of Enchanted Rock Tour Guide will present a virtual tour of Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

September 29, NPSOT Fredericksburg, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Instructors Kathy Lyles and Chris Anderson will present Native Landscape Certification Program Level 3: Installation and Maintenance of Native Plants, including a classroom session and two-hour plant walk. NLCP Level 1 is a prerequisite. Limited class size, register ahead, \$37 NPSOT members; \$52 non-members. For class details and to register go to <https://npsot.org/wp/nlcp/>. For more information or to complete a mail-in registration, contact Meg Inglis at nlcp@npsot.org or 512.589.1316. Central Texas Electric Cooperative conference room.



Addresses for Events

Central Texas Electric Cooperative, 386 Friendship Ln, FBG
Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne
Gardens at the Ridge, 13439 North Ranch Road 783, KRVL
Herff Farm, 33 Herff Road, Boerne
Hill Country Youth Event Center, 3785 Highway 27, KRVL
Hunt United Methodist Church, 120 Merritt Road, Hunt
Medina Community Center, 13857 State Hwy 16N, Medina
Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam St, FBG
Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, KRVL

Gillespie County 2018 Tomato Trial Results

By Beth McMahon, Gillespie County AgriLife Extension, CEA-Horticulture



Within AgriLife Extension, there is a saying that an Agent or Master Gardener is going to get the most questions on the three T's: Turf, Trees and Tomatoes. Tomatoes are indeed a favorite for local vegetable gardens. But there are many different tomato varieties available. The same tomatoes that do well in East Texas may not like our dry heat. To this end, the Gillespie County AgriLife

Extension Office in partnership with Jenschke Orchards, planted a determinate tomato trial. The trial was planted on April 11th, 2018. Six tomatoes each, with a few exceptions, of thirty-six varieties were planted. Varieties included "Valley Cat", "Celebrity", "Tycoon", and "Phoenix". Tomatoes were provided by Peterson Brothers Nursery and Dr. Larry Stein, Extension Horticulture Specialist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center at Uvalde. None of the varieties grown in this experiment were engineered using biotechnology.

Tomato production overall wasn't as high as it could be this year. Tomatoes delayed set, and did not set as profusely as expected, though nutrients were adequate and plants were healthy. Wind damage earlier in the season was rough on most varieties. Due to the lack of rain and the grower's spray program, foliar fungal issues were not a major concern. Hornworms were spotted in the field and treated for. Spider mites, a common tomato pest that can cause speckling damage to leaves and fruit, was first only seen on the varieties "Phoenix" and "Valley Cat". Later in the experiment spider mites were found on "Sunbrite" and "Grand Marshall".

The top five varieties that set the most, in respective order, were "Sunstart", "Grand Marshall", "Rally", "Tribeca", and "BHN 964". The five tomatoes varieties that set the least, in respective order, were "SV 7631", "Mountain Spring", "Florida 91", "Summer Pik", and "Rocky Top". "Rocky Top", which started with six plants



Six tomatoes each, with a few exceptions, of thirty-six varieties were planted



Harvested Tomatoes

but two died, set less than five tomatoes for the entire variety.

Continued on page 7

Thinking About a Fall Garden?

By Pat Wolters

In the Spring, I can't wait to get into the garden. I've been looking at seed catalogues and garden books long enough and I am ready to get in the dirt. The Fall garden is another story, it's 100 degrees, literally, the garden is dry and covered with debris, the sun is unrelenting—all of you know what I mean. And yet, I know that in the Hill Country we are headed to the most beautiful time of the year, Fall, and if I don't plant now, I won't have anything to tend in the wonderful weather coming. So I get up early, put on my hat and sunscreen, and get started.



Fall "To Do" List

Reference: Fall Vegetable Gardening Guide for Texas, AgriLife Extension

1. Pull out all plant material, the remains of your spring crop and any weeds that have grown in the garden. Don't put plant residue from a spring garden into your compost bin because it is likely to be contaminated with insects and disease pathogens.
2. Now add the fertilizer. Apply 1 pound 21-0-0 per 100 square feet (10 x 10) before planning or you can apply 2-3 pounds of slow release fertilizer (19-5-9 or 25-5-10) per 100 square feet of garden area. Aged horse or cattle manure may be substituted for commercial fertilizer at a rate of 60-80 pounds per 100 square feet of garden area. Never use poultry manure on a fall garden.
3. Water the fertilizer into the soil for at least 2 hours with a sprinkler or drip irrigation. Allow the area to dry for several days and it will be ready to plant.
4. Fall crops generally do better when started from transplants than from seed. Transplants in peat pots or cell packs with restricted root zones require at least 2 weeks for their root system to enlarge enough to support active plant growth. Until that time, they may need to be watered every day or plants will be stunted or even die.
5. Group the plants according to their frost tolerance. (see table below).

Frost-susceptible crops (will be killed or injured by temperatures below 32 degrees F)

Bush bean, summer squash
Cucumber, sweet corn, lima bean, okra, pepper, cherry tomato
Cantaloupe, eggplant, Irish potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, tomato, watermelon, winter squash

Frost-tolerant crops (can withstand temperatures below 32 degrees F)

Beet, leaf lettuce, mustard, radish, spinach, turnip, turnip green
Broccoli, carrot, Chinese cabbage, green onion, kohlrabi, parsley
Brussels sprouts, bulb onion, cabbage, cauliflower, garlic

Suggestion—try using Spunweb on your fall plants

- * Plants covered with Spunweb never need to be uncovered. Spunweb will not overheat plants because the temperature inside the material is about 15 degrees F cooler than the outside temperature. Used in the fall, Spunweb also gives plants some shading from the hot sun. Spunweb will protect seedlings from birds and other pests, and cole crops (such as broccoli and cabbage) from leaf-eating caterpillars.
- * Cover can also protect plants from the wind. Winds as low as 15 mph can significantly slow plant growth, delay harvest, and decrease yields.

For specific planting dates get the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Flyer: Fall Vegetable Varieties.

Ways to Deal with Too Many Squash!

Pat Wolters' granddaughter, Anna Strouth, submitted her favorite way to disguise zucchini.



**Chocolate
Zucchini
Cake**

2 cups flour
2 cups sugar
1/2 c dark baking cocoa
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt

2 large eggs—beaten
3/4 cup plain yogurt
1/4 cup canola oil
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 cup shredded zucchini

1. Blend dry ingredients
2. Blend wet ingredients
3. Combine and placed in a greased Bundt pan and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes

Frosting—beat ingredients until thick & pour over cooled cake

1 can (5 oz.) evaporated milk
1 cup powdered sugar
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract
4 ounces unsweetened chocolate and 1/4 c butter melted

1. Get out those dog-eared cookbooks: *101 Ways to Disguise Zucchini*, start cooking and invite the neighbors
2. Load up the wagon and deliver to all your neighbors
3. Leave a box of fresh squash by the fire station, library, school parking lot, etc. with a sign, FREE to a good home
4. Place a zucchini in all your neighbor's mailboxes—never mind, that's a federal crime!
5. Feed the compost pile. With this maneuver, you're either feeding the soil or the neighborhood birds and beasts, in either case, you're recycling.

Southwestern Squash Casserole

Recipe from The Dove's Nest. Waxahachie, TX

8 medium squash (yellow, green or mixed)
1/2 cup plain yogurt
3 Tb butter
1/2 tsp. salt
2 eggs, beaten
2 Tb chopped chives
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
6 pieces of bacon, crisp fried, and crumbled
1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chilies, drained
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
12 saltine crackers crumbled
Paprika to taste

1. Place squash in a saucepan with water to cover. Cook over high heat until tender, drain well.
2. Combine with the yogurt, butter, cheese, salt, eggs, chives, bacon, green chilies, cilantro and crackers in a bowl, mixing well
3. Spread evenly in a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle with paprika.
4. Bake at 350 for 30-45 minutes or until browned.





UGRA landscape is thriving after recent rains

Clockwise from upper left: rain garden, gravel rain water diversion canal, wire/rock erosion control feature, and waterfall by the front steps.

Photo Credit: Pat Wolters



Newly Certified Hill Country Master Gardeners

Photo Credit: Jim Latham



Left:
Dennis Davidson
with his Mentor,
Raeann Reid



Right:
Betsy Scheffe
with HCMG
President,
Jackie Skinner

Gillespie County 2018 Tomato Trial Results continued from page 3:

The winning cherry tomato variety was "BHN 268". It set too many fruits to count! "Ruby Crush" and "BHN 968" did well, but did not produce the overabundance as "BHN 268" did. The cherry varieties "Chiquita" and "Sweet Zen" performed poorly. Only two "Chiquita" cherry tomato plants survived of the five planted. These survivors had poor fruit set. "Sweet Zen" only lost two plants out of the six planted, but did not set well either. These winning varieties aren't ironclad guarantees, as this trial only covers one year of data. As many an experienced gardener will tell you, some years will be better for tomatoes, others not as good. The winners from this year's trial may be dethroned next year. The hope is to have enough data to eventually choose tomatoes that produce well and consistently, instead of those that have one lucky year. For gardeners and farmers eager to try these varieties there is an unfortunate issue. The winners of this tomato trial are unavailable unless you order the seed in very large quantities. Local plant nurseries may carry these as tomato transplants next year, so keep your eyes open. In future experiments, to rectify this issue and at the request of the grower, a couple indeterminate varieties such as "Better Boy" and "Big Beef" may be added. Because of popular interest, several heirloom varieties such as "Thessaloniki" or "Cherokee Purple" may be trialed as well.

If you have further questions about this trial, please contact the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office at **830-997-3452** and ask for Beth McMahon.



HCMG Monthly Business Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2018

Hill Country Youth Events Center

Call to Order-Jackie Skinner called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Al Bispo.

Invocation was given by Rev. Allen Noah with a brief devotion.

Verification of Quorum – Patti Schlessiger reported a quorum was present.

Treasurer's Report – Bernadell Larson/Approval of Treasurer's Report-Bernadell Larson handed out copies of the report. Jan Grimes moved we accept report, Cindy Anderson 2nd, and all approved.

Approval of July 2018 Minutes-Bryan Strickland moved we accept minutes, Patty Zohlen 2nd, and all approved.

Old Business—none

New Business— none

Announcements

- ♦ New Certifications-Raeann Reed presented Dennis Davidson with his certificate, and Jackie Skinner, in the absence of Linda Proffitt, her mentor, presented Betsy Scheffe with her certificate.
- ♦ Education Committee – Lydia Jones
Dates/Meeting Sites for 2019 Classes- Lydia Jones reported the new class will run from February 26th through April 18th, with the exception of week of Blooms and Barrels, when students will assist with plants. Fees-Still not sure as Lydia is waiting on the cost of the digital manual.
- ♦ Recruitment Forum – Saturday, October 13th, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. at the Youth Event Center. Booth Set Up by Committees and Project Leaders, 8:00 a.m.
Committees and Project Leaders will provide a visual display and handouts for the attendees
- ♦ Results from UGRA River Clean-Up, July 28th – Debbie Lea reported approximately 40 youth stopped by the booth.
- ♦ Kerr County Fair, October 26 – 28 – Need Booth Coordinator/Information Table Volunteers-Donna Bellis volunteered to coordinate booth.

- ♦ Gillespie County Fair – Al Bispo announced the fair runs from August 24th through the 26th, and asked for volunteers to help with the information booth.
- ♦ Demonstration Gardens
Demo Garden Open House/JMG Activities – Saturday, October 13, 9:00 – 11:00 a. m.- Donna Bellis volunteered to help with the JMG activities. General Work Day to prepare for the open house, Wednesday, Oct10, 9:00 a.m.
- ♦ Volunteer Specialist Coordinator for TMGA – Duane Robinson

Projects :

- Lipe Gardens-Jim Wilhite said he is learning a lot from Joyce Studer, as he will be the new coordinator.
- Kronkosky Senior Center needs a coordinator to work with adults to raise vegetables.
- Veterans' Hospital-Melayne Arnold said a group has put together a plan for their garden. The current plants are doing well.
- ♦ Jackie Connelly reminded everyone she needs seeds for seed packets.
- ♦ Jim Wilhite gave a brief talk on his visit to the greenhouse at Texas Tech. There were a lot of floral plants. The Open House will be in Sept.

Change of Meeting Dates for 2019

January Meeting Canceled

February Meeting Delayed Until February 13

March Meeting Delayed Until March 13

Thank You Note for Contribution to 2018 State Conference-We gave a nice wine basket.

August CEU Program – Oliver Smith, “Vines in Landscaping”

September CEU Program – “Herb Gardens with a Texas Accent: Mediterranean Herbs” - Beth Potter Patterson

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Schlessiger, Secretary

