

October 2020

Volume 18, Issue 10

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

**October 7, 2020  
1:00 p.m.**

**Program: 2:00 p.m.  
Texas Critters**

Fernando Gonzalez, HCMG, class of 2019, will discuss insects and other things you may find in your garden that may be a problem for you and your plants.



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

Rachel Garrison

*"Bittersweet October. The mellow, messy, leaf-kicking, perfect pause between the opposing miseries of summer and winter."*

--Carol Bishop Hipps, author

The pages are flying off the calendar. October is upon us. Autumn, oh how I love this season! Crisp mornings, cooler days, the kids are back in school, pumpkins, a brief respite before the crush of the holiday season, what's not to love? After living a few years in more northern states, I've grown to love the fall season. Autumn has been described as a mellow season and somehow the description resonates with me. I guess that's one reason I love autumn.

For Hill Country gardeners, we look forward to cooler weather and some rain as we move into the fall season. We can enjoy working in our fall vegetable and flower gardens without the unrelenting heat of the summer months. We may not have all the beautiful fall colors that those in more northern climates celebrate, but we can certainly appreciate the cooler weather as we spend time outdoors.

Take some time these next few weeks to enjoy one of the most pleasant weather months of the year in the Texas Hill Country. As you work in your garden and enjoy the fruits of your labor, reflect on the blessing of this mellow season, a welcome pause before winter.



## Hill Country Master Gardeners ' Vegetables Win at Fair



Photo Credit:  
Beth  
McMahon,  
Gillespie Co  
Horticultural  
Agent



## Gardening after Two Months Away

By Sandy Martin, Master Gardener

My husband and I planned to be gone because of the virus for two months from June 10 to August 10, traveling in our RV up to my step-sister's cabin in the Big Horn Mountains outside of Sheraton, WY and volunteering at a Fish Hatchery outside of Rifle, CO. We were not going to visit family or friends on the way up or down because of the stress we might put them through.



I first had to get rid of the vines of the Buffalo Gourds or commonly called "stinky gourds." By the time we get back, they will be growing across our driveway and they were. I have worked a week pulling vines and weeds from the gardens. We had a friend watch our home, bringing in the mail and watering. We have an alluvial well next to a creek. And he did water.



I was so happy to see my Geraniums that I had bought in the spring from the Master Gardeners still alive and beautiful on the back screened-in porch. The Desert Willow was beginning to bloom, the hummers and bees were around the Esperanza, and the Bird of Paradise. We could not believe how tall the Maximillian Sunflowers were. It is good to be home, but it is so hot!



Sandy with the Maximillian Sunflowers 8 miles west of Hunt



## Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace

Another month has come and gone, but the veggie garden continues. The weather will be getting cooler soon. I have cucumbers, squash and tomatoes. Some in the garden and some to be planted soon. Fall gardens tend to be very productive. Things like cucumbers, squash and tomatoes will need to be covered from time to time as some nights may dip down into the mid to lower

30's. These crops are warm season crops and will not survive a freeze but can survive if they are protected. Fall in The Hill Country can be mild or cold or hot. By preparing to protect these vegetables, you can enjoy fresh produce sometimes as late as December or January. I use old blankets and sheets to drape around and over to protect my plants. Some folks use plastic sheeting. You can purchase row cover material if you like. I just use what I have handy. I take the cover off as soon as it warms up enough for the plants to be out of danger.

If you are want to grow fresh vegetables that grow well during the winter, I would be thinking about lettuce and mustard greens or kale and collards. These will

grow well in late fall and winter. Spinach is another good crop for this time of year. Unless we experience a hard freeze, all these can tolerate the lower temperatures that we get. Cabbage is always a perennial favorite of mine this time of year as well. As with all vegetable gardens, keep building your soil up. Add compost and some slow released fertilizers. Once your plants are established cover the soil with mulch. Straw hay is also a good mulch during the winter.

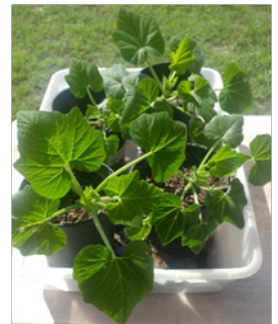
This spring I found a volunteer Lambs Quarter growing in an old bed next to my fence. The seeds that I had were old and the germination test I conducted did not fare well. I left this plant alone and let it grow though the summer. Its just now starting to produce tiny seed heads. Lambs Quarter is very nutritious and needs little help from me. Most think its just a weed, old timers refer to it as wild spinach. This is also one of my perennial favorites.



**Cucumbers**



**Tomatoes**



**Squash**



**Lambs Quarter**



**Autumn Sage is a wonderful native plant for all seasons, especially fall.**



**By Cindy Anderson**  
Native Plant Society of Texas  
Hill Country 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 Tuesday, September 22), the Kerrville and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters are featuring Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*) at five local nurseries as their N.I.C.E. Plant of the Season.

*Continued on page 6*

## **SALVIA GREGGII**

Though known as Autumn Sage, it blooms off and on nearly all year, from spring until a winter freeze.

Autumn Sage is a small ornamental flowering shrub, delightful to use in a perennial bed or as a low hedge. It normally grows 2 to 3 feet tall and wide. Its aromatic foliage makes it unpalatable to deer, but its flowers are magnets to bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

*Salvia greggii* is a plant that makes EVERY list of “best landscape plants” for Texas. When I first moved to the Hill Country in 2006, I thought perhaps this plant was overused, as I saw it in every single home and commercial landscape. However, after seeing it in bloom over and over, even in neglected spaces, I realized that it is the most perfect native flowering plant for our area.

*Salvia* is a huge and varied genus of perennials, and while *S. greggii* is just one of many *salvias*, it is by far the most popular in this area – and for good reason. Make that REASONS:

- ◆ It is native to the Edwards Plateau.
- ◆ It is perennial and virtually trouble-free.
- ◆ Its water use is low.
- ◆ It loves hot sun and dry (but well-drained) soil.
- ◆ It is mostly evergreen over much of Texas, only going dormant for a few months in the most northern parts.
- ◆ It is deer resistant (one of the most prized qualities in these parts.)
- ◆ It is disease- and insect-free, and extremely tolerant of heat, humidity, and drought.
- ◆ It blooms for nine months of the year (how many plants can do that?), though it does slow down in the heat of summer. But in the spring and fall it can bloom heavily, with eye-popping color.

The true native forms of *Salvia greggii* grow in rocky soils of Central, West and South Texas, and Mexico. The color of its flowers in the wild is usually red or coral, but varies from area to area, with some regions dominated by red-blooming plants, others pink, others orange, others purple, and others white, plus many shades in between.

The color range has been further enhanced by plant breeders, resulting in many new cultivars over the years. There are many hybrids with *Salvia microphylla* and other species in today’s market, which are often referred to as “*Salvia greggii* types.” You may have seen hybridized varieties with names like Hot Lips, Cherokee Chief, Sierra San Antonio, and more.

***Continued on page 7***

## HOW TO GROW AUTUMN SAGE

- ◆ Buy color(s) that will blend with other plants around it.
- ◆ Space plants 18 to 24 inches apart.
- ◆ Water lightly but regularly for the first year, until well established.
- ◆ Little trimming will be needed the first year.
- ◆ Beginning the second year, trim plants back by one-half in late winter (February) each year and again by one half in August, to maintain a tidy shape and to promote new growth, which produces new flowers.
- ◆ Deadheading (removing spent flowers) is not required, but enhances the appearance and stimulates the production of new growth and new blooms.
- ◆ Or, for a more natural appearance you may allow it to grow and spread or sprawl, with occasional pruning of old wood.
- ◆ Properly tended, plants should last for many years and never have to be dug or replaced. This is one perennial you won't have to dig and divide.



## 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, and Medina:

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

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 the following link: <https://npsot.org/wp/kerrville/nice-2> and scroll to the bottom of the page for the list of featured plants.



## ***Beautiful but Invasive***

by Pat Wolters, MG

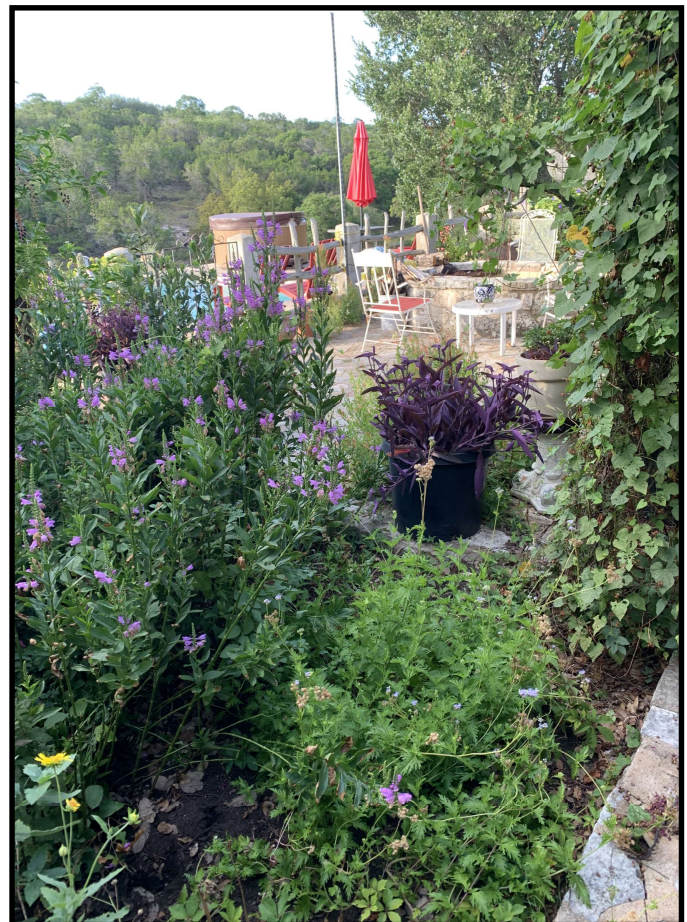
*A weed* is a plant considered undesirable in a particular situation, "a plant in the wrong place". ...

When I moved to the Hill Country over 40 years ago, I planted things that I knew I loved to see. I didn't even consider the concept of beautiful but potentially invasive or in other words, "more trouble than they are worth."

Trumpet Creeper is a quick growing Texas native. It's a deciduous vine growing 20-30

feet and can quickly cover an arbor, plus hummingbirds love the flowers. But the rest of the story found

in Neil Sperry's "Complete Guide to Texas Gardening" is "because it root sprouts great distances from the mother plant, it quickly becomes a weedy pest". In the above picture, you can see how it has nicely covered the arbor, but you don't see all of the roots trying to take over my planter boxes. On the fence is Blue Morning Glory. This vigorous plant will grow 8-15 feet in one season and blooms summer and fall. Neil says "flowers best when not heavily fertilized and watered". My kind of plant except it tries to take over my herb garden on the other side of the fence. It seems like I'm pulling runners daily (slight exaggeration). To the right you will see the Obedient Plant I purchased a couple of years ago at the B&B sale (the obedient was apparently used sarcastically). This is a beautiful flowering plant that grows 15-24 inches tall and blooms summer and fall. Can you see in the picture how it is trying to take over my Greggs Blue Mist and everything else in the pollinator garden? Well now that I've finished whining, I must admit that these plants are beautiful and I guess managing them is good exercise.





**HCMG Monthly Business Meeting  
September 2, 2020  
Online Zoom Meeting**

**Call to Order**

August 2020 Business Meeting Minutes can be found on VMS

**Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer's Report-Jackie Connelly** – Jackie reported disbursements of \$627.97 issued from the general account at Security State Bank resulting in a balance of \$26761.27. The sale of 3 rain barrels and interest leaves a balance of \$44084.66 at Guadalupe Bank. Full Treasurers report is online at VMS.

**Standing committee reports**

**VMS - Patti Zohlen** – Patti reported that she is updating the 2021 handbook. She asked members to review their current contact info in the VMS roster for accuracy. She also asked project chairpersons to make sure that any changes in project information be reported to Bob Huff for handbook updates. Jackie Connelly added that the semi-annual paper roster is manually updated and please email any changes to Jackie also.

**Junior Master Gardener- Rachel Garrison** - Kim Courtright is stepping down as Chairperson of the Junior Master Gardener Committee and needs a replacement. Kim has offered to share her supply of materials and ideas and to offer support.

**Unfinished Business**

**Badges-Rachel Garrison** – Rachel reported an order of 25 badges from the new badge vendor. Members will be notified when badges arrive.

**Advanced Training & Scholarship-Rachel** reminded membership of two upcoming online (Zoom) Advanced Training Seminars. Water Harvesting starts in September, Greenhouse Management in October. She said there is one scholarship still available. If interested, visit the state master gardening site to sign up.

**Recertification-Rachel Garrison**– Rachel reported the results of the recent email poll to reduce the HCMG requirement to a minimum of 12 hours due to the difficulty of acquiring 25 hours. She reported over 70 votes were received and the

majority voted to reduce the requirement to 12 hours for 2020 only.

**Virtual CEU** – Rachel reminded the membership that there are plenty of online opportunities for the 6 hours required of CEU and are reported in the weekly e-minder. Jackie Connelly recognized and thanked Raeann Reid for compiling and updating the list of classes.

**New Business**

**Nominating Committee-Rachel Garrison**-Rachel reported that September is the month to appoint a nominating committee, to produce a slate of candidates to be presented at the October 2020 meeting and voted on at the November meeting. Rachel invited members to volunteer for office or nominate individuals after first securing their permission. The 2020 nominating committee consists of Patti Zohlen, Pam Umstead and Duane Robinson.

**Online Voting – Rachel Garrison and Mark Schultz** -Rachel and Mark teamed up to provide an online hummingbird quiz as a fun way of practicing online voting via Zoom polls in case issues arise requiring a group vote during future Zoom meetings.

**Online Awards Ceremony -Rachel Garrison** – Rachel explained that the state organization produced an online awards ceremony in place of this year's cancelled state convention. Three HCMG members were honored, Tommie Airhart, for 20 years of service, and Liz Althaus and Peggy Benson for 15 years respectively.

**Virtual CEU today**-Patty Leslie-Pasztor will present a CEU program on ethnobotany. Handout will be made available.

**Next Meeting** – Rachel announced the next meeting will be October 7, hopefully at HCYEC but possibly on Zoom depending on Covid restrictions.

**Adjourned**

Submitted by

Donna Nutt

Secretary

September 10, 2020

## **Rose Garden Club of Medina Speakers for 2020-2021**

By Carol Hagemeyer, MG

**September 9, 2020:** Johnny Arredondo—Same as last year

**October 14, 2020:** Donnie Rambin on Arrowhead Collection

Especially if you are a gardener and digging in the dirt. This program is for you. How he got started and secrets for looking for them on ones own property? Different kinds and some show and tell. Donnie has lived in Medina since 1979. He was six years old when he moved here. He graduated from HS here. His two children went through 12 years in school here too. He has hunting arrowheads since he was 10 years old and seriously got into it when he was 18.

**November 11, 2020:** Chris Siefert, HCMG -Composting

**December 9, 2020:** Christmas luncheon

### **Programs for 2021**

**January 13, 2021:** Cathy Downs- Monarch Watch - She is a Conservation Specialist. She does Education Programs, Creates Monarch Habitats and she is a member of the Texas Master Naturalists.<https://txmn.org/hillcountry/files/2020/06/TexasStar2020-6.pdf>

**February 10, 2021:** Blue Star Program with Karen Taylor Hunt Garden Club

In 2017, Karen spearheaded the efforts to have the Blue Star Memorial Marker located in Kerrville, TX refurbished. She also heads the Blue Star Committee of the Hunt Garden Club. This committee raised funds to re-landscape the marker and provide a rededication ceremony for the community. She continues to chair this committee on the maintenance of the beds.

**March 10, 2021:** Kim Courtright-Junior Master Gardener lead. Student Certification in projects & lessons for Student JMG program. Sponsored by the Hill Country Master Gardeners in Kerr County.

**April 3, 2021:** Plant Sale

**April 14, 2021:** Butterfly Garden Tour and Monarch Way Station at the Kerrville State Park and then a lunch at the Pinnacle Grill at Comanche Trace.

**May 12, 2021:** Spring Luncheon and installation of officers.

**Note: Club meets at 2 pm**

**Medina Community Center**  
13857 State Highway 16 North, Medina

**Visitors Welcome**

**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



Alexa,  
  
Bake me a  
Pumpkin Pie  
And  
Tell me I'm  
Skinny

**Special Opportunity Garden**

The Master Gardeners volunteering at the Special Opportunity Garden worked all summer on the garden even though the clients couldn't be there due to the Covid 19 restrictions. Donna Bellis, Imelda Horne, Meg Scott-Johnson and Lydia Jones grew tomatoes, pumpkins and flowers. They weeded, watered and mulched all summer and then donated the produce to the Special Opportunity staff. The unused beds were covered with a green mulch (hemp) which has been shredded and layered on the beds for the winter. Some beds have been covered in cardboard. They have started composting (thanks to Meg) and the scarecrow got a change of wardrobe (also thanks to Meg). Pat Wolters got her granddaughter,

Dorothy, to help cut the hemp. The team is looking forward to working with the Special Opportunity clients in a spring garden.



Photo  
Credit:  
Pat Wolters