

September 2017  
Volume 15, Issue 9

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**HCMG will meet on  
September 6, 2017**

**AgriLife Classroom**

**12:00—1:00 Networking  
lunch -no volunteer hour  
1:00—2:00 Business  
Meeting  
2:00—3:00 Program  
"Web soil Survey"  
Travis Waiser,  
Soil Scientist**



**TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION**

*The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.*

### New Landscaping for Kerr County's Juvenile Probation Center

PHOTO CREDIT: Jackie Skinner & Vickie Killeen



Wil Rolfe and Jackie Skinner review their shopping list with Ernesto Carino of Medina Garden Nursery. Meanwhile, back at Kerr County's Juvenile Probation Center, HCMG and other project volunteers were preparing the beds for planting.



While Jackie and Wil were shopping, the rest of the dedicated crew were busy with bed prep including a drip irrigation system. Taking a well-deserved break are:

Back row, left to right – Chris Scruggs, HCMG intern; Micah Odish, an irrigation specialist volunteer; Carla Schuster, Kerr County Juvenile Probation Officer & Special Program Coordinator; and Jim Wilhite, HCMG. Front row, left to right – Travis Pflughaupt, HCMG intern; Juan, a project volunteer; and Bob Huff, HCMG Project Coordinator.



The Administration Building at Kerr County's Juvenile Detention Center has a more welcoming appearance with the addition of easy-to-maintain landscaped beds. A layer of mulch helps retain moisture and control weeds. Maintenance will be provided by facility staff and volunteers.

Proper spacing gives the perennials the room they'll need to grow into a lush bed of carefully selected Hill Country plants. When planting a new bed, it's always best to remember a popular gardening adage: "The first year a garden sleeps, the second year it creeps, and the third year it leaps!"



**HCMG 2017, Calendar of Events prepared by Racann Reid**

*Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional. We list events for those wishing to attend other educational offerings. We try to limit the listed events to those that would earn our members CEUs. Be sure to call the sponsor and confirm event.*

**August 22, NPSOT Fredericksburg.** 6:30 p.m. social followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. George Cates, restoration specialist at Native American Seed will present, "How to Grow Native Plants from Seed." Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

**September 5, NPSOT Boerne,** 6:30 p.m. social, followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Pablo Teveni, Professional Horticulturist, will speak about the unique diversity of endemic plants found in the Hill Country: "The Balcones Canyonlands of the Edwards Plateau: Where Southeast meets Southwest." Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium. Visitors welcome.

**September 6, HCMG Hill Country Master Gardeners,** 2:00 –3:00 p.m. Travis Waiser, Soil Scientist with Natural Resources Conservation Service in Kerrville, will present a program on how to use the online tool – Web Soil Survey – and what to do with the information. Hill Country Youth Event Center. HCMGs and interns.

**September 9 and 16, Cibolo Nature Center & Farm,** 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Two-part hands-on organic gardening short course. \$30 for the course. Preregistration is required using the link on the cibolo.org calendar. Herff Farm.

**September 12, NPSOT Kerrville,** 1:30 p.m. Dr. Jim Stanley, naturalist, columnist and author, will discuss the characteristics of native grass plants and how they enhance the soil, prevent erosion

and capture water. He will focus on Hill Country grasses. Riverside Nature Center. Visitors welcome.

**September 13, Rose Garden Club of Medina,** 2:00 p.m. Program to be announced. Medina Community Center. Visitors welcome.

**September 19, Hunt Garden Club,** 10:00 a.m. Mike Harper, owner of Harper Horticultural Services, will present the program. Mike specializes in installation of drought-tolerant plants and xeriscape designs. Hunt United Methodist Church. Visitors Welcome.

**September 19, Kerr County Cactus & Succulent Society,** 7:00 p.m. Program to be announced, Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library. Always confirm date, time, and location online in latest newsletter at <http://home.windstream.net/Wildfong/KCCSS.html>. Visitors welcome.

**September 26, NPSOT Fredericksburg.** 6:30 p.m. social followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. NPSOT will present its annual members' forum discussion: "Native Landscaping – Learning by Doing." Memorial Presbyterian Church. Visitors welcome.

**Addresses for Events Listed Above**

Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville  
Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium, 140 City Park Road, Boerne  
Herff Farm, 33 Herff Road, Boerne  
Hill Country Youth Event Center, 3785 Highway 27, Kerrville  
Hunt United Methodist Church, 120 Merritt Road, Hunt  
Medina Community Center, 13857 State Hwy 16N, Medina  
Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg  
Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville



**Glory Community Garden  
Photo Credit: Donna Guthrie**



## Hill Country Master Gardeners Monthly Program and Business Meeting August 2, 2017

The Monthly business meetings was held at the Kerr County Youth Event Center classroom.

54 members were present.

President, Jackie Skinner, called the meeting to order. Connie Townsend led the members with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation was led by Patty Zohlen. Quorum was verified.

The minutes of the July meeting were approved. Debra Foley moved to accept the minutes, Melayne Arnold seconded and the motion carried.

### OLD BUSINESS

Logo Wear: Shirts have been ordered and will be in soon

Greenhouse Update: Anne Brown says the greenhouse is still in the process of being put up correctly.

### NEW BUSINESS

Children's Classes—August 9th: Mimi Stidham has cancelled the classes for children.

Authorized HCMG representatives to the Youth Events Center: A list of the HCMG s authorized to book events at the Youth Event Center has been created..

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

2017 Graduate Certificates: Certificates were presented to Bob Huff, Christine Synder, Mimi Stidham,

Terry Lashley, Shirley Smith, Shawn Richards and Joan Morgan.

New Education Committee Chairman: Lydia Jones will head the Education Committee. An open invitation was extended to everyone to join the Education Committee.

Drip Irrigation Class, July 29: There were 16 participants in the July 29th Drip Irrigation class with 7 attendees from our Master Gardener ranks! There were 3 irrigation kits leftover: 50 piece set available for \$36.79.

Propagation Specialist Class: will be held on October 30-31; 24 participants have registered for the class with an additional 3 to be added soon. There is room for 30 attendees with a maximum number of 40 students. Applications are still being taken.

Glory Community Gardens Project: Chris Seifert indicated that all the raised garden beds have been taken. Pumpkins and watermelons have been planted for the Fall Festival. Fall Festival will be held on November 4th from 10am until 2pm.

Juvenile Probation Garden: Bob Huff and Lloyd Kneese along with the children at the center worked on the raised beds—planting salvias etc. building up the soil and in-

stalling irrigation. The project is now finished.

Special Opportunity Center: The vegetable raised beds have been moved into the sun and fall vegetables have been planted.

Horticulture Inquiry Forms: Questions for our current interns to work on during their phone duty are still needed. The desk will be open every Tues until the end of October.

Gillespie County Fair, Aug 24-27: This event has already been staffed. Gillespie Home and Garden Show, February 10-11; Hangar Hotel and Event Center: Needing volunteers for this event.

Riverside Nature Center/Master Naturalist—Fall Native Plant Sale and Festival, Oct. 7th, 9am until 2pm: Needing volunteers, sign up on VMS.

**SEPT CEU PROGRAM** will not be available to the general public. The business meeting will be starting at 1:00 and the CEU program will be starting at 2:00.

**ADJOURNMENT**  
3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lydia Jones, Secretary

## UGRA Guadalupe River Clean-Up

Jackie Skinner (left) and Kerry Brittain (right) answer questions at the HCMG information booth during UGRA's Guadalupe River Clean-Up. The annual event concludes at Flat Rock Lake Park,

Kerrville with refreshments, prizes, and nature-related information booths. More than 475 people participated in this year's event.

PHOTO CREDIT: Vickie Killeen



## Newly Certified Hill Country Master Gardeners



Jackie Skinner ,  
Mentor of  
Bob Huff



Jackie Skinner ,  
President and  
Christine Snyder

**Photo Credit:  
Jim Latham**



Mimi Stidham and her mentor,  
Caroll Edwards,



Terry Lashley and her mentor,  
Carol Hagemeyer,



Shirley Smith and her mentor,  
Pat Wolters,



Jackie Skinner,  
President  
with



Shawn Richards  
and



Joan Morgan





## 2017 HCMG College Scholarship Recipients

By Carl Luckenbach, Scholarship Chair



**David Erik Figueroa**, a graduate of Reagan High School in Houston Heights and having earned an AA degree from Houston Community College, is now a senior at Texas Tech University pursuing a major in Horticulture and a minor in Landscape Architecture.

As a non-traditional student, working his way through college, David is a little more mature than some of his classmates. He entered Texas Tech with a GPA of 3.267, but at Texas Tech he is maintaining a 4.0.

David's interest in horticulture goes back to when he was nine years old, and developed a passion for plants. He loves to garden and had taught himself to graft before taking any courses. His jobs while at Houston Community College were at Houston area nurseries. His volunteer work during his time at Texas Tech includes working on Habitat for Humanity, Heart of Lubbock Community Garden, Lubbock Arboretum (updating outdated tree inventory maps), and Horticulture Club, judging at Southern Regional Judging Competition, Cross Fit, Mentor Tech Protégé, and the Lubbock Native Plant Society.

His near-term goals include continuing his work at the Lubbock Arboretum, incorporating newer, more technological methods, helping entering horticulture students in the transition to Texas Tech, learning more about attracting natural pollinators, and traveling to Panama with Engineers Without Borders to assist native tribes integrate water-saving techniques. If given an opportunity to present to our chapter, his topic would be "Incorporating Fruit Trees into a Landscape."



**Randa Gayle Homann** graduated from high school in Lockhart, where she was president of her 4H Club, vice-president of her FFA chapter, and team leader on a judging team. After earning a 3.22 GPA at Austin Community College, Randa has entered and become a senior at Texas A&M where she

is earning a 3.954 GPA, majoring in Horticulture. Randa's activities at A&M include volunteering for the Big Event, assisting elderly at a nursing home, decorating the nursing home for holidays, donating canned good to a food bank, and participating as a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She is a member of the Horticulture Club, Freshman Leadership Experience, and plays volleyball and flag football in intermural athletics.

During the summer of 2016, Randa served as an intern at Kuhlman Cellars in Stonewall, TX. Her work focused on management of the vineyard and landscape around the winery. She learned to train and prune the vines, how to operate and read soil probes, and how to properly irrigate grape vines. Currently, during the summer of 2017, Randa is participating in a landscaping internship in College Station. She is designing and creating landscape around the AM campus and will be expected to complete a landscape design project on her own.

If Randa were to make a presentation to our chapter, her topic would be sustainability.

**Kaylee Elizabeth Ites** is a junior at Texas A&M University, majoring in Horticulture, with a minor in Crop Production in Landscape Management and Design.

While a student at Samuel Clemens High School in Schertz, Kaylee was president of the Cibolo Creek Chapter 4H Club as well as treasurer of the Guadalupe Valley 4H District.

Kaylee has earned a 3.975 GPA at Texas A&M. She is very involved with student activities and organizations including the Horticulture Club, the American Society for Horticultural Sciences, and The Student Association for Sustainable Agriculture Club, the Leadership Living Learning Community, Freshman Leadership Experience, the Student Leader of Tomorrow Conference, Texas A&M University Big Event, and the Texas Nursery and Landscaping Association Exposition.

Kaylee's varied work experience includes cashiering at Chick-fil-A, Bank of America Student Leader, Hill Country Garden Nursery in New Braunfels, and, currently, serving as an intern at Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, Florida. There, she inspects and maintains irrigation systems in all greenhouses, maintains a greenhouse show of over 150 hydroponically-grown food crops, propagates and irrigates a variety of plants, and leads daily informative and interactive guest tours through the greenhouses, labs, and aquaculture facility.

If she were to make a presentation to our Hill Country Chapter, she would like to talk about her experiences as an intern at Walt Disney World.



## **.Drip - Drop**

**PHOTO CREDIT:**  
Jackie Connelly



Sixteen gardeners learned how to assemble a drip irrigation system in a recent workshop led by irrigation professionals Chris Scruggs, HCMG intern, and Travis Pflughaupt, HCMG intern, (standing on the far right). Included in the class are HCMG (from left) Jim Wilhite, Jerry Christensen, Allen Mace, President Jackie Skinner, Loes Williams and Chuck Fitzsimmons. Not pictured were Kim Courtright and Dusty Gilliam. Attendees went home with a system ready to install in their gardens.

## **Education – Our Primary Mission**



With 18 volunteers eager to help, Chairman Lydia Jones called to order the first meeting of HCMG's revamped Education Committee. Planning for 2018's Master Gardener training class was the focus of the agenda. Committee members included (from left) Patty Zohlen, Caroll Edwards, Diane McMahon, Janice Walker, Debbie Bass, Chairman Lydia Jones, Mentor Chairman Tommie Airhart, Terry Lashley, and Debra Foley. Also serving on the committee but not pictured: Jerry Clark, Terrie Clark, Dee Dunton, Debra Rosario, Patti Schlessiger, Nina Wagner, Mike Weberpal, Jim Wilhite, Pat Wolters, and Gillespie County Horticultural Agent Beth McMahon.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Jackie Connelly





Roy Walston

County Extension Agent

### **My Cedar is Dying “What’s killing my cedar trees?”**

This may be the single most asked question I have had over the past few weeks. Some, I find, are either elated or disconcerted about this phenomenon while others, hate losing any trees. These may be the only tree structures they have after oak wilt or drought has taken out their oaks. Around Kerr county, especially on the western end of the

county, we are noticing Ashe Juniper or “Cedar” are browning in large areas and some have even died.

Many of you may have remembered back in 2011 and 2012 when we actually had cedar dying in large numbers from both drought and the Spruce spider mite. This tiny eight legged animal does best in the cool spring and fall weather with severe infestations causing discolored foliage, unthrifty looking plants and premature leaf drop. While feeding occurs in the fall and spring, often the damage does not become apparent until the heat of the summer. This oval shaped mite is small (about 1/50”), and with all eight legs stretched out would just cover the period at the end of this sentence. Many spider mites produce webbing particularly when they occur in high populations, providing protection from natural enemies and heavy rainfalls.

During the overwintering period, red eggs are found on the bark of small branches followed by egg hatching during the spring from mid-March to mid-April. Young mites feed on previous year’s foliage and do not attack the current season’s growth until it hardens off in summer. Spider mites do best when daytime temperatures are in the 60’s and 70’s. During the heat of the summer when the daily temperatures consistently exceed the mid 80’s, adults become inactive and populations decline due to an increase in predatory mites and insects. If temperatures remain over 90 degrees Fahrenheit for an extended period, the adults become dormant and lay tan or salmon colored

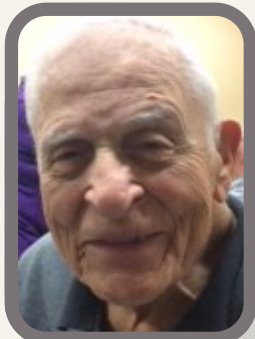
eggs that only hatch when cooler temperatures return in late summer/early fall.

Scouting for spruce spider mite eggs can be done in early spring or summer with a 10 or 15 power magnification hand lens. Adult mite activity can be assessed by holding a white piece of paper under a branch and striking the branch three or four times to dislodge the mites. Spruce spider mites will appear as tiny black or gray-green spots moving slowly on the paper.

Some management control options include beneficial insect predators. Predatory mites, lady beetles, minute pirate bugs, and dusty wings can keep the spruce spider populations in check during the summer months but there is often a lag time between the build-up of spider mite populations and predators due to slower reproductive rates. Mechanical control options include spraying the plant with a steady forceful jet of water from a hose twice a week during periods of peak mite activity. This can greatly reduce the mite population and help conserve the natural predators. Spider mites can be dislodged from plants during heavy rains. Spider mites thrive on plants under drought stress, so provide adequate water during dry periods. Most spider mites can be managed with the use of insecticidal soap or horticultural oils. However, keep in mind that oils require good coverage for good control. Some miticide active ingredients available are; abamectin (Avid), bifenazate (Floramite), and carybaryl products (Sevin).



**For more information** on this or other topics related to agriculture and natural resource concerns in Kerr County, contact Roy Walston at the Kerr County Extension office at (830) 257-6568



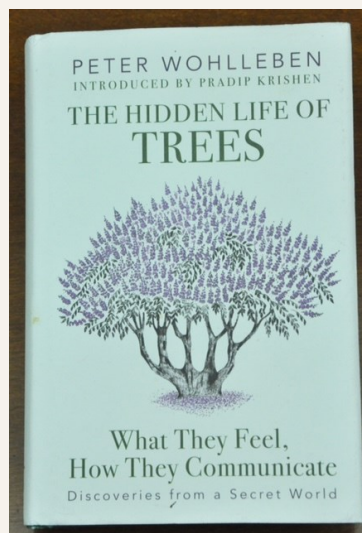
## BUILDING AN ORNAMENTAL GARDEN "THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES"

By Bob O'Connor

**Introduction:** As I write this newsletter, summer is almost over and the world will start to cool in anticipation of winter. Soon, too, I'll be able to resume

foundational planting in the garden but before that happens, I want to introduce a new series of articles that I shall call "Divertissements". I read a lot and often want to pass along what I've learned, not only to share but also to fix the new knowledge (at least to me) in my mind. Recently, my explorations have been into plant diversity, plant evolution and plant "intelligence", each a large field in its own right and each closely related to the others. The more I read, the more interested I become. In my August submission I touched upon this reading, so here is the first of these Divertissements.

**Divertissement** – "The Hidden Life of Trees": Some of you may have already read this book. It's by a professional arborist, Peter Wohlleben, a scientifically trained German forester whose life's work has been the care and preservation of German forests, both ancient and modern. To introduce his subject and to entice the reader to continue, he cites the story of damage that occurred to the Yellowstone National Park ecosystem after the wolves had been eradicated in the 1920's and its recovery with their reintroduction in the 1990's. His point, of course, was to underscore what he had learned about forest ecosystems over a lifetime of dedicated observation. He forces you to think about ecosystems and their importance for individual trees or plants. He forces you to think about what extraordinary living beings trees are



with life spans five to ten times those of most animals, sometimes 100 times longer as attested by a still living tree stump in Sweden that dates back almost 10,000 years to the dawn of human agriculture (radiocarbon dating). Early on he describes an experience he had when he discovered some interesting "stones" that turned out to be living chunks of bark surrounding a huge stump of a tree that had been felled some 400-500 years earlier but that was still alive. How was that possible that the stump had survived with no leaves to supply nutrients, no chlorophyll to produce them? It could only have been possible if the neighboring trees had been providing its food all these years through fungal networks, the mycorrhizae. Why had the surrounding trees continued to support their

decapitated neighbor over these hundreds of years? What does this tell you about trees as social beings? What does this tell you about fungal life, its ubiquity and the importance of cross-species relationships, about evolution, about biodiversity? Next, he talks about the language of trees, how they communicate, how they coordinate their defense against attack and so on. Here I shall stop this month in describing what I've learned from this incredibly interesting book. If you read it, I guarantee you will discover how truly ignorant most of us are about this realm of life, not just that of trees but of plants in general. You will be forever changed if you read it. Here is life in the full but at a very much slower pace than ours, as told by a consummate story teller. We are the "poor players who strut and fret our hour upon the stage" while our slow moving, sessile companions, upon whom we are totally dependent, live on and on in support of each other, if we let them.





**Hill Country  
Veggies**

September 2017

By Allen Mace

It's full blown summer and man oh man is it hot. About this time of summer I find myself feeling like, enough is enough. July through mid-August is usually hot and always dry. I had a friend comment to me the other day that since it was so hot a few weeks ago, he thought that we are in for a colder winter. I reminded him that it's summer in Texas, "It is always hot during the summer". Now if the squirrels and pack rats start laying in heavy loads, then we'll talk. I said all that to say this, this has been a fairly normal summer and I suspect it will continue to be a normal fall. That being said, if you are going to put in a fall garden, now's the time to get started.

My fall gardens tend to be the most productive gardens. It will still be hot for a few more weeks, but cooler nights and days are just around the corner. As with a spring garden, you need to amend your soil. I always add compost to the soil at the beginning of each growing season. I also add a bit of slow release fertilizer to the soil as well. If you buy plants from a nursery, take care not to let them dry out. You will need to stay on top of your watering. Seedlings can dry out very fast on these hot days.



**Pathetic Seedling**

We've all forgotten to water only to find some very pathetic, wilted plants, gasping for a drink. Once or twice and you'll be OK, but each time these seedling get stressed, it will affect your production later.

You will definitely need to add mulch to your beds. This will help hold in any moisture and it will help keep the soil temperature just a bit cooler.

If you are able to provide some shade from the late afternoon sun, so much the better. It's the late afternoon heat that will get you every time.

I like to plant tomatoes, squash, beans, and zucchini this time of year. I'll hold off a few weeks before planting any of the leafy vegetables. Our winters tend to be mild and things like lettuce, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, and chard will do well through the winter.

Years ago I made some portable support frames that I could put over the beds that will support sheets or blankets if we're expecting a light frost. Leafy vegetables can stand a light frost, but you will need to protect tomatoes, squash and beans. It's not uncommon to get a light frost and then a week or two of warmer temperatures. In some years I have been able to keep tomatoes producing into December by being able to protect them on a cool night.



**Pack Rat**



**Support Frames**

**Hill Country Master  
Gardeners 2017  
Executive  
Committee**

**Jackie Skinner**  
*President*

**Wil Rolfe**  
*Vice President*

**Lydia Jones**  
*Secretary*

**Jackie Connelly**  
*Treasurer*

**Debra Rosario**  
*Ex-officio Advisor*

**Roy Walston**  
*C.E.A. Advisor*

**Committees &  
Project  
Coordinators are  
listed on our  
website**

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*Web Assistant -*  
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**Submissions to**

Newsletter.editor.hcmg@  
gmail.com

**Already getting plants for Blooms and Barrels**

While shopping for greenhouse propagation stock plants at Medina Garden Nursery, Sandy Lewis (left) and Anne Brown (right) pause to admire grower Ernesto Carino's (center) bougainvillea and purslane. Greenhouse Committee and Propagation Committee volunteers will begin work with the selected plants in the fall so that they will be ready for the annual Blooms and Barrels sale in April.



**PHOTO CREDIT: Vickie Killeen**

**The new name badges have arrived!**



From left: Liz Althaus, who coordinated the procurement of new name badges, Bernadell Larson, Wil Rolfe, and Linda Proffitt.

Photo Credit: Pat Walters