

**September 2020**

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### HCMG Online Zoom meeting

**September 2, 2020  
1:00 p.m.**

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

**Ethnobotany:**  
Historical and Current  
Uses of Native Plants  
presented by  
Patty Leslie-Pasztor  
(information about  
presenter on page 10)



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## President's Message

Rachel Garrison

*"An infinity of forest lies dormant within the dreams of one acorn."*  
—Wayne Dyer, author

Dormant--- The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "marked by a suspension of activity; temporarily devoid of external activity; temporarily in abeyance yet capable of being activated". Synonyms for dormant include asleep, dozing, napping, resting, sleeping, and slumbering.

As gardeners, we are well aware of the nature of many plants to become dormant during winter months. During this period of dormancy, the plant exhibits little growth. Metabolic activity decreases. Unlike animals, plants can't seek shelter from the cold or move to a place with more favorable water sources.

Consequently, in order to survive, many plants become dormant during cold winter months of adverse weather conditions. This period of dormancy protects the plant until environmental conditions change. Plants that have this ability to go dormant aren't dead, they are in a state of suspended animation. While foliage may have died, the root system is very much alive. The plant ceases the activity of growing in order to conserve energy until better conditions are present.

In the Texas Hill Country, plants that have the ability to go dormant usually do so in the winter months. Turf grass might go dormant during a period of summer drought and high temperatures, but most plants go dormant during the winter. If we experience a warm period during the winter, some plants might be fooled into breaking from dormancy too early. A layer of mulch might help protect perennials from this unseasonable warm period often followed by more cold temperatures and harsh growing conditions.

As master gardeners, our organization is usually somewhat "dormant" during winter months, too. Some of our project work continues though the work is certainly curtailed. We aren't as active in our various activities such as education, help desk, etc. 2020 has been very different. Much like turf grass during a hot summer drought, it seems we have been dormant since mid-April! We can't blame our dormancy on drought or the hot weather we are presently experiencing. As Texas gardeners, we are tougher than that. We can point to the restrictions of Covid, as the source of our inactivity.

**Continued on page 9**



## News from Cultivar Farms

By Judy Beauford, MG



Cultivar Farms has welcomed Michael Bell to our group of volunteers. Michael moved to Boerne six months ago from Collin county where he had been a member of the Collin County Master Gardeners for five years. He was the co-director of their research and demo vegetable garden. It didn't take him long to start searching for our local Master Gardeners. And we are delighted he found us. Michael is a retired high school history teacher with an enthusiasm for vegetable gardening. (Fits right in!)

Michael will be joining our next new members class. He reports that the biggest difference he has seen so far between the two areas is our abundance of rocks. He has yet to meet the caliche and clay Boerne has for soil.

The best news is that Michael is giving much needed attention to our raised beds. He has had lots of experience with raised beds in the past. He has completely emptied one bed and put in new weed barrier to rid us of a mass of Bermuda grass, mint, and an invasive weed with roots down to China. Once we put in new soil and compost, he reconfigured the drip lines to accommodate a square foot garden. He is preparing seed strips for turnips, beets, carrots, and radishes for the fall and will follow up with cabbage, lettuce, and spinach for a winter crop. The rest of us are learning something new from him every week.



### Fall Planting Day (Volunteer opportunity)

Cultivar Farms will be holding their Fall Planting Workday on  
**September 15, 8:00 - 10:30 a.m.** at 122 Commerce Avenue, Boerne TX.

Come help us put in our winter crops and work a bit on the refurbishment of our raised beds. We will have some refreshments and good fellowship, too.

It's easy to social distance on half an acre.



### **Texas Blue Bells - *Eustoma exaltum russellianum***

Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A & M University



Texas Blue Bells are having a fabulous year! They appear during our hottest season and are too often mowed down. Their blooms are iridescent and velvety. Blues and purples are the most common colors but pinks and whites also occur. I remember first seeing them as a child. My Aunt Stell was a school teacher in Hope, Texas that had a two room independent school near Yoakum and always noticed wildflowers. She brought in a bouquet in the heat of summer and I was amazed. Long ago thriving colonies along river banks and open grassy fields were common. Blue bells were one of Lady Bird Johnson's favorites.

I have heard blue bells described as a weak perennial. The seed is as fine as ground pepper. The foliage is bluish green and they are usually 1-3' tall. Shortly after arriving at Texas A & M University in 1972, I was contacted by the Japanese government requesting that I locate a native site where blue bells were growing. At the time there were some large plantings between Navasota and Conroe on Highway 105. The site has since become a public school and the bluebells were destroyed.



Blue bells vary widely from year to year. Their use as cut flowers was what interested the Japanese visitors. They collected seeds and did some work toward making them available because they are not only stunningly beautiful but last a long time as cut flowers (two weeks is not uncommon). In early July of 2020, my wife and I noticed some really beautiful fields of blue bells along Highway 390 near Independence, TX (Washington County). We saw a tractor with a mowing attachment in the area and were saddened to notice several days later the field had been completely mowed and the blue bells destroyed.

#### **Note:**

Colonies have been spotted in Harper near wet seep areas, so they are in the region. There is also a colony around the Center Point area too.

Beth McMahon  
CEA-Horticulture, Gillespie County Extension Office

Native American Seed is listed as a source. Late summer or winter is probably the best time to start seed. Either cool season transplanting or direct sowing is probably best.



## Hill Country Veggies

By Allen Mace

This is the time of year I dislike the most. It is hot and it has been hot long enough. One of my goals in life is to head north in mid-June and not come back until sometime in September. In a few weeks, it will be over, and life will go on.

I pulled my garden last month, just too hot and too much direct sun. During the summer months, it seems that I am not able to water enough to keep the garden going. What I manage to keep alive does not produce much.



Tomatoes



Cucumbers

I am still in what is a temporary location so I'm hesitant to invest in an automated watering system or shade structure. I have started some tomatoes, jalapenos and most recently, cucumbers. These I keep on my porch, in six-inch pots for now. They catch the early sun in the morning and are shaded during the afternoon. I still have a yellow pear tomato from the spring. This is the one that a deer munched on earlier last spring. It has not produced much.



Jalapenos

I have been growing some herbs in pots on the back porch. It has been a learning curve watching how they react to the summer heat. I will need to do more research as to which herbs like it hot and which ones like it milder.

I've been researching how to propagate and graft fruit trees and hope to try a few things



Yellow Pear Tomato



Herbs

this spring. I had a plum tree that died off above the graft, but the root stock has grown and produces tiny peaches. I have been told that the native peach tree is what nurseries use to graft onto as root stock. I have a few fruit trees that I should be able to get some graft wood from. I look forward to giving it a try. I am afraid that it is a bit late to try anything now. I will just have to wait until next spring.



**15th Annual Kerrville Butterfly Count—July 15, 2020**  
**Sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA)**  
**Compiled by Tom Collins, MG**

**Region 7 Texas (TX)**

1. **Kerrville, TX.** Habitat changes since last year: Prolonged recently developing drought has damaged plants in area where they are not irrigated.
2. **Observers:** B. Anderson, C. Anderson, G. Anderson, Thomas Collins (261 Red Bird Loop, Center Point, TX, 78010; towhee@hctc.net), L. Eskridge, T. Gallucci, M. Hixson, S. Hixson, C. Johnson, K. Kappel, M. Scott, P. Umstead, G. Waggener, D. Wilson, S. Wilson, P. Wolters, P. Zohlen.

3. **Butterflies Identified**

Pipevine Swallowtail 23, Black Sw. 13, Giant Sw. 1, E. Tiger Sw. 4, Orange Sulphur 6, Cloudless Su. 4, Large Orange Su. 4, Lyside Su. 1, Sleepy Orange 5, Dainty Su. 6, Juniper Hairstreak 5, Gray Ha. 7, Mallow Scrub-Ha. 2, Dusky-blue Groundstreak 1, Ceraunus Blue 3, Reakirt's Bl. 4, Am. Snout 16, <sup>1</sup>**Gulf Fritillary 80**, Variegated Fr. 3, Theona Checkerspot 2, Texan Crescent 2, Phaon Cr. 4, Painted Lady 1, Red Admiral 2, Com. Buckeye 1, Viceroy 3, Com. Mestra 1, Tawny Emperor 1, Com. Wood-Nymph 1, Queen 88, N. Cloudywing 2, Meridian Duskywing 1, Horace's Du. 2, Mournful Du. 1, Funereal Du. 6, Common/White Checkered-Skipper 2, Clouded Sk. 4, Least Sk. 1, S. Skipperling 1, Fiery Sk. 6, Sachem 1, Dun Sk. 1, Eufala Sk. 2. **Total 43 species, 324 individuals. Immatures:** Black Sw. 75 eggs on Dill; Gulf Fr. 54 caterpillars on Passion Flower (*Passiflora incarnata*).



4. **Field Notes:** The Corvid-19 virus spread caused me to change our protocol for conducting this butterfly census. Volunteers were required to census only their property from a city lot to a ranch. No public land other than the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden was permitted. Volunteers could only have a household member with them or a close friend.<sup>1</sup>New high count - old high count was 32.

**HCMG Demonstration  
Garden**



## Butterflies Identified in Recent Count



**Gray Hairstreak**



**Widow Skimmer  
(Female)**



**Theona Checkersport**

**Photo Credit:  
Tom Collins**



**Queen's**

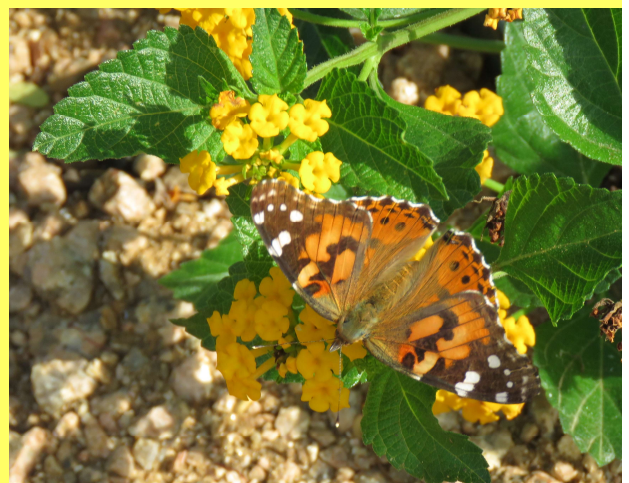


**Gulf Fritillay Caterpillar  
5th Instar**

**Update from Demo Garden:** Lots of Painted Lady's working the Gold Lantana's (right) and the usual crowd of Queen's (above) on the Blue Mist and Tropical Milkweed.

A good link on the best milkweed plants for our area.

<https://npsot.org/wp/story/2012/2235/>





## News from the Demo Garden

By Jackie Skinner, MG

A few months ago Darla Cluster and I visited Medina Nursery where Ernesto introduced us to a newly available wildflower, Wright's Yellow Show. We were so taken by the gay yellow and red flowers, we decided to purchase one for the demo garden. (It was quickly placed along the curb at office front, left side of the entry walk.) Not only is the flower lovely, the serrated leaves are a rich green, making this specimen attractive no matter the time of year.

Although it is the beauty of this plant that caught our eye, I have since learned that it was a sought-after food source as recently as the mid-20th century. The tuber root is shaped much like a parsnip and reportedly easily cooked. It may also be consumed raw. Even when this plant dies back in times of drought, the dried leaves and flowers mark the spot for foragers. Apparently Yellow Show also bears a green fruit whose seeds are edible when the fruit has matured to sort of a papery nut.

This little cutie thrives in full sun, but it wants regular watering. In the fall the stem dies back to the ground, to be replaced by a new one the following late spring. Our herb garden caregiver, Bee Evans, will surely want one for her demo garden section. It's small 18" height will fit quite comfortably among her surprisingly expansive native and adapted herb section.



Wright's Yellow Show



### Angelonia

Submitted by Leigh Thomas, MG

This sweet little flowering perennial (annual in zones 1-7) does well in our Texas sun and heat. This plant comes in colors from white to pink to shades of blue and purple. It grows to between 12-18 " tall with a spread of about 12". I plant mine in various clumps in three different flower beds for great splashes of color! I have never had any problems with pests, fungus or any such thing that drives a gardener crazy. This great color plant, which resembles little snapdragons will flower from April/May to first freeze. I doesn't take a lot of water, but will flower profusely if it gets extra.

**Angelonia is a designated Texas Superstar!**

## **HCMG Monthly Business Meeting**

**August 5, 2020**

**Online Zoom Meeting**

### **Call to Order**

**July 2020 Minutes can be found online in newsletter**

### **Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer's Report-Jackie Connelly-** Jackie reported the sale of rain barrels and the issuance of six checks. The detailed report can be found online on VMS.

### **Plant Sale Report Opportunity-Rachel Garrison**

– Rachel mentioned an opportunity to earn volunteer hours by writing an article for the newsletter. Members can submit a picture of any plant purchased through the B&B sale along with a write up of the plants attributes and cultural requirements, positive and negative. Please email to Pat Wolters for inclusion in upcoming newsletters. This will assist the B&B Committee in planning for the next sale and it will help volunteers earn hours.

**Badges-Rachel Garrison-** Rachel explained that badges with the new logo purchase, paid for by members and ordered from the printer in March but are no longer available. Other options are being evaluated and Rachel apologized for the delay, offering a refund to anyone who wants to cancel their order.

### **Advanced Training & Scholarship-Rachel**

**Garrison-** Rachel mentioned the recent notices in eMinder for online Advanced Training Classes. Two classes are offered. Duane Robinson contributed the dates for Water Harvesting on September 11, 18, and 25 and Greenhouse Management on October 16, 23, and 30. Scholarships are available. Class is online, but will not be recorded. The cost is \$125.00. Scholarships are available. Contact Rachel or scholarship committee for more information.

### **Standing Committees and Project Reports**

**Demo Gardens-Jackie Skinner-** Jackie mentioned having to chain off entrances to the demo garden due to increased activity by deer. An entire goldenball lead tree was eaten by the deer. She requests that any volunteer entering through the chained areas be sure to put the chain back up to

keep the deer out. She is adding cages to protect plants

**Education – Donna Bellis –** Donna announced the education committee is planning the 2021 training class and has openings for volunteers. Membership in committee entails attending monthly zoom meeting and a willingness to assist experienced facilitators in at least one class in 2021. In addition small groups are meeting on Zoom to revamp text study guides. This volunteer opportunity is open to all interns, prior committee members, and all interested members. Donna is hoping to meet soon with the 2020 interns to recap the 2020 class.

**Research Desk-Mark Schultz-** Mark reported that training is continuing and slots are open for all interns. There are two sessions per day but volunteers must leave the building during the lunch hour. The research desk is in need of more questions for the interns to research.

**Scholarship Committee-Rachel Garrison-** Rachel shared receipt of a thank you note from Gabriella Hale, a student graduating from Texas Tech and advancing to postgraduate work in genetics.

### **Unfinished Business**

**Butterfly Count-Tom Collins-** Tom Collins updated the group on the successful butterfly count results and explained this year's count was restricted to HCMG Demo Garden and members' personal property due to COVID restrictions. In spite of the restrictions, HCMG volunteers counted 43 species and broke prior records on 8 different species including gulf fritillaries. Jackie Skinner asked about requirements to become a Monarch Waystation. Tom explained it takes two stands of milkweed. Jackie asked if tropical milkweed counts. Jackie said she has planted antelope horn and tropical milkweed. Tom mentioned Cathy Downs as a possible resource. Duane recommended Native American Seeds as a milkweed seed source and Jackie suggested having the Propagation committee order seeds and grow milkweed babies for demo garden in order to qualify for Monarch Waystation signage. Volunteers earned hours for this activity. **Continued on page 9**



## HCMG Monthly Meeting Cont'd

### New Business

**Nominating Committee-Rachel Garrison**-Rachel requested volunteers for the nominating committee to locate and present a list of nominees at the September meeting. Rachel and Debbie Bacon have held the offices of president and vice president for two consecutive years and both have reached their respective two year limit. Anyone interested in holding office or in volunteering for the short term nominating committee can contact Rachel for information.

### Announcements

**Coming King Thank You Note- Rachel Garrison** - Rachel received thank you note from Coming King for the donation of four plants.

**Missing wagon-Rachel Garrison**-The missing wagon has been found and labeled- Rachel reminded the membership how important it is to keep all HCMG property correctly labeled and to return all property to the correct location after finishing with it.

**Texas Superstars**-Jackie Connelly noted in a recent eMinder that the Texas Superstars web site has been updated.

**Virtual CEU-Rachel Garrison**-Rachel announced that a CEU on bulbs will follow the meeting and is eligible for one hour toward the six hour requirement for recertification. Rachel mentioned several additional opportunities to acquire the necessary CEU units for recertification. Bexar County has a You Tube channel, Texas A&M state website has virtual option options. Facebook Live on Wed and Fri, gardening 101, and Water University recommended by Patty Zohlen and Rachel. Duane has attended the state Directors meeting and reported the dates of the virtual Advanced Training seminars mentioned above and mentioned that the class limit is raised from 2 per county to 3 per county. He mentioned the possibility of an online propagation class in the future if details can be worked out.

## Adjourned

Submitted by  
Donna Nutt  
Secretary.

### CE Program in September

Submitted by Edna Platte

**Ethnobotany:** Historical and Current Uses of Native Plants presented by  
Patty Leslie-Pasztor  
Zoom September CE Program.

Patty is co-author of the book TEXAS TREES. Patty was the Native Plant Horticulturist at San Antonio Botanical Gardens, Park Naturalist at Friedrich Wilderness Park and an adjunct professor at Northwest Vista College. She does consulting work with several organizations around San Antonio and presents workshops on many related subjects.

### *President's message continued*

Like a layer of mulch, our social distancing and Zoom meetings are to protect our most valuable assets, one another. I feel like a bulb that is anxious to break through the soil. I'm ready to resume our full activity level!

This time of dormancy for HCMG will pass. We will one day be able to resume our normal activities. Until that time, protect yourself. Stay safe. Look forward to the time we can get back together and carry on the full schedule of valuable work we do serving our communities with our gardening knowledge. Hang in there! Surely, we will blossom and produce some lush foliage of activity again, soon!

**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**

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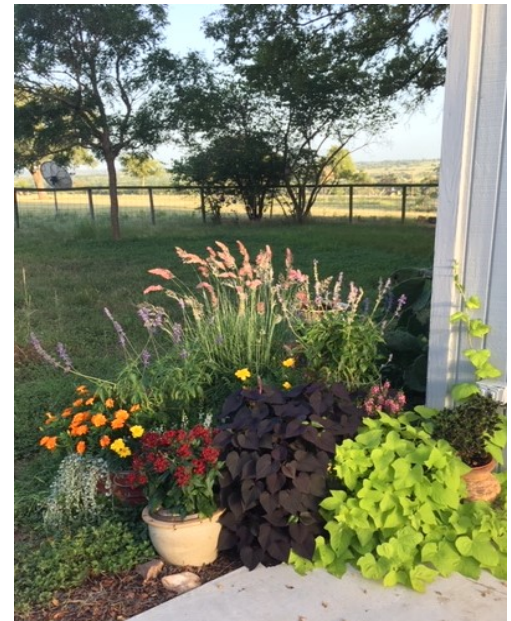
**Submissions to**

Newsletter.editor.hcmg  
@gmail.com

**The Fate of Blooms and Barrel's Plants**

By Kathy Lewis, MG

These photos are of two plant groupings near our home. Left: In bright **shade** most of the day, but gets hot afternoon sun for about 4 hours. Right: Gets morning & early afternoon **sun**, but is in the shade from about 2 pm on.



Ruby grass is doing well in both areas, although the grass in the "shady" pot has grown looser, longer stems. The plant in the "sunny" pot is more compact. The blooms/seed heads are about the same in size and number on each plant, although the "sunny" plant is also in a more windy spot and it's seed heads have disbursed earlier than those in the shady pot. I'm encouraged that new seed heads are being produced on both plants, which will lengthen their showy bloom period.

Both plants are planted in 3 gallon pots, which I thought would be plenty roomy. Although they are doing well, I suspect they would be even larger and happier in larger pots. This is my first experience with Ruby grass, so I'm learning. Both plants require watering at least every 48 hours and during the stretch of 100+ degree days I was watering every day. If we have especially windy day, they also require watering every day. Maybe larger pots would extend the watering interval, but that's an experiment for next year.

This fall I plan to plant these plants in my perennial garden. I hope they will come back next year. I also hope we have Ruby Grass at Blooms and Barrels next spring so I can try planting new plants in larger pots. Ruby Grass is my favorite purchase from B&B this year, possibly because it's new to me and very showy. The long, bluish leaves are graceful, beautiful, and contrast well (both color and texture)) with other plants. The early arrival of the beautiful blooms and seedheads and the long season of color in both sun and shade make this plant a real winner in my book!