



# The "DIG IT" News

## *Congratulations, Class of 2020!*

**Pandemic-proof new Master Gardeners  
complete their class project**

**PAGE 6**



# HIGHLAND LAKES MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

## President's Corner

Sometimes "you've got mail" delivers a timely message of hope and promise.

Greetings, fellow gardeners! Every morning when I wake up, I stumble into the kitchen and start a pot of coffee, scratch the kitties behind their ears and dole out their kibble. After pouring myself a cup with just a smidge of sweetener, I check for critters in the backyard, take my favorite place on the sofa, sip my coffee and try to wake up while opening my emails. Some mornings it is challenging to sift through all the news alerts, sales notices and political ads to get to the real communications from friends and relevant sources.

Five days ago, however, I spotted something different! My dailytrib.com post looked interesting, so I opened it up and, as I read, I began to feel really hopeful and excited. An article focused on the partnership between Marble Falls ISD and the Crisis Network to address student homelessness. The hope is for a long-term lease of land near Colt Elementary and Marble Falls High School to build a community-type facility for families in transition from homelessness, providing shelter as they find stable housing. There will be cabins, a playground, a fishing pond and a community garden! I just love collaborations like this, especially when it helps kids!

The Highland Lakes Crisis Network is made up of about 35 Highland Lakes churches and brings together volunteers to address emergency needs of the community. This facility would be used for families who lost their housing because of floods and other catastrophes. Students will have a stable environment with their families while attempting to re-establish their lives. I realize there are lots of hurdles to cross, but this seems like such a worthy project that I can see HLMGA helping to establish the garden area and perhaps provide a consistent helping hand.

Wait... what am I talking about? We are in the middle of a pandemic looking to last for months more, people are afraid to leave their homes, safe volunteer hours are hard to come by and my biggest

fear is that you will deem HLMGA irrelevant to your lives. And leave us. And in truth, when family is such a focus for us all, that may be the right way to think, right now. But that is exactly why I got so excited about the promise of this facility, which is still at least a year away.

There are approximately 95 homeless students in MFISD right now, mostly because of circumstances beyond their control. Family units and students are sleeping in cars in parking lots, spending a few nights on friends' sofas before they are forced to move to other friends' sofas, sleeping in tents in backyards... all while trying to study and support their families. My mom would call this a "family fruit basket turnover," where lives go flying and gradually come back together, a bit bruised and never quite the same again.

Looking at a future project seems crazy daunting because we, as a group, are limited by everyone's available volunteer hours, current projects needs, funding and weight of benefit vs. time. And this project may not excite you, but it does me. And right now, I desperately need to get excited again about something good. Particularly about what else HLMGA can do to help our community. For me, the thought of those students helping pick tomatoes, okra and beans from the garden and taking them, on site, to their families for a meal is like being home. I smile every time I think of it!

I wanted to share this with you because reading this article made me feel relevant and excited again, and I think we all need to find something like that right about now. If you would like to read this article, you can click on the link in the box. Hopefully, it will help you, too. Because at this moment in time, we all need to feel relevant and important and like we can make a difference in someone's life. I hope being a member of HLMGA still helps you feel that way, as well. Take care of yourself and others,

*Lida Woodul*

Read the article here: [dailytrib.com/2020/09/22/crisis-network-mfisd-partnership-could-help-homeless-students/?utm\\_source=The+Daily&utm\\_campaign=ad3d6a0d0c-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_09\\_22\\_08\\_04&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_6a6cc7fa21-ad3d6a0d0c-90363749&mc\\_cid=ad3d6a0d0c&mc\\_eid=c66f00de7c](https://dailytrib.com/2020/09/22/crisis-network-mfisd-partnership-could-help-homeless-students/?utm_source=The+Daily&utm_campaign=ad3d6a0d0c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_09_22_08_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6a6cc7fa21-ad3d6a0d0c-90363749&mc_cid=ad3d6a0d0c&mc_eid=c66f00de7c)

### Find the latest HLMGA news online!

[burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org](https://burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org)

 [facebook.com/HighlandLakesMasterGardeners](https://facebook.com/HighlandLakesMasterGardeners)

The "Dig It" News is a publication of the Highland Lakes Master Gardener Association – written by gardeners, for gardeners! Please send all content for publication to editor Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com). Deadline is the 28th of the month for the following month's issue. The "Dig It" News is published every month except February and August.



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**Tuesday, October 13, 2020 • 2 p.m.**  
**Outdoor Pavilion (covered) at the AgriLife Extension Building in Burnet, Texas**

**Speaker: Wade Hibler**

Due to early voting taking place in the AgriLife auditorium, we will be meeting in the great outdoors! All members are welcome, since we'll have plenty of room to socially distance. Masks will be required.

Plan to bring your own lawn chair and snack!

*Watch for an email with all the details!*

## OCTOBER 2020

From the MG Membership Committee

Again, there are no in-person meetings or presentations scheduled that would offer Advanced Training credit during October from any of the local nature-oriented organizations.

Also, there are no classes scheduled at Backbone Valley Nursery, The Natural Gardener in Austin or the San Antonio Botanical Garden.

On the other hand, there are numerous AT-credit Zoom presentations for October that have been announced to the membership through Co-secretary Marsha Whatley – from the Native Plant Society, from “Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Programs,” and from Molly Keck and Wizzie Brown.

There is one VIRTUAL class from the LBJ Wildflower Center available in October for Master Gardener

Advanced Training Credit:

**OCTOBER 11** — “Edible Native Plants and Where to Find Them – VIRTUAL” with Eric Knight, co-founder and owner of Local Leaf, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (2 hr credit) (repeat). Fee: \$25. Pre-registration required at [wildflower.org/learn/adults](http://wildflower.org/learn/adults). Click at right to get October 2020 calendar, click on program, click on “Find Out More” and click on register.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Watch for additional notices during the month about webinars, Zoom class, etc., that are approved for MG advanced training credit. (P.S. If you find a class about gardening that looks interesting, please notify Ray Buchanan at [drraybuch@gmail.com](mailto:drraybuch@gmail.com).)

**WASH YOUR HANDS**

### Volunteer Service Opportunities

## OCTOBER 2020

From the MG Membership Committee

**STAY SAFE**

HLMGA members are encouraged to follow social distancing protocols to protect themselves and others during volunteer activities.

Project sites are under the supervision of the Project Chairs. Therefore, no one should show up at a project site expecting to do Volunteer Service unless specific permission has been obtained from the Project Chair. Availability of VS activity as well as schedules, etc., at each project site are up to the Project Chair exclusively.

• Harth Foundation (Greg Cockrill – [jgcockrill@yahoo.com](mailto:jgcockrill@yahoo.com))

• Horseshoe Bay Church Garden (Vicki Adcock – [txrunner55@att.net](mailto:txrunner55@att.net))

• King’s Gate Garden (Keith Atwood – [keithatwood@hotmail.com](mailto:keithatwood@hotmail.com))

• Oaks Nursing Home Courtyard Garden (Christy Stephens – [cnt78611@yahoo.com](mailto:cnt78611@yahoo.com))

• AgriLife Extension Office Building (Amy Parke – [steveamyparke@yahoo.com](mailto:steveamyparke@yahoo.com))

• The Garden (Suzy Rowley – [suzyrowley@gmail.com](mailto:suzyrowley@gmail.com)).



## Learn to Make Unique Garden Pots

Story and Photo by Amy Parke

Hypertufa is a conglomerate word, combining “hyper” – excessive or extreme – and “tufa” – a natural hard rock. Put them together, and hypertufa means an excessively hard rock.

It is easy to make hypertufa pots and containers. The containers are made with a mixture of Portland cement, peat moss, and vermiculite, perlite or other lightweight materials and water. The mixture is pushed into molds and allowed to harden. After a few days, the molds are removed from the hardened pot. The pots then air dry for several weeks prior to curing. The cure process is simply leaving them outside for a few months to develop a patina of old

age. The cured pots look like they were made a century ago when, in fact, they are brand new. The pots make great gifts, especially when filled with

flowers or plants.

On Tuesday, October 27, from noon to 2 p.m., there will be a hypertufa workshop. Participants will learn the basics and then mold their own pots to take home. The workshop will be held at Amy Parke’s home at 6047 CR 223, Kempner. To ensure there is adequate space, the workshop is limited to 15 persons. To register, call 254-833-2720. Leave a message with questions or to reserve your spot. The program is approved for AT credit.

I am more myself in a garden than anywhere else on earth.

~Doug Greene

# Congratulations, Class of 2020!



After the pandemic-challenged certification class went online to fulfill MG training requirements, the remaining members came together at The Garden to complete their class project



Story and photos by Gail Eltgroth

To say it has been an unusual year is quite the understatement. The certification class began as usual in February, with 28 enthusiastic interns registered. Over the first several classes, they each began to embrace the mission of Master Gardeners and their interest grew. And then the shutdown halted all progress.

With the help of Texas Master Gardener Coordinator Jayla Fry and Burnet County Extension Agent Kelly Tarla, we were able to share links to online classes which kept our interns engaged and were in-depth enough to count toward their 40 hours of classroom training.

Understandably, lives had been turned upside down in the spring. With new telecommuting work obligations and children's distance-learning taking priority on home computers, Master Gardener classes had to move to the back burner for several of our interns. They will be given an opportunity to return to next year's class whenever that can be arranged.

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However, nine of our students persevered and finished all the online assignments at their own pace over the spring and summer months. Congratulations to Anelicia Cheney-Campbell, Pat Ivey, Jo Keller, Tania Lichtenstein, Staci McGuire, May Miller, Sheralyn Nobles, Lanetta Sprott and Connie Stein.

In August we gathered again virtually on a Zoom meeting to learn the keyhole method of gardening and plan for the completion of the class project at The Garden.

Special thanks go to Staci McGuire for contacting and coordinating the construction of two beautiful stone keyholes by Premium Landscape. All supplies were generously donated by Premium. The Certification Class and The Garden, with the help of donations, were able to hire Premium's stonemasons to do what they do best.

After the masonry was set, the interns arrived on a cool, drizzly September morning with cardboard, twigs and branches, garden and kitchen trimmings, plants and the sheer willpower to get it finished. The small but mighty crew, working in between rain bands of tropical storm Beta, finished layering the keyhole, and new herbs were planted by noon.

Thanks also to Kerry Nyquist, David Waldo and Suzy Rowley for their support and guidance during the planning process. We hope the keyholes will produce for many years to benefit The Garden and the community.

If you are interested in the construction and layering process for your own keyhole, a DVD donated by the 2020 Certification Class is available to check out at the HLMGA library in the AgriLife building. 🌱





This Bagworm pupae was removed from a live oak tree. The bunch of leaves is built around the caterpillar, which drags the leaves around while consuming food, then forms the pupae inside them. The Psychidae moth is harmful to a variety of trees.

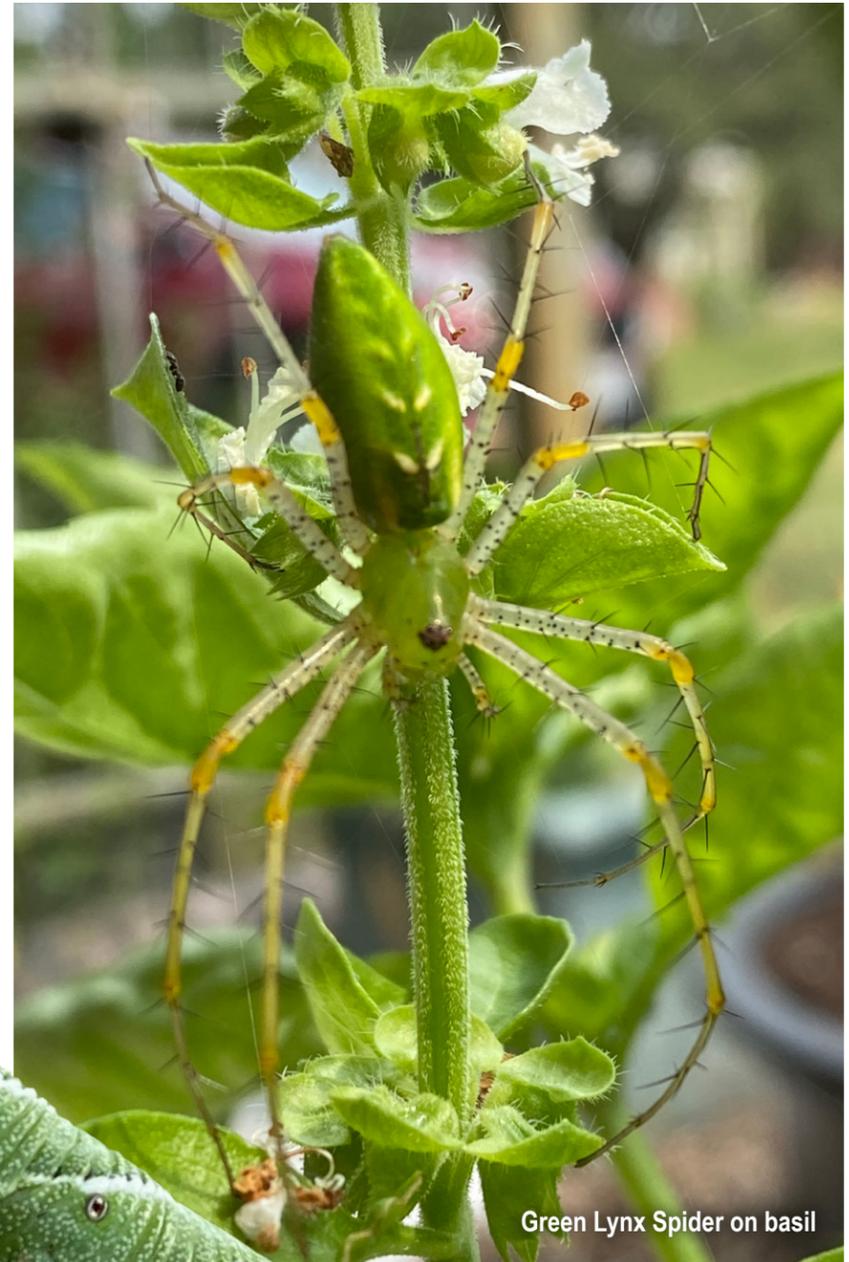


What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com).



Summer Tanager male and two Lesser Goldfinch females

Check out the fauna living amongst the flora at Nancy Knickerbocker-Penick's place!



Green Lynx Spider on basil



Tomato hornworm



# Luedecke Lessons

By Bill and Martelle Luedecke

*Keep your souls and soles in your garden! Remember the True Master Gardener: Jesus said, "I am the vine; my Father is the Gardener." John 15:1*

## Identifying Plants

Has this happened to you? While out exploring, you find a plant you don't recognize. You take a few photos of it with your phone, but then when you get back to your computer to identify it, you don't seem to have all the information you need.

Here are some points to remember when photographing for identification.

First, what size is the plant? Whenever I am out in the field and discover a new plant, I always take a photo with either my boot or my hand in the photo. I know that my mucks are



11 inches long and my hand without my thumb is 3 inches wide.

Second, try to take a photo from the top and the side. These shots will tell you how the leaves are connected to each other and to the stalk. The angle will also show the shape and characteristics of the leaves.

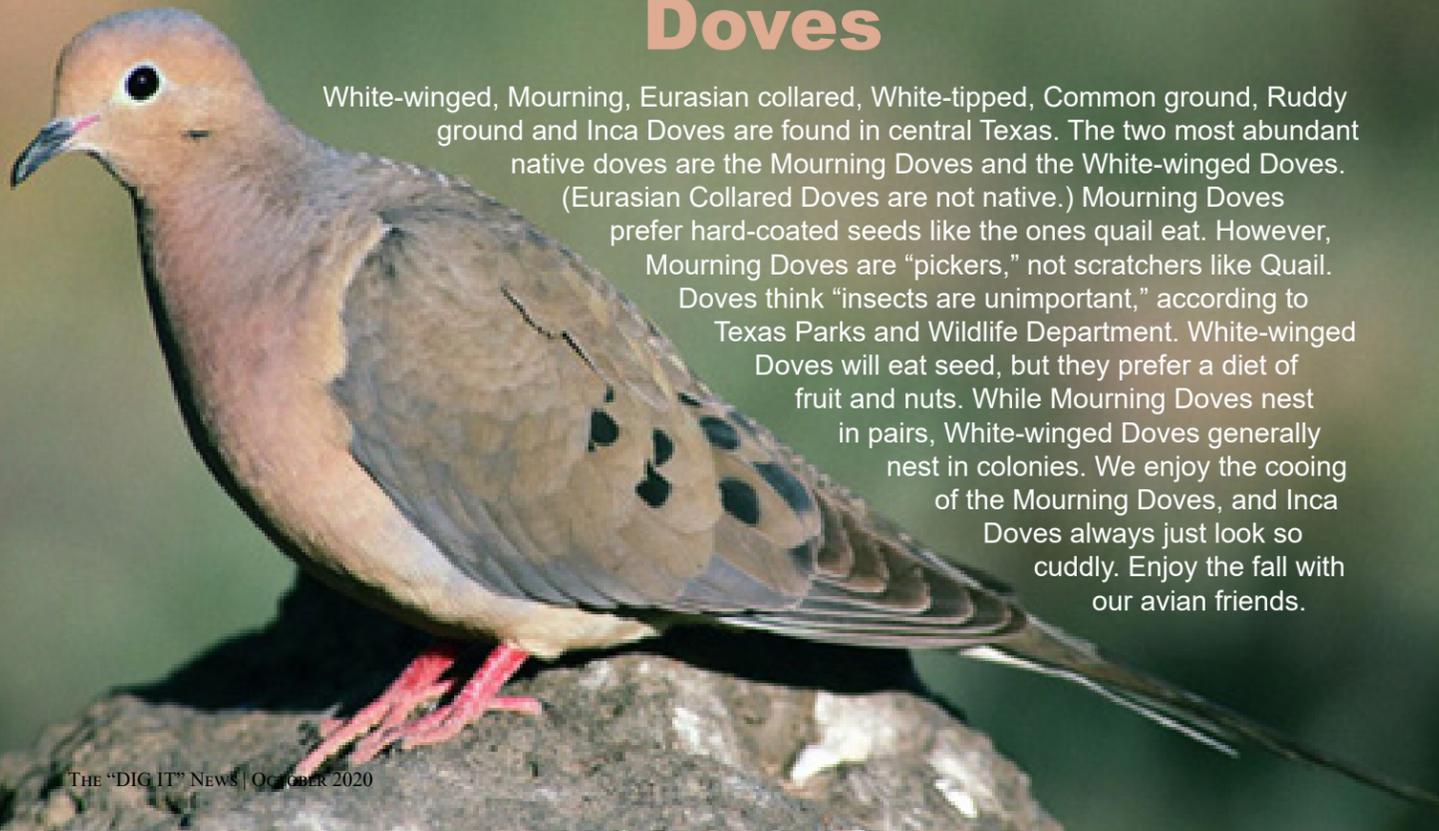
Third, if the plant is blooming or fruiting, take a photo of that. Often

leaves can be similar, but the flower and fruit will give you more insight to what type of plant you are identifying.

Happy exploring!

## Doves

White-winged, Mourning, Eurasian collared, White-tipped, Common ground, Ruddy ground and Inca Doves are found in central Texas. The two most abundant native doves are the Mourning Doves and the White-winged Doves. (Eurasian Collared Doves are not native.) Mourning Doves prefer hard-coated seeds like the ones quail eat. However, Mourning Doves are "pickers," not scratchers like Quail. Doves think "insects are unimportant," according to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. White-winged Doves will eat seed, but they prefer a diet of fruit and nuts. While Mourning Doves nest in pairs, White-winged Doves generally nest in colonies. We enjoy the cooing of the Mourning Doves, and Inca Doves always just look so cuddly. Enjoy the fall with our avian friends.



## October Garden Duties

- Place your Tulip (Tulipa) and Hyacinth (Hyacinthus orientalis) bulbs in the refrigerator. With 60 days of chilling, they can be planted in December.
- Now is perfect weather to dig up and separate your Irises (Iris) and flowering rhizomes (sidenote: deer don't like eating Irises for lunch).
- Since November through February is a good time to plant trees, why not begin your list?
- Don't start pruning trees yet, as tempting as it is. We'll remind you later.
- Remove all the annuals as they begin to dwindle in their blooms.
- Cut the tops off all the herbaceous (herb-like, usually leafy or non-woody) perennials that have completed their flowering cycle.
- If you have been collecting and saving seeds of those favorite or newly discovered plants, allow them to air dry. Then place them in an airtight container. Be sure to mark what they are before putting them away, inside, for a "good night's sleep."
- It's time to feed the Azaleas, Camellias and Rhododendrons with bone meal to encourage bud formation.
- When you are composting, be sure and add coffee grounds to assist in bringing the pH down.
- If you are not applying Corn Gluten this season, fertilize your lawn (8-2-4) for the winter.



## Purple Paint

Have you seen a painted purple post or fence or tree on a boundary line? Texas and several other states have a "Purple Paint Law." Purple paint on a boundary is the same as a No Trespassing sign. For instance, if you live in the Marble Falls area, the Bluebonnet House by PEC has a fresh coat of purple paint on its post by 281.

## Beets

Fall has officially arrived, and the cooler weather and rain has been a blessing. One of the fall vegetables we suggest is beets. Beets love the cool fall weather. Their tops can be eaten as greens in your salad, full of Vitamin A and calcium. The roots are often served pickled, baked or boiled, and we have met folks who eat them like apples. Seven to eight weeks after planting, your beets should be ready for harvest. You could serve beet salad at Thanksgiving. While you're waiting for harvest time, keep a careful eye out for these pests: flea beetle, aphid, webworm, and beet armyworm (no, we didn't make that name up.)



Have questions or comments?  
Contact Bill Luedecke at [bill@texasland.net](mailto:bill@texasland.net) or Martelle Luedecke at [Luedeckephoto@gmail.com](mailto:Luedeckephoto@gmail.com).

# Putting the polish on **PALMS**



Photo by Sherry Alherton



Photo by Sherry Alherton

*Editor's note: Lavona Fry and Willard Horn recently did some volunteer work at HARTH – Healing and Recovery Through Horses – near Buchanan Lake. Lavona sent these pictures and the following brief report about their palm-trimming activities.*

At HARTH there are five palms, then two very tall ones, as you drive up to the barn. The purpose of the trim is just for beautification. I brought my reciprocating saw for the trimming. The fronds are not too heavy, but they have very sharp thorns at the edges. We loaded a full truck load and took them to the burn pile down the road.



Texas Sage flowering at HARTH.

Photo by Lavona Fry

Story and Photos by Carolyn Crouchet

# Tex-Mex Food for Pollinators

• *No Salsa Needed* •



**T**he new pollinator beds planted outside my vegetable garden this spring have been a dandy experiment. I planted several kinds of annual seeds for color while the perennials filled in. Mother Nature planted a few, as well. Some have grown and vanished, some never even showed up, but some have been startling, and none more so than the Mexican sunflowers that I planted and the vigorous native Texas sunflower that appeared.

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Orange is usually not my favorite flower color, but I am totally smitten with the intensely vivacious shade produced by the Torch variety of *Tithonia rotundifolia* (Mexican Sunflower). The illustration on the seed packet, while charming, doesn't even come close to the glow of the blooms. I've seen hummingbirds sipping nectar from them and many bumblebees gathering pollen, and I hope the seed packet is correct about the flowers attracting monarch butterflies. They should be flying in soon, and I've got my fingers crossed.

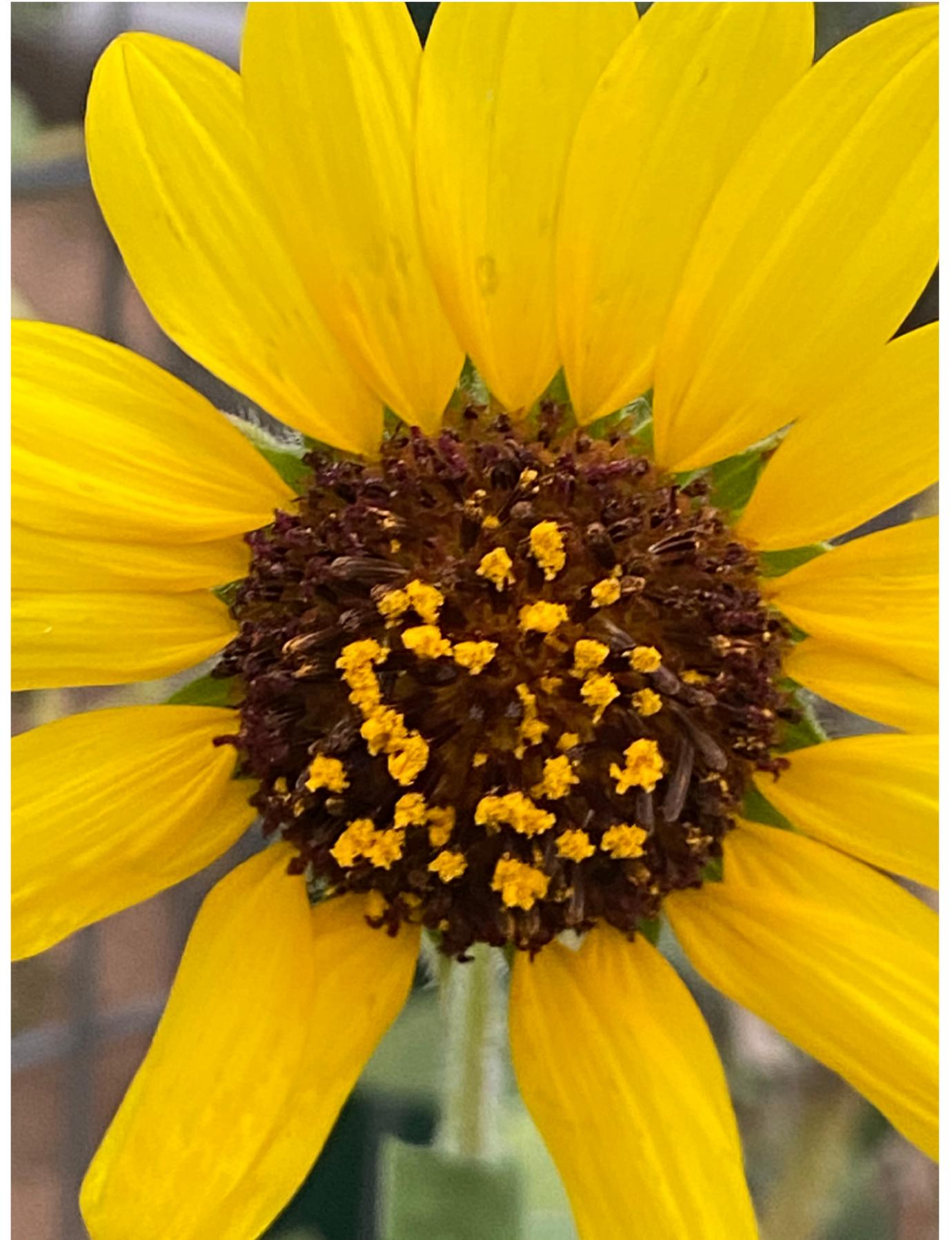
I don't see many native sunflowers here, although a few started showing up in the nearby chicken yard. However, the plant in the flowerbed is now about 4 feet tall and has bloomed continually since early summer. According to the database at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, the *Helianthus annuus*



(Common Sunflower) is considered especially valuable to native bees, and I have constantly seen bumblebees collecting pollen when I have been working inside the veggie garden. But our foraging honeybees love the cheerful blooms, as well.

In addition, the seeds attract Goldfinches, birds too shy to come to my porch feeders. I have startled them many times, but they retreat way too quickly for me to get a photo.

The sunflowers' time to bloom will draw down soon, and I have let many blossoms go to seed. I absolutely want these plants again for my own enjoyment and to feed the visitors. I know I can purchase seeds for both. But my real hope is that Tex-Mex sunflowers will show up again for next year's gardening experiment. 🌻



# THE KING'S GARDEN

UPDATE



This flower on a red okra plant is so beautiful!

What an exciting time to be a gardener in the Highland Lakes! When I lived in Alaska, this would be the time to make sure that the winter clothes still fit, the vehicles were winterized, and that there was sufficient heating oil.

Not here. The climate in the Highland Lakes is a tad bit different. After the challenges of the scorching heat of the summer, it's time to not only prepare for the fall crop season, but also look to the 2021 season. We are adjusting practices and resizing some of the beds to increase the harvest amount of our first season.



The King's Garden has harvested about 7,500 pounds, and our volunteers are optimistic that we will pick another 1,000 to 1,500 pounds before the end of 2020. We already have some late summer/early fall tomatoes, cucumbers and squash in the ground. It is especially amazing to see how the tomatoes grow from day to day. Back in Fairbanks, anything in the ground would have been killed by the freezing temperatures of September.

Beds are being prepared for the spinach, romaine and bib lettuce, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, carrots and turnips that have sprouted

**STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY HANK ROMINSKI**



A week before, these tomato plants were half this size.

in containers off-site. Within a few weeks, they will find themselves in their new home at The King's Garden.

Will these teeny tiny plants grow up to make 1,500 more pounds for the year? Tune in and read about us in the coming months.

I would certainly be remiss if I didn't mention our beautiful pollinator garden. It beckons butterflies, bees and people to come by to enjoy the flowers and colors. It really is a wonderful welcome mat to be enjoyed by all who visit and volunteer.

The King's Garden only continues due to the efforts of our volunteers. One thing that we offer to our volunteers is pride of ownership. Beyond just planting, weeding and harvesting, there are many opportunities to contribute your efforts to make The King's Garden successful, comfortable and beautiful. Stop by and see for yourself. 🧰

With more than 11,000 square feet of vegetable garden and about 1,500 square feet of pollinator space to tend, it is easy to maintain your "social distance" while experiencing your Joy of Gardening. Contact Keith Atwood (713.203.8846) or Hank Rominski (860.575.8098) for information if you want to visit or volunteer at The King's Garden.

We are leaning toward winter hours and will be at The King's Garden every Monday, Wednesday and Friday starting about 9 a.m. Usually someone is there until about 11-11:30.



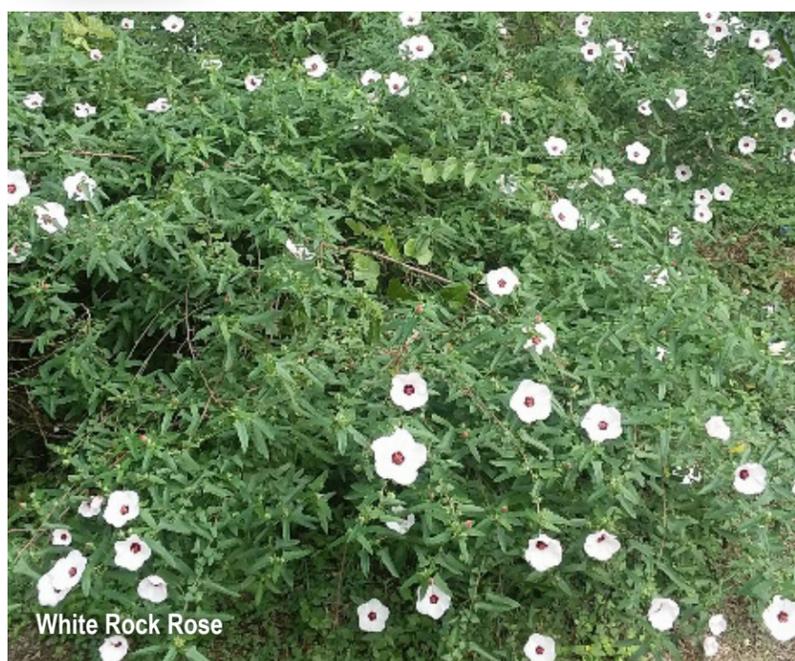
Future salad fixings – grow, baby, grow!



Black Pearl Pepper



Oxblood Lily



White Rock Rose



Sedum – six-week warning for frost.



Chives (which the bees love)

What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com).



*Pictures from Lavona Fry*



# UPDATE The Garden



We are heading into fall and our fall garden. Many cool weather plants are in the ground and doing well. The squash is going crazy! We also have many other cool weather veggies in the ground, so production should continue for several months.

Big news this month is the addition of two keyhole gardens. This accomplishment is due to efforts of a number of folks, but the primary driving force was Staci McGuire. Staci is a member of the 2020 MG class who took the project on her shoulders and got it done. Thank you, Staci, for an excellent job.

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Story and photos by David Waldo





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We have plans for a couple of small groups to come out and tour The Garden in the coming weeks. We see this as a great way to shed positive light on one of HLMG's major projects. This will be done in a responsible fashion, with safety as a number-one issue.

As always, feel free to come out and lend a hand or just take a look. We are on our regular schedule of 8 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. 🧤



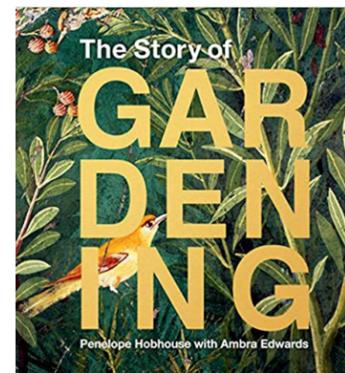
# Recommended Reading



Know of a great book that you would recommend to your gardening friends? Send the title to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com). Written reviews are welcomed, but not required.

## The Story of Gardening

By Penelope Hobhouse with Ambra Edwards



According to the Old Testament, life began in a garden, with dramatic events happening around a fruit tree. And later, divine communication took place through a bush. Depictions of gardens in ancient Egypt featured figs, grapes, pomegranates and melons. Bundles of flowers appeared in ancient Greek homes in order to “refresh the thinking faculty” and preserve “the purity of ideas and the gaiety of the spirits.” Louis XIV designed the gardens at Versailles to reinforce the centralization of his authority as the Sun King.

If this piques your interest, search out the “definitive” history of garden development and design, written by the “grande dame of garden design” in England, Penelope Hobhouse. Covering garden designs and styles from ancient Mesopotamia to the eclectic landscapes of the 21st century, this profusely illustrated, elegant book even includes timelines that chart the history and fashions of individual plants.

Never heard of this recipient of the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Garden Designers in England? Well, look for her principles of design in the Queen Mother's garden and in the garden she designed for an Austin, Texas, estate on Harris Boulevard in the Pemberton Heights area. (See photos here: [penick.net/digging/?p=157](http://penick.net/digging/?p=157)) And if you want more, try her “Gardens of Persia” or “In Search of Paradise: Great Gardens of the World,” among others.

Enjoy!

~ Recommended by Ray Buchanan

## Call for Content!

The Dig It News is written for gardeners, by gardeners... and that means we need to hear from YOU! You can send material at any time to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com), but the deadline for the next issue (November) is October 28. You can send content as the text of an email or in a document – whatever works best for you. Cell phone pictures are fine, and photos are welcomed with all types of submissions.

Here's a list of submission categories, but please don't feel limited – if a topic interests you, chances are it will interest other HLMGA members!

- Articles - Stories about people, projects, plants, places or anything else you think would interest readers. Those of you with specialized training or knowledge are especially invited to share your expertise with the rest of us! Photos are a plus. (BONUS: time spent writing articles counts as volunteer time!)
- Photos / What's Growing On - Share pictures of plants,

projects, people, you name it. Please include a brief description of what is in the photo and identify any people.

- Gardener's X-change - Please include your email address and/or phone number so folks know how to contact you.
- Q&A with the HLMGA - Send gardening questions you have, or answer questions published in a previous issue.
- Diggin' the Dirt - Share your gardening knowledge and experience by answering the question of the month. Please email your answer to Suzy Buchanan at [docinia@yahoo.com](mailto:docinia@yahoo.com).
- Garden Hacks - Share your best tips and tricks.
- Recommended Reading - Send the titles of your favorite gardening books.
- Links & Apps - Share your favorite online gardening links and applications.
- Recipes - Because who doesn't like to enjoy the fruits – and veggies – of their labor?



These salvias and lantana are in the beds at our home. They recovered from the hail storm, grasshoppers and lack of rain in splendor. Just in time for the hummingbirds moving through!

The deer head is a gift from friends with a ranch in south Texas. Most people might not like it, but we have a bunch of horns and such around our beds.

~ Lida Woodul



What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com).

# Backyard Beauties

Once again, Sissy's patience and long lens found some awesome things in our back yard. We were fortunate enough to be at the right place (inside) at the right time as a male and two female Baltimore Orioles saw our feeder and decided to stop for a snack and a sip.

The regular visits of the hummingbirds are always exciting, especially when they decide to zoom by about 2 inches from your ears. You can hear the wings coming, but they have passed by before you can truly react.

It's hard to believe that we have been working this property for almost four years now. So many changes to the landscape have been made during that time, many of which came after conversations or readings suggested by our fellow Master Gardeners. The best part is having the space and soil to try and attract different species to enjoy and photograph. We are always receptive to a new plant or idea that can be added to our eclectic back yard.

*Story by Hank Rominski  
Photos by Colleen "Sissy" Rominski*



A male Baltimore Oriole eats Hills Country Fare grape jelly.



A female Baltimore Oriole patiently waits her turn for snacks.



I can't believe what I am seeing!



A male Baltimore Oriole gets a sip along with the snacks.



"I think that there's enough pollen and nectar for the both of us, don't you?"