



Newsletter 2024

Volume 1

BOARD

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www.hcbloomers.org

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Board Bio Fiona Willcox 2024 President

My husband and I first moved to Leander from Connecticut in 2018. I feel so thankful for the small miracles that led to me being here, becoming part of the Bloomers and meeting all the wonderful people that I now have the privilege of calling my friends. A pickleball friend introduced me to the Hill Country Bloomers, and I knew instantly that I wanted to become more involved, especially after attending the Christmas Party with the white elephant gift exchange and margaritas!

In my second year of membership, I coerced a friend to become programs co-chair with me, and took on the tasks of finding presenters, advertising, sending invitations, liaising with speakers, and preparing the event space. It was challenging and such fun!

Last year, I volunteered as Vice President, and oversaw the amazing collaborative we call the Spring Plant Sale. Talk about a team effort! No one has to be a superb gardener – just a team player wanting to help – those are my kind of people for sure!

I am so excited for this year! We have so many new developments and plans to expand, the first being this new bimonthly newsletter. We are also starting open garden days, where members can visit other members' gardens. Add in our wonderful educational garden grants, the stream of excellent monthly speakers and the Fall Garden tour; the Hill Country Bloomers Garden Club really does offer something special for everyone!



(Image by Forest and Kim Starr)

SPRING PLANT SALE APRIL 13, 2024 MILBURN PARK

The Plant Sale Committee is planning and preparing for this year's event! Building on the success of the 2023 sale we will have even more of the most popular plants, garden crafts and a new area - "Garden Junque"! Our growers are hard at work on annuals, perennials, succulents, and herbs. Volunteer opportunities are available for members, ask a board member for information or email us at hillcountrybloomers@gmail.com.

The Spring Plant Sale - April 13, 2024, 10am-3pm - Milburn Park Pavilion, 1901 Sun Chase Blvd., Cedar Park.

SEED GROWING EVENT A SUCCESS!

On January 24, aspiring and experienced growers learned all about seed starting. They were able to borrow equipment such as grow lights, seedling trays and heaters to use at home. Another seed growing event is planned, please email us at hillcountrybloomers@gmail.com if you are interested in attending.

PERMACULTURE EXCURSION APRIL 6, 2024 10-12

Join us for a member exclusive excursion to Randie Picotello's 5-acre yard in which she has developed a permaculture inspired orchard featuring many native and fruit bearing trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Developed around a swale and berm system for water retention, this yard is an educational center for school children, and reflects Randie's passion for education and outdoors.

Learn from Randie about some of the core fundamentals of permaculture design, with a focus on designing for water conservation, and view this beautiful Texas garden in its spring splendor! Evite coming soon!

*A Garden is not a
Place.*

It's a Journey.

Monty Don

Upcoming Monthly Meetings

Cedar Park Recreation Center-6:30 PM

March 12, 2024

Xeriscaping - Jackie Gross

April 09, 2024

The World of Honey Bees

Nona Spillars

May 14, 2024

Land Stewardship for Birds

Rufus Stephens

Special Seed Sorting Event

March 21, 2024, 10 am – 12 pm

Leander Library

We will be sorting seeds for the Mason Homestead Open Day!

Open Garden Days

Any members interested in opening your garden for an informal tour for other club members, please contact Judy Schwartz at hillcountrybloomers@gmail.com or speak to her at a monthly meeting.



GARDEN GRANTS

Applications for the Hill Country Bloomers 2024 garden grants are due on March 1, 2024.

\$200 grants were awarded in 2023. In 2024 we are expanding to four grants of up to \$500.

Schools and non-profits in the Leander ISD area are eligible to apply for grants to assist garden related education for children and youth.

Go to www.hcbloomers.org/garden-grants for more information.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

It's a new year, have you renewed your membership yet? Not a member yet? We'd love to have you!

Join on our website, www.hcbloomers.org/membership or at a monthly meeting. (first meeting is free!)

What are the perks of membership?

Enjoy our monthly educational meetings, plant swaps, volunteer opportunities and our fantastic community of garden enthusiasts!



GARDEN SPOTLIGHT CORNELIA DU PLESSIS



Cornelia and her husband bought a 1/3 acre lot in Cedar Park in 2016. They designed their home around the existing mature live oaks. Cornelia explained that their goal was to gain as much privacy as possible using shrubs, trees and fencing. They gravitate to the European style of secluded courtyards, and created several areas they call garden rooms or “little sanctuaries”. Benches, large flat rocks, and chairs provide spots to enjoy listening to birds or meditating.

Being new to the area, Cornelia did some quick research on deer-resistant plants and trees for the front yard. She feels they were successful in the selections because the plants are still here! They are able to keep deer away

from the pool area with help from the greenhouse, maturing plants and stacks of wood (thank you ice storms!) The splash pool was a Covid project they constructed themselves from insulated concrete forms (ICF).

There is a deer path through the backyard, and they plan to keep it natural as is. Other visitors include opossums, skunks, snakes (mostly friendly ones!), armadillos and a variety of birds that enjoy the three birdbaths.

Goals for the garden include not having a lawn and incorporating as many indigenous plants as possible. Because of the extreme climate in Texas, they have come to appreciate the native plants’ ability to survive and thrive here. In their garden you will find Texas Persimmons, Flameleaf sumac, Arroyo Sweetwood, Retamas, Carolina Buckthorns, Possumhaw Hollies, and more. Because of the abundance of beautiful rocks, they also created a few rock gardens! Future plans include finding/installing/making a fountain and finding space for a vegetable garden.

“It is the plans and the dreams we have that keep us going!”

Memories from 2023

