

Gardens of SJC Master Gardener Report 3/21/2018

Last month, I reported that I had submitted a grant application for Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas. 28 of the 69 applicants were chosen, but we were not among the winners. There were 21 reasons on the rejection form letter. When I contacted the Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist, I was told that our ratings were “all over the place” and we lost points for non-natives, but in the end, since there were so many applicants, they chose new gardens, who could best use the grant monies. I suggest that we no longer apply for this grant in the future. AND we can congratulate our intern Vickie Pullen who received a grant for the newly formed Native Plant Society of Texas, whose garden is located at their meeting location in Huntsville.

Regarding non-native plants, the most controversial “butterfly” plant is the tropical milkweed *Asclepias curassavica*. Many differing opinions are being researched, but the Native Plant Society of Texas believes that it is harmful. Therefore, we will remove it from our Butterfly Garden.

February 24 - I fertilized the garden per the plan approved by the Garden Committee last fall.

March 1 - The mulch project was completed in two days at the end of February, without any Garden Committee members. I was able to get Trustee help, so I decided to get bulk mulch, instead of bags, as the Garden Committee had voted for last fall. Our mulch budget for bags was \$575, the actual cost was \$280.04, resulting in a savings of \$294.96.

March 15 – WorkDay – Pruning and clean up was completed by Kathy M., Vicki G., Carol and myself.

As many of you know I was honored to be chosen as Chairman of the Garden in February 2017. I resigned in April due to some issues and returned in July, when no one stepped up to the plate. The SJC Master Gardeners had made a commitment to the Coldspring Community Center, but more importantly, we needed to honor the dream of a former member, Connie Heiman. However, the reasons I resigned last April have not been resolved. Therefore, I have sent my Garden Committee resignation to the Executive Committee.