



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

June, 2005

Volume 3, Issue 7

Meeting

Wednesday,

June 1, 2005

1:00 p.m.

at the extension office.

Jan Fulkerson, Texas Forest Service, will speak about "fire-wise landscaping."

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President's Message:

Congratulations are in order for our new Master Gardners. Liz Althaus (class of '04) finished her volunteer hours. Anne Brown and Harold Pieratt (class of '05) are also entitled to the MG designation. We welcome the three of them with a hearty "well done!"

I attended the Texas Master Gardner Association meeting in Denton in May. There were many good seminars. Too bad you could only attend one per session. It was difficult to choose. There were exhibits of things other groups are doing which were interesting. I attended a topiary workshop. I learned that the topiary experts will have no competition from me. That

certainly is not going to be my specialty.

The executive board is looking into the possibility of hosting the TMGA meeting in 2007. Doug Welsh has encouraged us to make a proposal. The Denton group and the Corpus Christi group have offered to share their experiences to help avoid some of the pitfalls.

I went to Corpus Christ last week and met with Helen Orsak, chairman of the meeting in Corpus Christi, and Jan Shannon, incoming president of the Texas Master Gardner Association. They both offered support and they said they felt their group was stronger after hosting the meeting.

Club Ed, the community education program, is still looking for someone, or two someones, to help with a gardening class in September. They have the work done already and need someone to suggest plants and instruct people in the planting and care of the plants. If you are interested give me a call and I'll give you the particulars.

Stay cool and come to the meeting on June 1.

Fay Drozd

Special Deal on New Garden Planner for All HCMGs

The 2006 garden planner is being offered at a special advance-sale price of \$7.50, plus \$2 shipping and handling fee to all Hill Country Master Gardeners (HCMG) now through Aug. 31.

Unlike many so-called Hill Country gardening references that focus on Austin, this new edition planner specifically targets Kerr County and the surrounding area, said Christine Millar the project's coordinator.

Included in the planner are articles on such topics as edible landscaping, plants that attract beneficial insects, how to build a bird house from a single fence paling, plus a section on roses that thrive in our area without super-human effort, recipes, lists of good books and other valuable bits of information. The planner is sponsored by local small businesses.

"This is a great gift idea for gardeners," Millar said, "and, at this price, it would be a wonderful stocking stuffer for the holiday season."

The cost for each planner is \$9.50, which includes shipping and handling. Those wanting to take advantage of this special offer can send a check or money order for the total amount of their purchase payable to Hill Country Master Gardeners. Mail orders and payment to Christine Millar, Garden Planner, P.O. Box 1479, Center Point, TX 78010.

Hurry, this special, discount is only available through Aug. 31, 2005. Advance-sale copies will be mailed in September when published.



Rose Selection Proves a Thorny Issue for HCMG

Folks calling the Kerr County Extension office have a broad range of questions, but two of the most common ones posted are seeking advice on deer-resistant landscape plants and recommendations for what kind of roses grow well in the Hill Country.

Both are topics for considerable examination, but we've been asked to turn our attention first to a discussion of roses suitable for our challenging environment.

Contributors to this conversation are MG Frances Brandes, rosarian who has grown more than a thousand roses in Houston; newly certified MG Harold Pieratt (class of 2005), who has more than five years experience growing roses in Fredericksburg; and MG Pam Bresler, whose "Ten Commandments for Growing Roses in Kerrville" is one of the oft-cited resources in the MG file.

Before addressing actual cultivars, it's probably wise to begin with a brief review of some basic requirements of growing roses.

The planting site should receive a minimum of **six hours of sunlight** and, because our summers are so intense, morning light is preferable.

Soil testing is always a recommended first step, and as most of us already know, roses prefer an acid soil. Our soil, when it isn't solid limestone, is alkaline. Pieratt told how he was determined to introduce an acid soil condition by having his landscaper dig out about a foot of top soil and caliche, then till east Texas top soil, compost and shredded cedar mulch into his raised beds. "The limestone bedrock leached into my rose beds and the alkalinity in our city water caused all my effort to be in vain," he said. We really can't effectively change the pH of our soil, but **adding compost and other organic material** is rule number two on Bresler's list.

Late December through February is the ideal time to plant or transplant roses. Bare-root roses should be

planted in January or as soon as they are available in stores.

Roses need about **2 inches of water per week**, including rainfall and irrigation. In our part of the Hill Country, especially in summer, irrigation is a necessity, and **root watering** is recommended rather than overhead watering, which might lead to problems with fungal diseases.

All our experienced rose experts agree that it's most important to **plant the right kind of rose**. Some criteria for selection include purchasing:

- grade #1 roses from reputable nurseries.
- disease-resistant roses, such as *Earth-Kind Roses* and *Texas Superstars*. These designations are bestowed by the Texas A&M Agriculture Program on plants that, after extensive statewide field tests, demonstrate outstanding disease and insect tolerance and/or resistance and which grow well in almost all soil types.
- old rose varieties, which tend to be stable, long lived and sturdy. Bresler further noted, in her rule # 3, that roses grown on their own roots tend to live longer than grafted roses.

Here are six specific cultivar recommendations suitable to the Hill Country:

Old Blush: Both a climber and a bush, this China rose is a heavy bloomer with pink, semi-double flowers. Brandes said Old Blush was called Old Monthly in the "olden" days and blooms heavily in the spring with another smaller flush in the fall. Pieratt, too, extols the steady-blooming virtues of Old Blush, as does the Aggie Horticultural Web site. To see an example of Climbing Old Blush, visit the Admiral Nimitz Museum on Highway 290 in Fredericksburg. Brandes said Old Blush is often found in old cemeteries all over Central Texas.

Mutabilis or Butterfly Rose: This single rose grows on medium-sized shrubs and features blooms which open

yellow then, as the rose matures, change colors to orange, pink and red. Another constant bloomer, Pieratt points out that you must give Madame Butterfly a lot of room because it can easily grow to 6 feet. Mutabilis put on quite a show at the Marketplatz in downtown Fredericksburg. Mutabilis is a designated Earth-Kind Rose.

Mrs. Dudley Cross: Thornless shrub rose with great foliage and double yellow flowers that blush pink. Brandes recommends it for pathways and entrances, and Pieratt says it's a show-stopper for passersby.

Belinda's Dream: Another Earth-Kind Rose, this free-blooming shrub can reach 5 feet and has large, long-lasting cupped cabbage pink blooms. Pieratt said Belinda's Dream is ideally suited for the careless gardener and gives off a very distinct and enjoyable fragrance. Brandes also included it on her list of shrub roses for our area.

Katy Road Pink: This shrub is a free-blooming pink, semi-double rose with large orange hips. It made everyone's list and is a recognized Earth-Kind Rose. An interesting fact about Katy Road Pink is it categorized as a "found" rose and was named for where it was discovered by Dr. and Mrs. Stahl of Houston.

Dame de Coeur: Pieratt said this is his absolute favorite rose with large, deep red double blooms that are fragrant and long-lasting. A steady bloomer, the shrub can reach about 5 feet and is very upright.

A few other notable cultivars mentioned by Pieratt are: **Mrs. B.R. Cant**, a pink cabbage rose; **Heritage Rose**, a cup-and-saucer rose with a spicy scent; and **Rise-n-Shine**, a yellow miniature rose he uses for bordering.

(Continued on page 5.)

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Kudos:

Liz Althaus, Anne Brown and Harold Pieratt, our latest Interns to complete their volunteer hours and become certified Master Gardeners.

B.B. Browning, Phyllis Knight, Tony Pacini, Judy Simmons and Randy Simmons for their time and effort building and staining our new arbor. Now we have a shaded, separate area for our larger plants.

by Betty West

Market Days Scheduled

We have six Market Days remaining in 2005. They are May 28, September 10 & 24, October 8 & 22. There will be shifts from 8:30 - 11 am, 11 am - 1:30 pm, 1:30 - 4 pm. There will be three people on each shift. You must be on the schedule to receive credit for time served. The interns from '04 needing hours to complete certification will be given preference in April. After that the '05 interns will be allowed to sign up. The sign up sheet is in the office.

Calendar of Events: (Attendance at events other than Master Gardener Meetings is optional; events are listed for those wishing to attend other educational offerings)

June 1 – HCMG monthly meeting at the Kerr County Extension Office at 1:00 p.m. Jan Fulkerson, Texas Forest Service, will speak about “fire-wise landscaping.”

June 21 – Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Butt-Holdsworth Library, Kerrville.

June 7 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, meets at Riverside Nature Center (RNC), 150 Francisco Lemos, Kerrville at 2:00 p.m. Barbara Lowenthal and Raul Pena will present “Creating a Virtual Herbarium.”

June 28 – Gardeners of Kerrville meet at RNC for their annual barbeque. Members only this month.

June 9 – Riverside Nature Center's lunchtime Brown Bagger program is on “Amphibians of the Hill Country.” Bring a sack lunch and learn something new. Noon – 1:00 p.m. Fee is \$5 for non-members, \$3 for RNC members.

June 28 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter, meets at 7:00 p.m. at the Gillespie County Historical Society Bldg. 312 W. San Antonio St., Fredericksburg.

June 20 – Deadline for HCMG newsletter articles (send to Martha at hnews@kctc.com).

June 29 – Executive board meeting At the Kerr Count Extension Office At 1:00 p.m.



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Volunteer Hours - Record Keeping

Remember, Interns turn in their volunteer hours at the end of each month. I am currently missing timesheets from seven Interns. Some of our Interns have already completed their volunteer hours (see the Kudos section for the list of our newly certified MGs). Once you're certified, you'll be using the MG timesheets to report your volunteer and education hours and will be able to claim a maximum 1 hour of mileage per round trip. Timesheets for certified MGs are filed quarterly or whenever you fill up a page, whichever comes first.

Master Gardeners are asked to report your "Contacts" to me via e-mail at tla@omniglobal.net by the fourth of the following month after your actual contact. In other words, if you speak to a group on June 18, you report to me how many were in the audience by July 4. If your neighbor asks you a gardening question on May 24, then you notify me of that contact by June 4. Please e-mail your contacts to me and be sure I acknowledge receipt by return e-mail.

Master Gardener quarterly timesheets are due at the end of June. If you fill up a page before the quarter is over, leave the timesheet in my tray and start on your next page. If you haven't filled up a page at the end of the quarter, then turn in what you have.

By Tommie Airhart

Horticultural Inquiry Committee

Proposed refresher class for certified Master Gardeners: To date, only two MGs have requested refresher classes on our new filing system and database. Due to the lack of response, we are assuming the rest of our members are up-to-speed on our new office procedures and are eagerly awaiting their opportunity to work on the phone desk. Remember, phone desk duty is our primary responsibility as MGs, so please sign up for empty slots at the June meeting.

by Pam Bresler, Chair

Phone Desk Calendar: Many of our MG Interns have completed their volunteer hours, thus we have lots of open dates on our calendar starting in July. Certified MG please write your names in the blue binder (on top of the book shelves in the MG office) or e-mail me, Betty West, at dwest@omniglobal.net for the dates you wish to work (M/W/F). Working with a partner makes it more enjoyable for some; so round up a buddy, plan lunch and come on out for either a morning or afternoon shift and earn some of those volunteer hours.

by Betty West

Scrapbook

The Hill Country Master Garden Scrapbook will now be placed at the Extension Office permanently.

The Hill Country Master Garden Class of 2005 now have their pictures with their names in the scrapbook. If we ever get everyone of the '05 class together again, we will take a group picture.

There are so many programs being undertaken by so many different groups, it is just wonderful. I am sure the volunteers are interested in having their many hours of work documented in pictures. Take your place in history in the Hill Country Master Garden Scrapbook. All you have to do is take the photos, write a short description and place them in an envelope addressed to Ida Luckey. Leave the envelope at the Extension Office. If you have photos on disk, you can email them to wgluckey@aol.com.

by Ida Luckey

**Hill Country Master
Gardener Association
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Georgia Roth, Betty West, Jean
Anderson

***Comments,
Submissions...***

We welcome and encourage any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter. Also, if you would like to submit an article for an upcoming edition, please send to: hnews@kctc.com. Indicate "Editor HCMG Newsletter" in the subject line.

Nativescape Garden Tour Recap

More than 260 people braved unseasonably hot temperatures to attend the third annual Fredericksburg Nativescapes Garden Tour held Saturday, May 21.

Presented by the Fredericksburg Chapter Native Plant Society of Texas, this year's tour visited six different gardens located in and around the city, including two private homes, one local business and two demonstration gardens.

According to tour co-chair Liz Althaus, about 110 volunteers assisted in the event. "Co-chair Maria Robertson and I want to express our appreciation," Althaus said, "A big round of thanks to all the docents and other people who assisted in the tour and to everyone who bought tickets and attended."

Additionally, Althaus said she counted about 20 MG friends, both certified MGs and interns, taking the tour. "We were very happy to see so much interest from the HCMGs."

by Carol Seminara

Roses (continued from page 2.)

Brandes said beginners have the best luck with teas, Chinas and shrubs, and further suggested Knockout as another good shrub rose, and Bon Silene, Marie van Houtte and Madame Joseph Swartz as tea roses. Brandes said old-fashioned roses and old companion plants are making a comeback and recommended driving around the older neighborhoods in Fredericksburg to enjoy the true taste of the German gardens from the 1860s to present and as an excellent way to de-stress.

And Bresler had a final rose commandment for all HCMG, "Enjoy your roses and share them with friends."

Notice: Minutes of the May meeting were not available.