



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

September, 2005

Volume 3, Issue 10

Meeting
Wednesday,
September 7, 2005
1:00 p.m.
at the extension office.

Richard Thornber of Kerrville will speak to us on water features, water plants and diseases of water plants

Highlights:

President's Message	1
Kudos	1
Saving Summer, Part One	2
Garden Planners	2
Good Samaritan	
Center Update	3
Calendar	3
Horticultural Inquiry	
Committee	4
Volunteer Hrs. Records	
Committee	4
Greenhouse & Market	
Days Committee	5
Minutes	5

President's Message:

Hi, everyone!

I need your help. I would like to begin putting into place the committee structure for next year, and to do that, I need committees and volunteers. The list of committees follows. Descriptions of the committees are mine, and if I left off something important or put in something incorrectly, please let me know. I have indicated by an asterisk (*) those committees that currently have chairpersons. If the current Chairs do not want to continue in that position next year, please let me know.

Committee List:

- * Education committee -- organizes, schedules and completes the classes for new MGs yearly.
- * Garden Planner Publication -- publishes the planner yearly
- * Greenhouse/Market Days -- manages the greenhouse, and plans and executes Market Days. We probably need an Assistant Chair to manage scheduling of the watering and Market Days volunteers.
- * Horticultural Inquiry

Committee -- Manages the training, mentoring and scheduling of the phone office volunteers.

* Hours/Record Keeping Jr. MG Committee -- a new committee to coordinate the JMG program with 4H. Mentoring Committee -- coordinates mentors with new students.

* Newsletter Committee -- produces the monthly newsletter.

* Nominating Committee -- nominates a slate of officers annually.

* Programs Committee -- arranges speakers and programs at the monthly meetings.

Public Relations Committee -- arranges publicity for the organization; arranges for and schedules speakers in the community.

I am inviting and encouraging all MGs to participate in the committee structure. If you are interested in participating on or assuming the Chair position of any committee, please e-mail me at: abrown@paterehab.com

HCMG is all of us. The extent to which you want to participate is the extent to which the organization can be effective. While we will be busy preparing for the convention, we also have to honor our commitment to our original purpose as the volunteer arm of Texas Cooperative Extension. I encourage everyone to respond, and look forward to working with all of you this next year.

Anne Brown,
President-Elect

(Editor's note - President Fay Drozd has been ill and would like to thank all her MG friends who visited, called and sent cards and flowers during her recent hospital stay. She asked that we extend her gratitude to everyone on her behalf and let you know how much she appreciated all the support and encouragement.)

Kudos:

Marguerite Belec, Cheri Bolden, Mildred Coggin, Sharon Johnson, and Phyllis Knight, our latest Interns to complete their volunteer hours and become "certified" Master Gardeners.

Jean Anderson for taking over the "Watering Schedule" calendar. Now we have a "go to" person who can tell us which dates need workers, and she does it by e-mail!

Cheri Bolden for her using her MG refund check to purchase new pots for the greenhouse. What a great use of her returned deposit.

Anne Brown for recording the minutes for the July meeting, and **Judy Simmons** for taking the August meeting minutes.



Saving Summer – Part One

by Carol Seminara

Everyone has a favorite fruit of summer. For many folks, it's all about watermelon. Some people prefer pears or plums, others fancy blackberries, and, of course, there are those who sing the praise of home-grown tomatoes despite the Supreme Court ruling that they're vegetables.

But for me, nothing ultimately embodies the languid nature of the long, hot season more than a ripe peach. Even two decades in Southern California, with its ridiculously protracted growing season, did nothing to dissuade me from my penchant for Texas peaches.

Now I live in the heart of Peach Paradise -- the Texas Hill Country -- with immediate access to possibly the best peaches on earth from farmers' stands on nearly every street corner. I think I was first in line last May for the early cling peaches, fruit with flesh that clings to the pits. I sampled my way through Springolds and Bicentennials, and in early June moved on to try the semi-freestone varieties such as Garnet Beauty. The last of the local Redglobes and Redskins, freestone peaches, are gone from the super markets; all that remains are imports from California, North Carolina and Georgia.

Not to fear. I did not allow the

season pass without putting by a modest supply of peaches for future use. When freez-ing peaches, I believe in minimal processing.

Here's the method I use:

- Have a large kettle of boiling water going on the stove and a bowl of ice and water standing by in the sink. You'll need a sharp paring knife, colander, a large bowl for anti-browning and cookie sheets for freezing the peaches.
- Dip a peach into the boiling water for 10-20 seconds to loosen the skin. (I usually do no more than 4 at a time.)
- Remove the peach and immediately submerge it the iced water; the skin should easily slip off.
- Cut the peeled peach in half, remove pit and dip peach halves in acidulated water to prevent browning. Make a solution of ascorbic acid (available under brand name Fruit Fresh) in the ratio of approximately 3 tablespoons ascorbic acid to 2 quarts cool water. You can use lemon juice or cider vinegar, instead of ascorbic acid; the ratio is approximately 1/2 cup juice or vinegar to 2 quarts cool water. Please note: do not allow the peaches to soak in the acidulated water for an extended period of time; usually no more than 3 to 5 minutes.
- Remove peach halves from solution

and place cut-side down in a colander to drain.

- Place drained peach halves, round sides down, on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet in a single layer. A standard cookie sheet or half-sheet pan will accommodate 12 to 15 large peach halves.
- Immediately place pan of peaches in the freezer.
- When peaches are frozen solid, place them in a sealable plastic bag, label and date, and return to the freezer.
- To thaw, allow frozen peach half to sit at room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes, or heat in microwave oven on medium for 30 seconds.

Frozen in this manner and kept at zero degrees F, peaches will keep for up to one year.

Then in November, when it's cold and damp, I can pull out a bag of summer peaches and make one of Beulah's batter pies 'cause "P - E - A - C - H - E-S, peaches make the very best cobbler."

If you would like a copy of the recipe for Beulah's Batter Pie, drop me an e-mail at: carol@carolsworld.tv

Bought Your Garden Planners Yet?

If you're reading this notice in the September "Of Leaf & Limb" newsletter and you haven't already ordered your copies of the 2006 HCMG Garden Planner at the advance-sale price of \$7.50, then it's too late to save \$2 per copy. The deadline for this special sale price was Aug. 31.

It's not too late, however, to purchase a copy at the regular price of \$9.50, plus a \$2 fee for shipping and handling. Of course, if you're willing to pick up your copies at the Extension Office, you can omit that additional \$2 per copy.

The new garden planner is sponsored by local businesses and specifically addresses Kerr County and its surrounding area. Christine Millar, the project's coordinator, said the new planners contains relevant articles on such topics as edible landscaping, planting to attract beneficial insects, a section on cultivating roses in our challenging environment, plus recipes, resource lists and other interesting and useful information.

To purchase your planners, send a check or money order for the total amount of your purchase payable to Hill Country Master Gardeners. Mail your orders and payment to Christine Millar, 2006 Garden Planner, P.O. Box 1479, Center Point, TX 78010. The total cost for each planner that is picked up is \$9.50. Planners that will be mailed cost \$11.50 per copy, which includes the \$2 shipping and handling fees.

Garden Planners are expected from the printer this month. You will be notified of the planner's availability for pick up and/or its anticipated shipping date.

**You must
have a
garden.**

**wherever
you
are.**

**-from
Sarah,
Plain and
Tall, by
Patricia
MacLachlan
, 1985**

Good Samaritan Center Update

Landscaping efforts continue at the Good Samaritan Center in Fredericksburg, reports project designer and coordinator Peggy Benson:

"I have applied for and received a Backyard Wildlife Habitat Certification from the National Wildlife Federation for the Center, and now I'd like to further develop the area in compliance with the citation."

Recently Master Gardener Debbie Russell and her husband delivered and placed some large rocks along the drainage path to keep the mulch from washing away.

MGs Liz Althaus and I deadheaded the perennials while watching the garden's many butterflies fly from blue mistflower to lantana and back. It is a real joy to see how well the landscaping has grown and how beautiful the Center's grounds are becoming thanks to the help of the Master Gardener volunteers.

The rental space at the Center is currently being readied for finish-out, and we have had to remove plants from the east side of the building and place them in a "holding place" in back until the ditches for the plumbing are completed. These plants are doing well, so far, and we hope they will survive the move.

Master Gardener Harold Pieratt has been the Center's tree expert and has done a remarkable job doctoring a couple of sick trees back to health.

Our next phase is to plant beds in the back along the building and to construct a retaining wall to keep the dirt from eroding and damaging the beautiful oak trees there. Also, we hope that one day some of the shaded area in back can be turned into a park-like setting with picnic tables, birdhouses and bird feeders for wildlife and people to enjoy. Liz's husband is helping me clear the area in anticipation of this next step.

I appreciate all of the help I have received from the Master Gardener participants and would welcome others who would like to volunteer there. It is a work in progress, and we can always use additional volunteers."

If you are interested in working with Peggy on the Good Samaritan Center's garden, please contact her at: (830) 997-9960. This is an authorized Master Gardener project and work at the Center counts toward MG volunteer hours.

by Peggy Benson.



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

September 2 – Riverside Nature Center's Wine & Weed Party from 5 to 7:30 p.m., 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville. RNC provides both the wine and the weeds to be pulled.

September 6 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, will meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Riverside Nature Center.

September 7 - HCMG monthly meeting at the Kerr County Extension Office at 1:00 p.m. Richard Thorner of Kerrville will speak to us on water features, water plants and diseases of water plants

September 9 – The Gleaners meet at Riverside Nature Center at 9:00 a.m. For information on this month's program, contact Linda Riner at: (830) 792-3893.

September 10 – HCMG has a booth at Market Days, Kerr County Courthouse from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. If you need some fall plants for your garden, be sure to drop by and check out our selection.

September 10 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Bandera Chapter, will meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Medina Community

Library Meeting Room, in Bandera. Horticulture Director of San Antonio Botanic Gardens Paul Cox is the featured speaker. Call Susan Tracy at: (830) 589-7124 for additional info.

September 13 – Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Gillespie County Agricultural Extension Bldg., 95 Frederick Rd. A bee-keeper presentation is planned. For more info, call Jane Crone at: (830) 669-2639.

September 20 – Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Butt-Holdsworth Library, Kerrville.

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

September 24 – HCMG has a booth at Market Days, Kerr County Courthouse from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

September 27 – 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.

Committees

Education:

Judy Schaefer, Chair

Greenhouse/Market

Days:

Tony Pacini, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry:

Pam Bresler-chair

Carol Johnson, Betty

West

Newsletter:

Martha Stevens-editor

Carol Seminara-

assistant editor

Contributors: Betty

West, Pam Bresler,

Tommie Airhart, Jean

Anderson, Peggy

Benson

Nominating:

Tommie Airhart-chair

Otis Fox, Betty West

Program:

Eileen Haden-Chair

Volunteer

Hours/Record

Keeping:

Tommie Airhart, Chair

Mentoring:

Naoma Peacock, Chair

H/C Garden Book

Publication:

Christine Millar, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry Committee

As of July 31, we have received 185 horticultural inquiries. Seventy-two inquiries were about plant disease and insects. Ironically, only five inquiries were about soil and nutrients. If those numbers were reversed, I think we'd have many more successful gardeners!

In our July 6 training session, we suggested listening to gardening programs on the radio to get a feel for asking questions to diagnose a problem. Notice how the host of the program asks many questions before giving his response to the caller. Here are a few of these local programs to review:

Bob Webster - KTSA - 550 AM, Sat. 5:30-9 a.m. and Sun. 8-11 a.m.
(website: www.shadesofgreensa.com)

John Dromgoole - KLBj - 590 AM, Sat. 9-11 a.m. and Sun 8-10 a.m.
(website: www.naturalgardeneraustin.com)

Bruce Deuley (2003 MG from HCMGA) KHAL - 1310 AM, Sat. 10 a.m.-Noon
and Sun. 7-10 a.m.

Sheryl McLaughlin - KLBj - 590 AM, Sun. 10-11 a.m.

Milberger's Gardening South Texas (Dr. Jerry Parsons and Dr. Calvin Finch)
KLUP - 930 AM, Sat. Noon-2 p.m. and Sun. Noon-3 p.m.
(website: www.plantanswers.com)

We also have a concern with "pending" responses to phone inquiries from the public. Sometimes our clients wait many days for an answer. If you are comfortable doing the research at home and following up after your shift is over, we encourage you to do this. Just be sure to leave the completed "Horticultural Inquiry Log" in the bottom tray on the desk for Carol Johnson to enter into the database and file in our notebooks. Please print legibly to make her job easier. We want to build our database so that we can quickly find answers to common inquiries. We hope answering inquiries from the public will get easier every year. If you have any questions or suggestions, e-mail me at: bregal@kctc.com.

Thanks for your help.

by Pam Bresler, Chair

Phone Desk Calendar Report:

Thank you for filling up the August time slots. We'll be passing around the sign-up book at the September HCMG meeting. Our goal is to cover the phones on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. If you can take a shift, you may also e-mail me, Betty West, at: dwest@omniglobal.net. I'll be able to tell if the date you want is available and confirm your date selections by return e-mail.

Please be sure to check your e-mail in-box regularly because we'll be sending out e-mail notices for jobs that need to be covered on specific dates.

by: Betty West, Phone Desk Calendar

Volunteer Hours Record Keeping Program

Since most of the '05 Interns have already become MGs we're dropping the intern hours instructions in this issue of the newsletter. Please record all additional volunteer time on the regular MG timesheets and remember, you can count one hour of travel time to attend the monthly meetings.

Also, please report all your "Contacts" to me via e-mail at tla@omniglobal.net by the fourth of the month following after your actual contact. If you talk to someone about enrolling in the Master Gardener Program, be sure to get their name, address, phone number and e-mail address so that we can contact them when we're ready to send out applications for the '06 class. When you e-mail me with your contacts, be sure I acknowledge receipt by return e-mail.

Master Gardeners quarterly timesheets are due at the end of September. If you have not filled up a page at the end of the quarter, please turn in what you have. We only have a few more months left in 2005, so I hope all of you realize you must complete your 12 hours volunteer time and 6 hours continuing education units (CEUs) by the end of December to qualify for recertification in 2006. **ANY MG WHO HAS NOT REPORTED HOURS FOR THIS YEAR, PLEASE DO SO BY THE DECEMBER DEADLINE.**

by Tommie Airhart, Chair

Hill Country Master Gardener Association 2005 Executive Committee

Fay Drozd – President
Anne Brown – President Elect
Tony Pacini - Vice President
Diane Whitney - Secretary
Barbara Robbins - Treasurer
Kristi Gebauer - Ex-officio Advisor
Roy Walston - C. E. O. Advisor

Of Leaf & Limb Newsletter Committee

Editor - Martha Stevens
Assistant Editor - Carol Seminara
Contributors – Fay Drozd, Betty West, Pam Bresler, Tommie Airhart, Jean Anderson, Peggy Benson

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.

Greenhouse & Market Days Committee

From the Greenhouse: THANKS ... THANKS ... THANKS ... to all who are helping and have helped with the greenhouse watering. As you know, this is the Master Gardeners only source of revenue so it's very important that we have happy, healthy plants to offer for sale to the public. We will be doing more propagation in the coming months, so keep some time available to help in the Greenhouse. Right now we are looking for help with the September watering schedule, as well as helpers for Market Days of September 10 and 24, and October 8 and 22. WE NEED YOU ... AND WE HAVE FUN!

If you can spare some time for watering and plant propagating, e-mail Jean Anderson, at: aljean1962@yahoo.com. Jean will let you know by return e-mail if the dates you want are available and whether you're confirmed to work. We'll also be sending out mass e-mails in the future for particular dates needed, so watch your e-mail in-box.

by: Jean Anderson
Tony Pacini, Chair

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting August 3, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President Fay Drozd. and the minutes from the July meeting were approved as presented in the newsletter.

Treasurer Barbara Robbins reported that HCMG has total assets of \$9,658.64, with the total current liabilities amounting to \$750.00.

Barbara also reported that the 2006 garden planner is currently at the printer and should be available in time for the September meeting. Those who have ordered the planners will be able to save \$2.00 by picking them up at the Extension office.

Fay announced that there are openings to sign up for October Market Days and with the weather cooler at that time of year it should be a good time to work.

Tommie Airhart reminded everyone to submit their hours to her each month. The new Master Gardeners need to use the MG form for submitting their service hours. If there are any questions, please contact Tommie, 238-3528 tla@omniglobal.net

Eight new Master Gardeners were recognized and congratulated including Beverly Weidenfeller, Connie Townsend, Carol Johnson, Randy Simmons, Judy Simmons, Carol Seminara, Jean Anderson, and Huibert VanDemmeltraadt.

Fay reported that there is a definite need for people to sign up for phone hours for the coming months. Betty West, 896-5996, is the contact person for those willing to man the phones.

A definite date for the next MG class has not been scheduled but will be on the calendar by the first part of September. The class will be advertised in the paper beginning in September and interviews will begin in November.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Following the meeting, a program on "Caring for Your Perennials" was presented by Karen Smith, Manager of the Plant Haus in Kerrville.