



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

June, 2006

Volume 4, Issue 6

Wednesday,
June 7,
1:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Speaker:

Mitzi McCollom from Alltex Nursery will speak about deer-resistant perennials.

Highlights:

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President's Message:

Hi Everyone!

Hope everyone's flowers and gardens are coming up nicely with all this warm (hot) weather.

Our two big projects are coming along well. My thanks to all those who attended the Texas Master Gardener's Conference in College Station. Anna and John Osborn, Carol Biggs, Fay Drozd, Carol Seminaria, Beverly Weidenfeller, Liz Althaus, Tommie Airhart, Sandy Martin, Georgia Roth and myself, all learned a lot about the hows and whys of the convention. We are all meeting at the host hotel, the Inn of the Hills, for our June meeting. We have lots to do to get ready to host the convention next year, but we are definitely up to the project. As we get closer to next April, we will be calling on everyone to pitch in on all the tasks which are required to pull a meeting of this size off. You might be interested to know that the Inn has already received over forty room reservations for next

year. They are quite impressed. There were about 560 people who came to College Station, so we are anticipating between 650 and 700. We also have changed the place of the Thursday night reception to the Museum of Western Art, and the banquet Friday night to the Inn of the Hills.

The demonstration garden is taking shape, thanks to the hard work of Tony and Fay and all the others who have helped with this project. Maldonado's is donating almost all of the materials we need, Roy has someone who is designing and providing the irrigation system, and the grass is being donated by Tim at the Grass Farm. Our out-of-pocket expenses at this time involve running a three-inch water line around the back of the building to connect to the irrigation system. The walk ways should be installed shortly, if not already, and the flower beds designed and installed, at least with the

planting material. If anyone has not seen the design by John Osborn, one is available in the office. It's a project which will really enhance the front of the building and be a good education tool for us all to use.

I hope all you who are able and willing to do so, join our speakers bureau. Harold and Pam have done a great job organizing the program. If you haven't filled out a form to be included in the speakers bureau, please contact Pam Bresler and do so. The more we get out into the community, the more we will be recognized and the better we will be able to recruit new students for our classes.

I hope to see everyone at our meeting on the 7th of June.

Anne Brown

HCMG Website of the Month

<http://www.seedsavers.org/savingheirlooms.asp> This website gives information about heirloom vegetables, herbs and plants, how to save seeds, where to buy heirloom seeds and much more. It has books and gifts and lots of information.



Days of Worms and Roses

By Carol Seminara

The HCMGs were well represented at this year's Lavender Festival held at Becker Vineyards the weekend of May 20. VP Harold Pieratt spoke on "Garden Roses for the Texas Hill Country" and Beverly Weidenfeller presented a lecture on "Vermiculture."

Roses:

Along with basic information on rose cultivation, Harold explained a bit about the history of old-growth roses and their resurgence in popularity due, in part, to the efforts of the so-called rose rustlers, rose enthusiasts who seek out and propagate antique rose varieties which would otherwise be lost. Rose rustlers are credited with locating many heritage Texas roses such as "Pam's Pink" and the "Katy Road rose."

Harold recommends these old garden roses for their hardiness even in poor soil and climate conditions and because of their inherent disease resistance. Of course, Harold believes in mulching as one of the primary keys to garden success with his roses. An organic gardener, he generously shared a few of his "recipes" with the group and granted me permission to publish them here. Following are two of Harold's formulas, one is a foliar feeder for roses and the other is his recommended flower bed mixture. Thanks, Harold, for sharing!

Rose Recipe (enough for a 2-gallon sprayer)

Combine:

- 2 oz. apple cider vinegar
- 1 oz. liquid seaweed
- 1 oz. garden molasses
- 1 capful of Ironite Liquid Plant Food
- 1 capful of Superthrive

1 tsp. Miller's Ferri-Plus

1 tsp. Epsom salts

Add enough lukewarm water to fill 2-gallon sprayer. Mix well. Use to foliar feed roses once a week during their growing season.

Yum-Yum Mixture for Flower Beds

In a wheelbarrow, mix:

1/2 bag of double-shredded cedar mulch

1 20-qt. bag of Dillo Dirt or other biosolids compost (NPK 8-2-4)

1 qt. garden molasses (NPK 1-0-3 plus trace minerals)

1 qt. green sand, or equivalent (NPK 0-1-5 plus trace minerals)

3 or 4 oz. humic acid (concentrated compost), optional (Microbes love this stuff and it's also a great chelating agent)

Mix well and apply approximately two inches of depth to rose beds two or three times a year. Employ a no-till method to increase physical condition of soil. Yum-Yum will decompose to approximately one-third its bulk in 4 to 6 months.

Worms

Beverly introduced vermiculture, or worm composting, as a great way to turn your organic waste, including many of your kitchen scraps, into some of the best fertilizer available. Worms digest organic materials such as food wastes and break them down in their digestive tracts into simple plant nutrients. Vermiculture requires little work, produces no offensive odors and helps protect the environment and make your garden thrive.

You only need a few things to make good worm compost:
a bin and bedding
worms
worm food

Worm Bin and Bedding:

Compost worms are surface feeders, so their bin should only be 8- to 16-inches deep. You can build a bin using non-treated wood, buy a commercial worm bin, or even use an old dish pan or shipping crate. Whatever you use, make certain you have a lid to keep out flies and rodents, and holes (1/4-inch or smaller) in the bottom for drainage and ventilation. A general rule of thumb for bin size is: one square foot surface area per pound of food waste recycled per week. Place your bin in a shady location where it won't freeze or overheat.

Regular newspaper (just the black-and-white printed pages, NOT the glossy, color inserts) is the easiest bedding material to find and use. Tear newspapers into approximately one-inch wide strips and moisten; they should be as damp as a wrung-out sponge. A small amount of cow or horse manure can be mixed with the paper strips to prevent the bedding from pack down and to help absorb excess moisture. Fill the bin with the moistened bedding, along with several handfuls of soil and you're ready to introduce your worms to their new home. Every few months, add a little ground limestone or well-crushed eggshells to the bin for grit and calcium.

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Kudos to:

Education Committee members for all their hard work expended for this year's class . . . **Debbie Russell, Chair; and members Cheri Bolden, Fay Drozd, Otis Fox, Eileen Haden, Ida Luckey, Sandy Martin, Mary Allen Meriwether, Judy Russell, Judy Simmons, Huibert Van Demmeltraadt and Beverly Weidenfeller.**

All the members who have been installing our new "*Demonstration Garden.*" **Tony Pacini and B.B. Browning** got the plumbing installed for the irrigation system. **Cheri Bolden, B.B. Browning, Fay Drozd, Phyllis Knight, Ida Luckey, Tony Pacini and Huibert Van Demmeltraadt** put down the edging; spread the mulch and decomposed granite. **Tony Pacini and Roy Walston**, our *County Agent*, installed the rest of the back fence.

Extraordinary Kudos to:

Joe Seminara, husband of Carol Seminara. Thanks to Joe, we have a special Logo for our 2007 State MG Conference and some very snazzy promotional pieces. Joe donated his time, talent and many hours of work so that we can put our best "boot" forward.

Maldonado Nursery and Landscaping Service for donating the edging and granite for the Demonstration Garden.

Texas Tree Service for donating wood chips and trimmings for mulch in our new Demonstration Garden.

(Note: Whenever you patronize these businesses, be sure to thank them in person for their generosity and let them know the donations are appreciated.)



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 6 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, will meet at Riverside Nature Center (R.N.C.), 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville. At 2:00 p.m. *Fred Snidow* will share his expertise in plant photography.

June 6 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Boerne Chapter, meets at 7:00 p.m., Cibolo Nature Center, 1 City Park Rd (off Hwy 46 east of Boerne).

June 7 – HCMG State Conference Planning Committee Chairs will meet at 10:00 a.m., Inn of the Hills, to tour the hosting hotel facilities. Working luncheon meeting at the hotel following the tour.

June 7 - HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. . Mitzi McCollom from Alltex Nursery will speak about deer-resistant perennials.

JUNE 20 - Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

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

June 24 – Kerr County Market Days at Kerr County Courthouse, 9:00 am – 3:00 p.m. Hill Country Master Gardeners will have a booth and lots of plants. Is it time to replace some of your plants that the heat has wiped out? Now's your chance!

June 27 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter, meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Gillespie county Historical Society Bldg, 312 W San Antonio St., Fredericksburg.

Committees

Education:

Debbie Russell, Chair;
Cheri Bolden, Fay
Drozd, Otis Fox,
Eileen Haden, Ida
Luckey, Sandra Martin,
Mary Allen Meriwether,
Judy Russell, Judy
Simmons, Huibert Van
Demmeltraadt, Beverly
Weidenfeller

Greenhouse/Market

Days:

Tony Pacini, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry:

Pam Bresler-chair
Carol Johnson, Betty
West,
Judy Simmons

Jr. Master Gardeners

Committee – Fay
Drozd

Newsletter:

Martha Stevens-editor
Carol Seminara-
assistant editor

Contributors: Betty

West, Ida Luckey,
Anne Brown, Carol
Biggs, Sandy Martin

Nominating:

Tommie Airhart-chair

Program:

Phyllis Knight, Chair

Volunteer

Hours/Record

Keeping:

Ida Luckey, Chair

Mentoring:

Judy Simmons-Chair

H/C Garden Book

Publication:

Christine Millar, Chair

Hours and Tracking

Master Gardeners, remember that you need twelve hours of volunteer time and six hours of continuing education to become recertified for this year.

Congratulations and many thanks to the following Master Gardeners for all the volunteer hours donated: Recertified in February was Tommie Airhart; in March, Mary Allen Meriwether and Debbie Russell; in April Marguerite Belec, Carol Biggs, Pam Bresler, Mildred Coggin and Sherlie Vangsnes and in the first week in May, Betty Martens was also recertified.

By the end of April, the Master Gardeners in our Association had donated approximately 2,168 hours. The only way for us to know exactly the number of hours volunteered is by submitting the Volunteer Hours Form. Keep up the good work and thanks again.

by Ida Luckey

Last Call For Shirts

Another order for the denim shirts with our 2007 conference logo stitched on it will be placed immediately following the June meeting. The cost is \$25.00. They are 100% cotton denim, garment washed, open collar, double-needle stitched made by Port and Company. They come in ladies and men's sizes XS to XL in both short sleeve and long sleeve. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please contact Anne Brown abrown@paterehab.com or Carol Biggs Avalon08@Yahoo.com to indicate your size.

by Carol Biggs

PR Chair, 2007 Conference

Sharing the Master Gardener State Convention...

This was my first Master Gardener State Convention and it was so much fun. I wish more of the Hill Country MGs could have attended. What a wonderful setting to have it on the A&M campus and with the expertise of the professors!

The whole event started at the Bush Library. It is a beautiful building; but for gardeners, the lake with all the plants and roses was more pleasant. Barbara and George Bush will be buried near the lake. They had a daughter who died at age four from leukemia, already interred there. The only thing strange was to have "sweet" appetizers at 6:00 p. m.

Next was a tour of the Messina Hof Winery in the company of Beverly Weidenfeller, which could not have been more fun! I then signed up for "Healthy Foods & Plant Health." We were allowed to go in a lab, look through microscopes, and learn about very expensive machines that can diagnose plant problems. Plants are sent from all over the world to find out what is wrong with them. The professors are developing plants to help lower cholesterol, have more antioxidants, and keep us healthier longer against the major diseases. (Drug companies don't like that!) There is research to put genes in plants that will make the plant take the toxins out of the soil. Then scientists burn the plant, which leaves the soil healthier. Studies are also on going with carrots, onions, potatoes, and garlic to name a few.

The keynote speaker was Peggy Cornett, Director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants. She talked about how they are researching seeds and plants that were here before 1900. They have been able to recreate Thomas Jefferson's gardens of flowers, vegetables, grapes, and fruit trees. You can order plants and seeds through their gift shop 800 243-1743, or email www.twinleaf.org.

I also signed up for Dr. David Reed's "Learn to Think Like a Plant—Then You can Talk to Them" which was hysterical, but the information about the chemicals they produce, how you can hurt them, and how to thin and prune for their health was great. Plants love to receive light from blue and red colors, but not green. Last was "Spanish Influence on Texas Gardens," a presentation of Spanish gardens from all over the world with glimpses of present Texas gardens.

by Sandy Martin

HCMG May 3, 2006 Monthly Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President, Anne Brown, at 2:15 p.m. on May 3, 2006, following a presentation on Edible Flowers by herb specialist Bird Mangels.

Newsletter. The monthly newsletter is available on the website. E-mail notification to members of when the newsletter is available and web access of the newsletter seems to be working out. For those not able to access it on the website or guests who may want a copy, there are ten copies available in the office.

Speakers Bureau. Harold Pieratt and Pam Bressler gave a progress update on their efforts to create a speaker's bureau. The ultimate goal is to have a booklet of speakers and their topics. Everyone was encouraged to think about a subject they are passionate about and fill out a speaker's bureau form. Sample bios along with a speaker's bureau form were distributed.

Treasurer's Report. Carol Johnson reported March income and expenses. Income was \$1,029.19. Expenses were \$488.71 leaving a balance of \$9,163.98.

Greenhouse. Tony Pacini reported plant sales for the April 8 sale at the Extension Office were \$199.41 and \$361.21 for the April 22 Market Days sale. Upcoming plant sales for May are May 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Extension Office and May 27 at Market Days.

Demo Garden. Grass, irrigation system and materials have all been donated. There should be little or no out-of-pocket expense. Walks will be handicap accessible.

Earth Day Booth. Cheri Bolden and Phyllis Knight manned the Earth Day Booth at Riverside Nature Center. A total of forty-six people stopped by the booth.

Denim Shirts. The first order has come in. Anyone wishing to purchase a shirt should fill out an order form and turn it in to Anne along with their check. Another order will be placed when there are enough orders to warrant it.

Convention. All committee chairs will be attending this year's convention in College Station. All speakers and tours have been arranged for the 2007 convention being hosted by HGMG. A raffle will be held for a two-night stay at the Inn of the Hills during the 2007 convention. Tickets will be on sale at this year's convention and will be available on the web site until the drawing on December 6.

Miscellaneous.

The new microscope has been purchased and is in John's office.

A membership directory booklet has been created by Marilyn Pease. Copies were available at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon K. Johnson

[
Whoever makes two ears of corn, or two blades of grass
to grow where only one grew before, deserves better of
mankind, and does more essential service to his country
than the whole race of politicians put together.
-Jonathan Swift
]

Hill Country Master Gardener Association 2005 Executive Committee

Anne Brown – President
Harold Pieratt - Vice
President
Sharon Johnson -
Secretary
Carol Johnson -
Treasurer
Fay Drozd - Ex-officio
Advisor
Roy Walston - C. E. O.
Advisor

Of Leaf & Limb Newsletter

Editor - Martha
Stevens
Assistant Editor -
Carol Seminara
Contributors –Betty
West, Anne Brown,
Ida Luckey, Carol
Biggs, Sandy Martin

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.

Days of Worms and Roses

(Continued from page 2.)

Worms:

Red worms, a.k.a. red wigglers, are the best kinds of worms for composting. They are different from the earthworms you normally find in the ground. These wigglers have big appetites (they can eat more than their own weight in organic material every day), reproduce quickly and thrive in confinement. Sometimes you can find them in old compost piles, but you probably will have to purchase your first batch of worms. One pound is all you need to get started.

Worm Food:

Worms aren't too picky about their diet and often eat many of the same things we do. Do compost: stale bread and other grains, vegetable scraps, fruit peels and cores, tea leaves and bags, coffee grounds and paper filters, well-crushed eggshells and most any other non-greasy leftovers. Food scraps should be chopped or shredded for faster digestion. Do NOT compost: meat, bones, fats, dairy products and greasy foods. Also, never add rubber bands, pet feces (dog and cat) or twigs and branches to your worm bin.

At first, feed your worms a little at a time. As they multiply, you can add more food wastes. Bury the organic material into the bedding, rotating the bin with each addition. Once you've returned to the first spot, most of the food you buried there should have been eaten. If it hasn't been, simply feed the worms less for a while.

After you have fed your wigglers for several months, most of the bedding will have been eaten and you can begin harvesting the brown, crumbly worm castings or compost. Add fresh bedding as you harvest, doing this at least twice a year, to keep your worms healthy and productive.

Harvesting and Use:

A simple way to harvest and replenish the bedding is to divide the bin in halves and do one side at a time. Move the contents to one side of the bin, placing fresh bedding in the empty space. Bury your food wastes on this side for several weeks, then harvest the other side after your worms have migrated to the new bedding and food.

Worm compost is more concentrated than most other composts because the worms are so efficient at breaking down organic materials into simple plant nutrients. Use worm compost sparingly for best results.

To mulch with worm compost, apply a one-inch layer to the soil around plants. Be certain the worm compost is NOT piled against plant stems.

To amend soil, a 1/2- to two-inch layer of worm compost can be spread over garden soil and mixed in before planting.

For houseplants, sprinkle some worm compost around the base of plants, again being certain it isn't piled against the plant stems. Each time you water, the houseplant will be fed.

For potting mix, combine one part worm compost with three parts potting mix.

Additional resources:

Worms Eat My Garbage, by Mary Appelhof, is considered one of the best books on practical vermiculture.

The Worm Book, by Loren Nancarrow, is another guide to worms in the garden.

Both books are still in print and are available at bookstores and through on-line book sellers.

On-line the Texas A&M Aggie-horticulture Web-site has several articles on the subject. You can search vermiculture at: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>