



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

May, 2006

Volume 4, Issue 5

Wednesday,
May 3,
1:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Speaker:
Bird Mangels will present a
program on "Edible
Flowers."

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President's Message:

Hi Everyone!

At the risk of being redundant, please everyone mark your calendars for April 12-14, 2007. Those dates are, of course, when the TMGA State meeting comes to Kerrville.

The sixteen HCMG's who serve as committee chairs for the convention have been working extremely hard to plan and organize everything. Dusty Gilliam and her committee have come up with a great list of speakers, all of whom are confirmed. We are excited that our keynote speaker should be (I say should because I am not certain as of this writing if he is confirmed) Felder Rushing. He is a noted speaker and author and has a terrific sense of humor. You can look up his web site, felderrushing.net, for more information about him.

We will need all of you to help out at our convention, both for the actual days of the convention and

that whole week. Please don't schedule anything for those days except the convention.

Most of the chairs and two other HCMG's are going to this year's state meeting in early May. We have organized ourselves such that we will attend everything going on. We will then be in a good position to see what went well and what didn't, and hopefully we will avoid the same mistakes next year (while we create some of our own!). The committee's goal is to put on the best convention ever while we are having fun hosting.

The demonstration garden planning is coming along. A huge thanks to Tony for getting all the grass donated. Another huge thanks to Laurinda Boyd, Fay and Tony for getting Maldonado's to consider donating most of the materials needed to construct the garden. All we won't have donated is the plants, and a good many of them are in

our greenhouse. We will let you know what we need as we get closer to the planting.

We have had two successful plant sales at the office and participated in Market Days on April 22. Thanks to everyone who made these events happen. Also on April 22, we had a table at Riverside Nature Center's Earth Day. Cheri Bolden and Phyllis Knight manned the table for us, and shared information about the Master Gardeners with all who came by.

As you can tell, it is a very busy time for the Hill Country Master Gardeners. I can't tell you how much I appreciate all of you that have worked and are working to not only get ready to host the convention, but also to keep all our other projects going. Thanks for all the support.

See you on May 3.
Anne Brown

Kudos to ...

Our newest Interns ... Eleanor Baldwin, Marie Brown, Bill Burger, Jack Cremin, Bernadell Larson, Margaret McBride, Diane McMahon, Jerry Peebles, Laura Price, Mary Ruth Segner, Sherra Thomason, Nina Wagner and Leo Wagner. Well done!

Our Phone Desk Mentors under the Direction of **Judy Simmons... Marguerite Belec, Cheri Bolden, Fay Drozd, Marilyn Pease, Randy Simmons and Huibert Van Demmeltraadt.** Sure hope this year's Interns know how lucky they are to have this program set up especially for them.

Jean Anderson, Eleanor Baldwin, Marguerite Belec, Cheri Bolden, Mildred Coggin, Sandy Martin, Diane McMahon, Howard Platte, Nina Wagner and Leo Wagner. These members attended the Greenhouse Workshop conducted by **Fay Drozd.**

Cheri Bolden and Phyllis Knight for manning the Master Gardeners booth at Riverside Nature Center's Earth Day. We were well represented with a very nice booth and display put together by **Cheri Bolden, Anne Brown and Fay Drozd.**



Great Garlic

Garlic, a.k.a. the stinking rose, has long enjoyed its deserved reputation as an indispensable culinary and medicinal marvel. It has been around so long, that its actual origin is unknown, although botanists believe that garlic likely originated in western China several thousand years ago. Garlic is known to have been a favorite food of the ancient Egyptians, who believed that it was divine. Clay models of garlic were found in Egyptian tombs and six dried garlic bulbs were entombed with Tutankhamen. Garlic bulbs have been worn as a talisman to dispel evil spirits, witches and, or course, vampires.

A pungent member of the allium family, garlic is rich in vitamins A and C, potassium, phosphorous, selenium and several amino acids, and is credited with many healing properties. It is a natural antifungal and antibacterial due to its allicin content, which is a complex sulfur compound that occurs when the garlic cloves are crushed. Garlic juice contains a natural antibiotic, which when applied topically, can clear up minor skin infections such as athlete's foot and, according to some legends, acne. Taken by mouth, garlic can help prevent colds, flu or sore throats. Current research shows garlic helps lower blood cholesterol by preventing plaque build up in the arteries, can

help lower blood pressure, and it may aid in the body's defense against the formation of cancer cells.

There are three kinds of garlic: soft-neck or common garlic (*Allium sativum*); hardneck garlic (*Allium sativum ophioscorodon*) and so-called elephant garlic (*Allium ampeloprasum*), which despite its enormous cloves has virtually no garlic flavor.

Soft-neck garlic is the variety we are most familiar with growing in this area, as the hardneck variety needs a cool winter and spring for successful cultivation and generally will not succeed in hot areas.

Garlic can be grown from seeds and from individual cloves, although it is generally cultivated vegetatively from cloves. Each clove produces one plant with a single bulb. Since each bulb may contain up to 20 cloves, it is easy to sustain a ready crop of garlic.

Garlic should be planted in well-drained soil in a sunny location. Use only large, firm, well-formed cloves and plant each clove upright at least one inch and no more than two inches under the soil and about 4-6 inches apart. Rows should be about 18 inches apart. Avoid overwatering -- garlic is susceptible to root rot. The pointed green shoots of the growing bulb gave garlic its name, which is of Anglo-Saxon origin: from gaar

(spear) and lac (plant).

In the garden, garlic makes a wonderful companion plant for some, but not other crops. When planted with lettuces, garlic helps deter aphids, and a clove of garlic is credited with being a rose's best friend. Garlic reportedly improves the flavor of beets and cabbage, but does not make a good neighbor when planted near peas, beans or potatoes.

Garlic is ready to harvest after the leaves have died off and are dry. The state of the leaves is the prime indicator when the bulbs are ready for harvesting and not the calendar. Harvest the bulbs by digging them up, shake off excess soil and allow the outer skins of the bulbs to dry either by laying them on a screen or hanging in a well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight. When dry, you can trim off the roots and rub off the dirty and/or discolored outer dried skin or parchment.

Stored garlic should be kept in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place.

There are several books devoted specifically to garlic, and the British Web-site Garlicworld Gardening (<http://www.garlicworld.co.uk/garden/page4.html>) has several links to other garlic cultivation sites.

by Carol Seminara

[
A beautiful garden is a work of heart

.
Anonymous
[



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

May 2 – 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). Book signing and Presentation on “Native Grasses” and photography by Brian Loflin, commercial photographer.

May 3 - HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. Bird Mangels will present a program on “edible flowers.”

May 4-6 – Texas Statewide Master Gardeners Conference at College Station.

May 10 - HCMG State Convention Planning Committee Chairs meet at the Kerr County Extension Office at 10:00 a.m. to discuss progress of the 2007 Texas Master Gardeners Convention.

May 13 – Gardens on Tour 2006. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center sponsors a tour of five exceptional private gardens in the Austin area. See www.wildflower.org for details.

May 16 - Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

May 20 – Harold Pieratt to teach a rose class, “Hill Country Garden Roses” at 11:00 a.m. at the Becker Vineyards’ Lavender Festival. For more information, www.beckervineyards.com or 830.644.2681.

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

May 22 – Texas Master Naturalists meet in Kerrville at Riverside Nature Center at 7:00 p.m. Roy Walston will present a program on County Extension Agents and how they assist our community.

May 27 - Kerr County Market Days at Kerr County Courthouse, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hill Country Master Gardeners will have a booth and lots of plants for sale. Drop by early to get the best selection!

May 30 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter, meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Gillespie county Historical Society Bldg, 312 W San

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,

Pam Bresler,

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

Volunteer Hours Record Keeping Program

Congratulations to those who tried and succeeded in filling out the Code Timesheet. It makes for less writing but it is new and not for everyone. Either time sheet is perfectly acceptable. My personal and sincere thanks for everyone who is taking the time to submit their volunteer and education hours. You may leave the time sheets at the office or fill them out online and email them to me at wgluckey@aol.com.

The following members deserve recognition and thanks for having become recertified Master Gardeners so early in the year. In February recertified Master Gardeners were Cheri Bolden, Marilyn Pease, Judy Russell, Judy Simmons and Randy Simmons. In March, members who were recertified were B. B. Browning, Sandy Martin and Connie Townsend.

by Ida Luckey

SPEAKERS BUREAU PLANS

The Speakers Bureau committee is seeking your input for a proposed Speakers Bureau. We want members to develop programs in their area of interest to present to local groups. You can work alone or with other members in preparing your program. The length of the talk is up to you, but 30 minutes to one hour might be appropriate. A question-and-answer time usually follows a presentation.

We believe that spreading our knowledge is the mandate of the Master Gardener program and we hope you will contribute to that effort. Please be thinking about topics that interest you and we will discuss this at the May 3 meeting.

Questions? Contact: Harold Pieratt (830) 990-1130 RX1@Austin.rr.com

by Pam Bresler

Attrra

Did you know your tax dollars are funding organic research? ATTRA, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, is managed by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) which is funded under a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service. ATTRA provides information and other technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, Extension agents, educators, and others involved in sustainable agriculture in the United States.

ATTRA has two free e-newsletters plus lots of good pamphlets, including a 62-page resource guide for vegetables. Contact them at 800-346-9140 or www.attra.ncat.org for a catalog of their publications. Many can be downloaded from their website.

by Pam Bresler

HCMG Website of the Month

www.soilfoodweb.com This is the website of Dr. Elaine Ingham and is devoted to soil nutrition.

Submitted by Pam Bresler

**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,
Pam Bresler, Ida
Luckey,

***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@ktc.com.
Indicate "Editor HCMG Newsletter" in the subject line.

HCMG April 5, 2006 Monthly Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Anne Brown at 2:00 PM on April 5, 2006 following a presentation on Hummingbirds and their Relationship to Native Plants by Mark Klym from Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Updates.

Bylaws. Tommy Airhart gave an update on the progress of the bylaws revision. The committee will review corrections made by Carol Seminara. A copy of the bylaws with the marked changes will be e-mailed or mailed to all members. At some point one of the monthly meetings will be dedicated to reviewing the changes after which they will be voted on.

Convention. All members should mark their 2007 calendars for the week of the convention which is April 12 -14, 2007. Volunteer help will be needed from all members for the entire week.

Committees. Pam Bressler mentioned that thanks were due to members of the training and mentoring committees for their outstanding efforts. Congratulations to the 2006 interns who recently completed their training.

Treasurer's Report. Carol Johnson reported March income and expenses. Income was \$3,575. Wildflower Farms donated \$1,000 for the convention. Expenses were \$1604.21 leaving a balance of \$8,623.19.

Plant Sale. Another plant sale will be held at the greenhouse on April 8. A signup sheet was passed around. Market Days plant sales need at least 1 Certified Master Gardener for each shift. This year we will provide an information sheet to purchasers for each plant. The sheet will have care information for the plant as well as information on the Master Gardener organization.

Earth Kind Day. Master Gardeners will have a table set up at Earth Kind Day at Riverside Nature Center on April 26.

Turf Grass Demonstration Garden. Volunteers are needed for initial planning and for maintaining the demonstration garden adjacent to the greenhouse. A signup sheet was passed around.

Denim Shirts. The first round of shirts has been ordered and should be here in a couple of weeks. There will be another opportunity to order before the convention. Both long and short sleeve shirts are available.

The meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully submitted,
Sharon K Johnson

BEYOND N-P-K

Twenty years ago, when I decided to become an organic gardener, the process was gradual. The first products to go were the insecticides. With children and pets, this was a no-brainer. With IPM and organic methods, I found insects easy to control. Examples of an organic approach are using Nolo bait for grasshoppers and Spinosad granules for fire ants. Of course, my finicky roses still needed fungicides and I was spraying "blue water," as Jerry Parsons calls Miracle-Grow. But I considered myself an organic gardener.

Fast forward twenty years. I've learned to plant disease-resistant roses and no longer use fungicides. I don't use chemical fertilizers, but opt to use cottonseed meal, fish hydrolysate, seaweed, molasses and other organic products. Now, I'm truly an organic gardener.....or am I?

I've gone from feeding the plant, to feeding the soil, to my current philosophy, feeding the soil organisms. As Melinda Kneese explained to the Master Gardeners, the soil organisms such as earthworms, fungi, protozoa and bacteria feed the plant. My job is to feed these soil organisms and let them feed my plants. Melinda was trained by Dr. Elaine Ingham who developed the Soil Food Web concept (www.soilfoodweb.com). You may wish to subscribe to her free e-zines or read the archived issues.

While attending the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (www.tofga.org) conference, I learned that many amendments, besides N-P-K, feed the soil organisms. For instance, molasses (dried or liquid) is an excellent food for soil organisms. Kelp meal, humates, rock powders and even ground crab shells help promote beneficial organisms. Crab shells feed predatory chitin-eating nematodes that destroy the harmful root-knot nematodes. Mycorrhizal fungi bring water and nutrients to the roots, cutting water usage by up to 80%. This beneficial fungi is destroyed by tilling, so a no-till approach is suggested. The new term is "roto-vate" which is shallow cultivation, so roots aren't disturbed.

The next step after making sure your soil organisms are fat and happy, is to actually add more soil organisms via "Actively-Aerated Compost Tea." AACT can be tailored to the consumers specifications: fungal teas for perennials, trees and shrubs; bacterial teas for annuals and vegetables. Now we have gone beyond N-P-K to inoculating the soil with beneficial organisms, feeding the organisms and allowing them to feed your plants. Whoa...out of the box!

The next time you're digging in your soil, imagine all that life taking care of your plants while you kick back with a cold one. Happy gardening to you and your soil organisms!

by Pam Bresler