



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

President's Message:

November, 2006
Volume 4, Issue 11

Wednesday,
November 1, 2006
1:00 p.m.
Extension Office

Speaker:
Barry Wall of Texas
Rainwater Systems will
discuss the different
rainwater collection
systems available.

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Hi Everyone!

Thanks to all of you who came to the last meeting and voted on the bylaws. Between the people at the meeting and those of you who left me your proxy, we had just the two-thirds that was required to vote. Please be sure to come to the November meeting, as we will be electing officers for next year. Otis Fox, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for the next year, which looks somewhat similar to the current officers, as all have agreed to serve another year. That having been said, if you know of someone who would like to be an officer, or you would yourself, please contact Otis or make a nomination from the floor in November.

It is also time to begin thinking about our committee structure. Our standing committees are education, horticulture inquiry, projects (Vice-President is Chair), speaker, nominating, program, public relations, archivist, volunteer coordinator, market days, greenhouse, junior master gardener, and demonstration garden. The responsibilities of each committee are listed in the bylaws. It is the President's responsibility to appoint all committee Chairs, with the exception of the projects committee. I am in the process of determining if the current Chairs are willing to serve

another year or if I need to make appointments. All Committee Chairs serve for one year, effective each January. The only exception to this is the Education Chair, who serves from June to June, due to the planning and preparation necessary for the class. All committees need help, so please let me know if you would be willing to either serve as Chair of one of the committees or would like to be on the committee. Any organization has to have people who help the group do its business. HCMG is the same – without the committee structure, the organization could not function. I encourage those who want to participate in this way to let me know if they would like to either chair or be a member of any of the committees mentioned. Per the bylaws, any Certified Master Gardener in good standing can chair a committee and interns can be members.

October was a fairly busy month at HCMG. If you noticed, the plant part of the demonstration garden is planted and irrigated. The turf portion will be completed in the early spring. Thanks to Tony Pacini and everyone who helped in preparing and installing the new garden. We have already had folks come by to look at the plants.

The convention is getting closer. The Planning Committee

continues to awe everyone with the amount they are accomplishing. We will be putting registration up soon (you will have a special registration form on the members only page of our website in advance of putting the general one up). All tours and speakers are confirmed, and the agenda is set. The registration process has been developed. While there is still a lot to do before April, we have made great progress and plan to have the best convention ever, and one that will be hard to beat in the future.

Three MG's participated in Club Ed this fall. Harold Pierrat taught roses, Fay Drozd taught plant propagation, and I taught oak wilt. Club Ed would like many Master Gardeners to teach a class. If you are interested, contact me or Fay or Harold, and we will give you the information.

We participated in the Kerr County Fair the last weekend this month, and Fay Drozd and Sandy Martin demonstrated rainwater harvesting at Market Days. We also helped the Texas Forest Service distribute trees. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with these projects.

Anne Brown

HCMG Website of the Month

<http://www-aes.tamu.edu/> Agricultural chemicals and environmental safety information from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.



Identify This!

By Carol Seminara

When someone finds out you're a genuine certified Hill Country Master Gardener, how do they react? If your experience is anything like mine, they usually smile and say "oh," while nodding their heads in appreciative agreement.

Then they ask you a question. One that, you feverently hope, you can answer. Lately, I've been getting a lot of questions about flowers blooming along the roads.

One of our B&B guests was enchanted by the mounds of blue flowers he saw growing everywhere, and he wanted to know the name of that plant. Ah, I thought, double-checking my calendar. Yup, it's November, so it must be fall aster (*Aster oblongifolius*). But when I pointed to my flowerbed in profuse bloom, he shook his head no.

I asked for more details.

My guest insisted the blooms were blue, not lavender or purple, thus ruling out lavender and verbena, neither of which is actively blooming right now. Of course, just because it's not the season, doesn't mean something isn't growing. Our past year's climate and weather have been so wacky, I'm confused. Imagine how the poor plants feel. In fact, I've got six good-sized volunteer bluebonnets growing in one of my beds even as I write this.

After a bit more discussion, I learned that the mysterious plant bloomed in spikes. Flower shape was an important clue leading me to identify the unknown flora as Narrow-leaf Gayfeather (*Liatris mucronata*), also called Bottlebrush Blazing Star of Cusp Gayfeather. Never mind that gayfeather flowers are classified as lavender, color is subjective and open to interpretation. Thankfully, the bloom type and other physical characteristics of the plant, such as

height and spread, leaf size and shape, were specific.

Gayfeather is a prairie wildflower that is native to Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and Missouri. This perennial is actually a member of the Aster family (*Asteraceae*) and grows in clumps up to 3 feet in height with a spread of 2 feet. The half-inch ray-shaped flowers are tightly clustered along upper portion of the stiff, upright spikes and bloom from mid-summer to early fall. They are very popular with butterflies and hummingbirds; the seeds are a food for goldfinches and other songbirds. Gayfeather stems are unbranching and the leaves along it are narrow and densely packed with the longest leaves at the bottom of the spike.

Gayfeather has a high heat tolerance and low water requirement, making it a good addition to a xeriscapic landscape. The plants thrive in dry, rocky conditions and are propagated from corms that lie just below the soil surface. Additionally, Gayfeather is considered a deer resistant plant.

Another flower making a showy display right now is the Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*). The tall stalks rise from 1 to 10 feet in height and are covered in large, bright yellow flowers up to 3 inches in diameter that grow in a spiral around the stem. The rough-textured leaves are long, narrow and drooping, and are a gray-green color.

While most sunflowers are annuals, the Maximilian sunflower is a rhizomatous perennial. The daisy-shaped blooms provide nectar for butterflies, and seeds, and habitat cover for song birds and other wildlife. A forage plant for livestock,

deer, too, enjoy Maximilian sunflowers, so this is probably not a good garden choice if you have a Bambi problem.

Maximilian sunflowers are adaptable and will grow in most well-drained soils. They prefer more moisture than the Gayfeather, which is why you often see the sunflowers growing along drainage ditches. They are easily propagated from seed or can successfully be transplanted.

It is not regarded as an invasive plant, although over several years, a single plant can form a fairly large colony. Interestingly, the Maximilian sunflower is not included in the Austin native and adapted landscape plants list, perhaps because it is often considered a nuisance weed to farmers. Further proof to my half-baked theory that any plant, even a rose, can be called a weed if it's growing where it's not wanted.

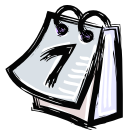
One more interesting fact I learned about the Maximilian sunflower: it was named in honor of the Prussian naturalist Prince Alexander Philip Maximilian who led two scientific expeditions to the New World, including a two-year visit to North America from 1832-1834. Before coming here, the Prince traveled to Brazil where he first described and named several other species including a turtle, two frogs and, most famously, the margay *Leopardus wiedii*, a small, spotted wild cat.

I guess that's why I love being a HCMG. My horticultural knowledge, like my garden, is a work in progress.

[
To cultivate a garden is to walk with God.
-Christian Nestell Bovee
]

Kudos

Diane McMahon, our latest Intern to complete her volunteer hours and become a "certified" Master Gardener.



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

November 1 – HCMG State Conference Steering Committee Chairs meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Extension Office.

November 1 - HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. Barry Wall of Texas Rainwater Systems will discuss the different rainwater collection systems available.

November 4 – Cibolo Nature Center will present a seminar on Rainwater Catchment from 9 – 10 a.m. 1 City Park Rd., (Off Hwy 46 East of Boerne.)

November 7 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, meets at Riverside Nature Center (RNC), 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville. Susan Sander, Texas Forest Service, will discuss native evergreen trees and shrubs that can add winter interest to your landscape.

November 7 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Boerne Chapter, meets at 7 p.m., Cibolo Nature Center, 1 City Park Rd., Boerne (off Hwy 46 east of Boerne). Baxter Adams, owner of Love Creek Nursery, will discuss Bigtooth Maples.

November 8 - Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2 p.m. at the Central Texas Electric Co-Op Bldg., 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. Anne Brown, Master Gardener and Water Harvesting Specialist, will address building a collection system and how to conserve water in our gardens.

November 11 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Bandera County Chapter, will meet at 2 p.m., Medina Community Library meeting room, Medina. Patty Leslie is the speaker.

November 21 - Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

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

Committees

Demonstration

Garden: Tony Pacini, Chair

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:

Jean Anderson, Chair

Market Days:

Tony Pacini, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry:

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

Jr. Master Gardener Program:

Fay Drozd. chair

Newsletter:

Martha Stevens-editor
Carol Seminara-
assistant editor

Contributors: Betty West, Ida Luckey, Anne Brown, Jean Anderson

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 we only have October, November and December to complete our volunteer hours and our CEU hours for 2006. Please take a little time and fill out those Volunteer Hour Forms. I would really appreciate it.

I am happy to congratulate Christine Millar who completed her hours for recertification in February. Sharon Johnson completed her hours in September, Janey Crum and Otis Fox were recertified in October. Congratulations and thank you for your very hard work.

by Ida Luckey

Help Wanted!

The HCMG Public Relations Committee for the 2007 State Master Gardeners' Conference is looking for another member.

We need someone who can take over our conference-related denim shirt ordering and distribution duties. Tasks include keeping accurate records of participants' shirt orders and coordinating the distribution of these shirts at the conference,

If this sounds like a good fit for your skill set, please consider volunteering your talents and a little time. Your efforts and willingness to help will be appreciated by all members of the committee. If interested, please contact Carol Biggs, Carol Seminara, or Betty West. Thank you.

by Carol Biggs

HCMG October 4, 2006 Monthly Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Anne Brown at 1:50 PM on October 4, 2006 following a presentation on organic gardening by Rick Martin.

A vote to approve the revised by-laws was taken. Revisions were approved by the required two thirds of the membership. The final by-laws document will be completed by January 1st 2007.

There was discussion on MG involvement in creating an herb garden in front of the Kerrville Health Food Store. There is an issue of whether or not MG can do projects of this nature for commercial enterprises. Anne will research.

Treasurer's Report. Carol Johnson reported income of \$139.00 and expenses of \$635.60 leaving a balance of \$4,523.37. Carol has created a binder with income and expense detail that will be kept in the MG office. Anne stated that approximately \$4,000 has been advanced to the Convention Fund. The money will be put back into the General Fund once money starts coming in for the convention.

Committee Updates.

Convention. There have been many requests to move registration up to an earlier date. Registration is expected to be up on the web site by November 1st. Registration fee will be \$135.00 which covers food for the Friday night banquet, the Saturday luncheon and all workshops. Convention sponsorships are welcome. Let Anne or Annesse Thomas know if you know of a business that is interested. Tommie Airhart reported that many volunteers will be needed and will need to volunteer for more than one thing. She requested that we let her know our interests. A volunteer is needed to coordinate table decorations for the Friday night banquet.

Education. Debbie Russell reported twelve applications have been received so far for the 2007 class with additional applications expected. Interviews are being set up. Twenty six applications have been sent out. Deadline for applications is October 17 but may be extended if necessary. Limit for the class is twenty five. Carol Biggs reported 1,286 hits on the web site as of 10/4.

Nominating. Otis Fox and Tommie Airhart reported that all existing officers have agreed to serve for one more year. Additional nominations are welcome. Members were advised to speak with the person they wish to nominate before proceeding with the nomination. A vote for the election of officers will be taken at the November meeting.

Greenhouse and Demo Garden. Demo garden plants are in; turf will be put in next Spring. The goal is to have the demo garden looking nice in the Spring. No more plant sales are scheduled for the year although we will still have a presence at Market Days.

Miscellaneous.

--MG will have a booth at the Riverside Nature Center event.

--Christine Millar is working on a generic version of the Garden Planner.

--Pam Bressler still needs speaker bureau bio write ups for a couple people who have signed up.

--The Christmas party will be a noon potluck on the first Wednesday in December followed by the December meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon K Johnson

**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. A.
Advisor

**Of Leaf &
Limb
Newsletter**

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