



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

May, 2007

Volume 5, Issue 5

**1:00 p.m. May 2,
2007 meeting
speaker is
Feather Wilson
on
Water: Challenge
for the Hill
Country**

Water availability is of utmost importance to our residents. We've heard many opinions about our water resources, but here's the opportunity to hear Feather Wilson, the consulting geologist for Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District discuss this timely issue. He is currently building a groundwater availability model for Kerr County. The aquifer modeling covers the water availability of the Middle Trinity, Lower Trinity, Edwards-Trinity, Glen Rose, etc.

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President's Message:



**Anne
Brown**

**WE DID
IT!!**

**As the
Kerrville**

**Daily Times put it,
"Master Gardeners
Swarm the Hill Country"**

Hi Everyone!

I certainly hope everyone is proud of yourself, because you should be. The convention ran smoothly, thanks to everyone's presence there those days, and I have heard nothing but compliments about it and us. In fact, the President of the Texas Master Gardener Association told me that it was the best convention she had ever attended, and I have to assume she has been to them all. I have about a hundred evaluations to tabulate, but aside from a few, and there are always a few, everyone had a great time. I will have the evaluations done by the meeting so you can hear some of the comments made. I have to tell you my favorite under the *what can we do to improve the convention box* – "serve more chocolate". You have to be pretty happy with the way things are going to make that kind of a comment!

We did set a few records those three days. We put on

the first ever sold out TMGA convention. We had 600 registrants (not counting the one I picked up yesterday), and only 13 no shows. The average no show figure is 10% of registrants, according to Doug Welsh. The Inn of the Hills served the largest number of meals in a single seating Friday night it has ever had in its long history. And I am making up a new statistic. We had 75 out of our 85 members volunteer and work at the convention. 88% of our entire organization was there to make sure things went smoothly. I am sure, were that statistic kept, we would have set a record.

**YOU ALL DESERVE A HUGH
PAT ON THE BACK.**

That being said, I need, once again, to offer special thanks to those of us who spent the previous year and a half planning the conference. In no special order, here goes. Roy Walston and Laurinda Boyd initially got us going by evaluating facilities here in Kerrville and selecting the Inn. During the conference, both were there full time to insure we had whatever we needed. Then Laurinda arranged to have some 4H kids there at the end to pack us up. Thanks.

Tommie Airhart was in charge of getting all of you signed up to help, and what a job she did, with Ida Luckey preparing the spreadsheets. Carol

Biggs managed all the Public Relations and generated the interest across the state. She and Betty West also managed the shirt sales. Beverly Weidenfeller obtained most of the items which we raffled off and managed the "goody bags".

Carol Seminara, and her husband Joe Houde, designed and printed all the materials and signs used before and during the conference. Joe, a very gifted graphic designer, also was responsible for the design of our logo and helped us out at every turn.

Liz Althaus, and her Captains, planned for and coordinated all the tours. We took out 313 (I think that is what she told me) folks, and all had a great time, and we did not lose anyone. Fay Drozd managed all the TMGA and JMGA awards activities, and it was not an easy job. John Osborn arranged for all the vendors, and also conducted the raffle, at which we made over \$1000. Cheri Bolden arranged for all the food for both the hotel and the tours, including the snacks and the water the tours had. And she made time to be the photographer for the event.

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Calendar of Events: Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional; events are listed for those wishing to attend other educational offerings. Be sure to call and confirm event.

May 2 – HCMG monthly meeting, 1 pm at the Kerr County Extension Office. Feather Wilson will be our speaker. Feather is a Consulting Geologist for Water Resources and Management in our area.

May 5 – Society of American Foresters, Texas Hill Country Chapter, will conduct a workshop on “*Tree Management*” at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, 8 am – 4:30 pm. Topics include Identification & management of oak wilt; Tree Selection; Planting & Avoiding Construction Damage; Pruning Young & Mature Trees. Cost is \$30 p/p. Contact Mark Duff at 830.257-7744 or mduff@tfs.tamu.edu

May 9 – HCMG members are invited to tour the gardens of Diane Matthews and Bobbie Schonaert. Liz Althaus will announce the specifics at our May HCMG monthly meeting and will need a head count of those wishing to attend.

May 12/13 – Salado Yard and Garden Tour. The historic village of Salado will host the 4th annual tour of yards and gardens. Saturday hours are 10 am – 4 pm. Sunday’s are 1-4 pm. Tickets are \$15 and good for both days. Tickets may be purchased at the Salado Civic Center, 601 Main, Salado, TX. Tours will be conducted rain or shine. Call (254) 947-8300 for further information

May 12 Riverside Nature Center’s Adult Learning for Living Program Series. Jay Keen, Amateur Birder, will present “Basic Birding Skills, Part II” 10 am – noon, Fee is \$5 per adult and half price for RNC members and children age 12 and under.

May 15 – Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

May 19/20 – Lavender Festival at Becker Vineyards, 11 miles east of Fredericksburg off US Hwy 290. Cooking demonstrations, luncheons, speakers, lectures, tours, vendors, wine tasting and wine pairings. Reservations required for the Lavender luncheons (A charge for these). 830.644.2681 or www.beckervineyards.com

May 24/July 18 - Southwest Gourd Show. Gourds become art. Kerr Arts & Cultural Center, 228 Earl Garrett. 830/895-2911; www.kacckerrville.com

May 26/27 – HCMG will have a booth at Market Days on the grounds of the Kerr County Court House from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. on both days. Drop by and pick up some plants for your spring garden. The volunteer sign-up sheet for Market Days is in the MG office.

President’s Message from Page 1

Dusty Gillam and her committee searched out and arranged for all the speakers, on which we had many compliments. Annese Thomas was in charge of getting our sponsors, who helped out greatly with the funding of the convention. Harold Pierrat arranged for the transportation, and even drove the in-town tour. Randy Simmons managed the registration process, and we got comments about it being the smoothest ever

And last but not least, Carol Johnson. Carol single handedly processed all the registrations that came in. There were probably 700 of those when you count the cancellations along the way. And she paid all the bills and managed all the money, and made refunds along the way.

She also came up with the idea for the ‘goody bags” and arranged for the flowers.

Thanks to all of you for a job well done.

I have one last comment to pass along to all of you. One lady came up to me and stated that for a group only five years old to accomplish something like this (referring to the convention), we should be recognized nationally. Enough said.

See you May 2nd.
Anne Brown

HCMG Websites for two of our Conference Speakers

<http://www.felderrushing.net>
<http://www.maggiesgarden.com>

**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 Committee

Editor – Eleanor Baldwin
Assistant Editors -Carol Seminara, Betty West and Kathie Marlow
Regular Contributors – Anne Brown, Ida Luckey, Sharon Johnson

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:
baldwin@ktc.com.



Be at the May 2nd Meeting for the

Surprise of the Month

*Because so many of our members were unable to attend the Diane Matthews Garden tour during our recent Texas State Master Gardener conference, Liz Althaus has set up a very special garden tour just for our HCMG members. **Liz will furnish the specifics at our May 2nd monthly meeting but just to give you a preview ... we'll enjoy a private tour at the gardens of both Diane Matthews and Bobbie Schonaert.***

Diane hosted two tours of her garden during our convention and both were sold out. Bobbie Schonaert is a Master Gardener from Montgomery County and her garden (near Fredericksburg) is "native." Bobbie's garden has been a featured garden on recent NPSOT Lawn and Garden Tours

Over the Fence (by You!)

We thought it would be fun if we started a new column in our HCMG newsletter - one that is written by you. There's so much talent in this organization, we thought this would be a good way to tap into it without stressing out anyone.

Now before somebody gets an attack of writer's block, let us explain how it will work with your help and participation.

As the name implies, this column is a neighborly place where we can stop, hang out and swap information and ideas. Each month we'll propose a topic and you, our fellow MGs, will send us a couple of sentences answering the question posed or expressing your opinion on the subject or sharing an anecdote. E-mail your replies to me, Carol Seminara; my e-mail address is: carol@carolsworld.tv . I'll need your contributions by the 15th of each month so I can compile and edit them, then I'll forward the completed column to our fearless editor, Eleanor Baldwin.

To get started, the topic for the June newsletter is: **What's your favorite tool?** We want you to name names, tell us the brand and model (if you have that info handy) and what makes this particular tool so useful. If remember where you got it and how much it cost, even better.

To help prime the pump, several of us are wondering what style of pruning shears are best, and we'd love to know what model our intrepid rosarian Harold Pieratt has on his belt when he heads out to dead head. At the conference, one vendor had a handy gadget called the Cobrahead, but when I went back to buy one late Saturday afternoon, he'd already packed up his wares. I did, however, hear that Faye Drozd has one and I'd love to learn if she thinks it's worth tracking down. If you've ever worked with Peggy Benson out at The Good Samaritan Center, then you've seen her handy cultivator.

Anyway, that's the premise. Tell me -- by e-mail, deadline May 15 -- what's your favorite tool and why, and we'll publish it in the June issue of OF LEAF AND LIMB. We think *Over the Fence* could be a helpful resource and a lot of fun for everyone.

Remember, the topic for June is: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TOOL?

Plant Chats

And don't forget our OTHER new column *Plant Chats* for those of you to share your longer gardening comments and ideas. Email baldwin@ktc.com by the 20th of the month





Felonious Feathered Friends

By Carol Seminara

We're gardeners and one of the reasons we work so hard at cultivating out flora is to attract and benefit the local fauna.

Personally, I love all the critters that call our yard home. My feelings about butterflies are already on record in this publication: I've gladly sacrificed my fennel to the Anise Swallowtail and my passion vine to the Gulf Fritillary. I'm delighted to see all the skinks, spiny lizards and anoles sunning themselves now that it's warm again.

Our feeder is frequented by several varieties of sparrows and finches, at least one Tufted Titmouse, an occasional Goldfinch, half a dozen doves including some White-wings and Mourning Doves, several Mockingbirds, a couple of Blue Jays, one particularly insatiable squirrel and our American Robin duo -- Rob and Laura. There's a Woodpecker who occasionally taps on our chimney and sometimes, late at night, we hear an owl hooting outside our bedroom window.

But the jewel -- dare I say the ruby-- of our backyard is our mated pair of Northern Cardinals who've taken up residence in the Photinia.

There's something special about those redbirds, as Joe's late mother used to call the cardinals that visited her birdfeeder in New Braunfels. She always delighted in pointing out their crimson flash in the trees whenever we came for a visit.

Cardinals are very popular birds, partly because their range extends from Maine to Texas and west to the Rocky Mountains. They are also found in parts of Arizona, California and New Mexico. In fact, they are the most popular state bird: seven of the 50 United States picked the Cardinal as the official state bird. Second most popular is the Western Meadowlark with six states, while the Mockingbird came in third with five states.

Because they are not migratory birds -- most live within a mile of where they were born -- cardinals can be seen all year long. They eat seeds, grains, berries and insects. These songbirds are particularly active and noisy during the morning and evening hours. Both the male and female sing, and their songs are loud, long and fairly complex.

Cardinals are monogamous and, during their breeding season between March and September, they usually raise two broods of one to five (usually three) eggs each. They prefer to nest in dense vegetation such as woodlands, thickets and hedges near houses and gardens. The female solely incubates the eggs, while the male brings her food during this time. Eggs hatch in 11 to 13 days and both parents feed the chicks insects. The parents continue feeding the chicks for 25 to 56 days after they fledge from the nest.

The male cardinal, who is already quite territorial, becomes even more aggressive during the breeding period. He spends a lot of time describing his territory through song, whistles and clicks, and he busily flits from tree to tree defining his boundaries. Sometimes, a male cardinal will even defend his home from his own reflection in a window or a mirror.

Thus every morning as we deliver breakfast to our B&B guests, we watch our male cardinal battling his imaginary rival in the side mirrors of the cars parked in our lot. He squawks, he whistles, he beats his wings and hurls his body at that other bird, but to no avail. I usually try to calm the situation by placing a dishcloth over the mirror, but that only slows the action until Mr. Cardinal spots that competitor in the windshield, and the battle begins again.

But then, the other day, we couldn't believe what we saw: after several minutes of sparring with his reflection, the cardinal flew down to the gravel driveway, picked up a pebble in his beak, flew back up to the mirror and threw the tiny rock at his image. Joe and I were dumbfounded.

Who knew thumbless bird brains could use tools?

