



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

October, 2007
Volume 5, Issue 10

**Meeting 1:00 p.m.
October 3, 2007**

Connie Townsend will discuss "Veggies: You CAN Grow Them in the Hill Country."

Townsend has been in the garden since she was two when her mother would park her there with a spoon to make mud pies while SHE gardened. Gardening in southern Iowa where the topsoil is measured in feet, not fractions of inches, makes for a totally different concept in gardening from there to our Hill Country. Besides gardening, she's active in choir/music, reading and cooking (even has her own cookbook of favorite recipes). She's a member of the local *Herbies* and *Jardin de la Cocina*. She has worked with the *Hunt School Garden Project* since its beginning and is an expert vegetable gardener.

Highlights

President's Message	1
Calendar & Kudos	2
Telephone Inquiry	3
Plant Plumbing	3
Speakers Bureau	4
Meeting Minutes	5
Pique Assiette Pot	5



President's Message:



Anne Brown

Hi Everyone!

I am sitting in a beautiful, peaceful campground in Hungry Horse, Montana, outside of Glacier National Park. If you don't know, Glacier and Waterton National Park in Canada joined together in the 1920's to form the Waterton - Glacier

International Peace Park, the only Peace Park in the world. We drove into Canada and took a boat down Waterton Lake to Goat Haunt, in the U.S. We found out about a special result of 9-11 – the Rangers at Goat Haunt are now also official customs agents, and no one can do the trails around that area unless they are U.S. or Canadian citizens. So if a British citizen wanted to walk the trails at Goat Haunt, they would be denied access. It's sort of sad in a way that we have had to change since the attack, but somewhat reassuring that they are attempting to secure our borders. At the border itself, there was a 10-foot wide path cut through the forest to mark the border – and they expanded that to 15 feet after 9-11.

I have no idea what the temperature is in the Hill Country, but just to make you jealous, it has been 34-36 when we get up, and gets to the mid 60's during the day. It would be great to be able to build a campfire, but there is a ban on almost everything – even smoking outside, because of the extreme fire danger. We cannot see the mountains clearly because of the smoke from burning fires. We are getting ready to drive through Idaho and get into southern Utah, to do Zion, Bryce and

Capitol Reef National Parks. We haven't seen the flowers we saw last year, due to the drought, but we have been lucky to see some wildlife. While in Canada, we saw a mama black bear with her two, two-year-old cubs, and while rafting down the Flathead River, we saw another black bear with two cubs, these one year old. We also have seen mountain goats, big horn sheep, and deer.

I hear Harold did a great job running the meeting this month, and I appreciate his doing so. Also, thanks to Carol Seminara for what I heard was her great presentation. Don't forget that next month the Nominating Committee will present it's recommendations for officers for 2008. You will have the opportunity to present nominations from the floor if you would like to, and we will vote in November to elect new officers. As you know, the officers this year have all served two-year terms, and are not eligible to serve again. Thanks to Randy Simmons and his committee for presenting a slate, and to those who have agreed to stand for election.

Since I left town on the 2nd, I have no idea what else is going on, so I will just say see you in October, on the 3rd. For those of you who have agreed to serve on the Scholarship Committee, we will meet at 10:00am before the general meeting.

Website of the month:
Upper Guadalupe River Authority
<http://www.ugra.org/overview.htm>

Education Chair Debbie Russell has added to her committee list since last month. Her team now includes Sandy Martin, Fay Drozd, Marie Brown, Nina Wagner, Eileen Haden, Diane McMahon, Joan Bryson, Bev Weidenfeller, Connie Townsend, and Mary Allen Meriwether.



Betty West



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. Betty West

September 29 – 2007 Tour of Yards hosted by Native Plant Society of Texas – Boerne Chapter and Cibolo Nature Center. Explore various Hill Country landscapes in San Antonio, Fair Oaks and Boerne featuring drought tolerant and native plants. Free.

October 27 - HCMGs will be selling fall plants at Kerr County Market Days, Kerr County Courthouse, 9 am to 4 pm. This is our LAST plant sale date for the year so mark your calendar.

October 30 - 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.

September 29 - Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardener Association "Hidden Gardens Tour & Fall Plant Sale" from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for the Hidden Gardens Tour and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for the Fall Plant Sale. Pick up tickets and maps at Green Acres, 611 East Mimosa Street at Pearl Street (FM 2165), Rockport, TX 361-790-0103. Cost is \$10 p/p.

Kudos to:

Dorothy Buchen, David Buchen and Jack Cremin, our latest Interns to complete their volunteer hours and become "certified" Master Gardeners.

October 2 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, will enjoy a field trip to Cibolo Nature Center (CNC) in Boerne. Meet at CNC at 2:00 p.m. 1 City Park Rd., Boerne (off Hwy 46 east of Boerne).

Sandy Martin and Annese Thomas for volunteering to serve on the Scholarship Committee. They join Fay Drozd (Chair), Liz Althaus, Judy Fleming and Shreena Spangler.

October 3 - HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. Our own Connie Townsend (HCMG class of '05) will discuss "Veggies: You CAN Grow Them in the Hill Country."

Tommie Airhart and Marie Brown for their organization of volunteers to keep our greenhouse plants watered, fed and ready for Market Days sales.

Annual Tour of Yards

Cibolo Nature Center/NPSOT – Boerne Chapter

October 10 – Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2 p.m. at the Central Texas Electric Co-Op Bldg., 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. Carol Seminara (HCMG Class of '05) will present "Mediterranean Herbs (including Lavender)."

Want to spend a delightful day exploring gorgeous landscapes and learning how to utilize native/drought tolerant plants in your own yard? Here's a deal that can't be beat!!

October 13 – Down by the Riverside Festival & Native Plant Sale will be held at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville.

The annual Tour of Yards will be hosted by Native Plant Society – Boerne Chapter and Cibolo Nature Center on Saturday, September 29th. The yards feature native and drought tolerant plants and you'll get some great landscaping ideas for your own yards. There is no charge for this tour!

October 13 – Native Plant Society of Texas – Bandera County Chapter is back from summer hiatus at the Medina Community Library, 1:00 p.m. Susan Tracy will present "Landscaping with Native Grasses."

This year's tour will be a little different from others. There's a Morning Tour (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) and you'll only visit the morning yards listed during these hours. Then there's an Afternoon Tour (Noon to 4:00 p.m.) and you should only visit the afternoon yards listed during this time period.

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

I'll have a list of the yards (along with map and directions to each yard) available via e-mail so if you'd like to attend this wonderful tour, e-mail me and I'll forward you the information. Throw in lunch at one of the restaurants in the area and you've got an inspiring and fun-filled day planned. And you certainly can't beat the price for the tour. Remember, it's free but lunch isn't.

October 20 – Deadline for HCMG newsletter articles (send to Eleanor Baldwin at baldwin@kctc.com)

Submitted by Betty West dwest@omniglobal.net



The Telephone Inquiry Phone Continues to Ring



by MG Interns Dorothy & David Buchen

As Master Gardener interns, we have found the telephone inquiry desk to be both

educational and sometimes uneventful (no questions to answer). We have used Plant Answers, e-mailed A & M specialists, researched the library in the MG office, and gone through previous data in the computer and in the completed file box.

One week when we came in for phone duty, we had probably eight inquiries about webworms. When we researched it, we found that BT was the thing to use, but Jerry Parsons said just wait a week or two and the worms would be gone and the trees would grow new leaves.

An interesting call came in from a lady in Ingram. She had a tomato plant that had grown so tall that she had ripped up some sheets and tied them to the eaves of the house to use as support for the vines. Her husband was so embarrassed by the looks of this that he parked their RV in front of the house to hide the sheets. Her question was should she pick off some of the leaves so the tomatoes would grow bigger. We told her that the leaves were essential support for the fruit and that removing them was not recommended.

We have realized that the questions coming across the inquiry desk deal with what is currently going on in yards at that particular time. Webworms were the topic in early July, problems with peach trees when they were setting fruit, and lawn problems when we had so much rain.

Another observation is that many of the questions are from people who have just moved to our area. They are unfamiliar with our unique gardening requirements.

Plant Plumbing

by Harold Pieratt



I am sure that you have crunched into a stem of celery and gotten some strands stuck between your teeth. Don't worry, it's just plant pipes, just pull them out and take a look at the amazing plumbing system of plants. All plants have pipes which move water and nutrients to all parts of the plant. This complicated network of pipes is called the vascular system and this movement of fluids is helped along by the leaves. As the leaves make food by photosynthesis, they give off a lot of water called transpiration. These water losses create a vacuum or pull on the rest of the water inside the plant, similar to sipping soda through a straw. So the water keeps moving up in the plant stems, exiting through the leaves while the roots constantly seek a new supply.

All living things have reached the same solution for moving fluids most efficiently despite their radically different vascular systems. Plant pipes or human/animal arteries, they all taper in size and length to reduce friction and optimize efficiency for growth and reproduction. And speaking of efficiency, green plants are the only living organisms to manufacture their own food.



Member photo: HCMG President Anne Brown and *Of Leaf & Limb* Editor Eleanor Baldwin at a recent meeting



What Do Our Committees Do?

Pam Bresler, HCMG Speakers Bureau

Our Speakers Bureau was formed in 2006 with the goal of providing Master Gardener speakers for local civic and gardening clubs.

Topics were solicited and a small booklet was printed with topic descriptions and speaker contact information. We keep copies of the booklet in the Master Gardener office. We also have a standing invitation from Club Ed to teach gardening topics.

When a request comes in for a speaker, we attempt to find someone who is free on the date requested. We can always use more speakers and need to cover additional topics such as: organic gardening, IPM, roses, composting, greenhouses, fragrance gardens, wildflowers, gourds, vegetables, xeric gardens, dried flower crafts and other garden-related crafts.

Committee members and their topics are:

- ◇ **Harold Pieratt**, Committee Co-Chairman, "Hill Country Garden Roses"
- ◇ **John Osborn**, "Container Gardening," "Water Catchment" and "Ornamental Grasses"
- ◇ **Christine Millar**, "Drought-Proof Your Garden"
- ◇ **Carol Seminara**, "Gardening 101," "Herb Gardening" and "Landscape Design"
- ◇ **Deborah Russell**, "Nineteenth Century Flowers and Vegetables in Texas" and "Planting and Using a Dyer's Garden"
- ◇ **Anne Brown**, "Rainwater Harvesting," "Plant Propagation" and "Oak Wilt"
- ◇ **Thomas Collins**, "Butterflies of the Texas Hill Country"
- ◇ **Cheri Bolden**, "Kitchen Garden at Henry Clay Estate"

If this project interests you, please e-mail me with your ideas. We also need a new chairman for 2008. The chairman updates the booklet yearly, as well as

finds a speaker when we receive a request from the public. This could be the project you've been waiting for!

Contact Pam Bresler 792-3830
bregal@ktc.com

HCMG DEMO GARDEN and GREENHOUSE WORKERS



Marilyn Pease weeding the demo garden turf.



New HCMG Carolyn Nall caring for the greenhouse



Marie Brown watering the greenhouse plants.



Tony Pacini hard at work weeding the turf at the HCMG demo garden.





Hill Country Master Gardener Association 2007 Executive Committee

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

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Pam Bresler, Chair

Volunteer Coordination

Tommie Airhart, Chair

Newsletter

Editor – Eleanor Baldwin
Assistant Editors - Betty West
and Kathie Marlow
Photographer - Marguerite Belec
Submissions to
baldwin@kctc.com

**Minutes of HCMG Meeting 1 pm Wednesday
September 5th**

- Meeting called to order by VP Harold Pieratt
- Visitor Recognition: Lee Fry, a MG moving here from the Beaumont area.
- Recognition of new certified MG's Dorothy & David Buchan and Jack Cremin.
- Debbie Russell in gearing up awareness and publicity for next year's Training Program. All educators for program are in place and interest is rising by potential candidates. Also she stated that a sign-up sheet for providing meeting refreshments and condiments was available at the registration table. And the annual Christmas Party date, time, and planning will soon need to be addressed.
- Treasurers Report: Carol Johnson was recognized for her faithful duty as Treasurer for the last 2 years and her yeoman's job as registrar for our state conference. Anne, our president, will undertake the duties of treasurer until new 2008 officers are installed. Fay Drozd delivered the \$1000 check to Montgomery County MG's which she said they gladly took.
- Fay Drozd accepted registrations from MGs for the Bamburger Tour leaving 4 open seats to be filled.
- Fay Drozd spoke about Doug Welsh's new book and its educational and sensible garden applications for the entire state. And early purchases do receive a discount.
- Marie Brown addressed needs for helpers in Green House and a sign-up calendar was passed around. Kudos' to Marie.
- Toni Pacini and his committee were commended for the educational turf garden.
- Business Meeting Adjourned.
- Program: Annese Thomas introduced our very own Carol Seminara who spoke on the topic "Garden Art" which everyone enjoyed. Carol spoke about how homes are becoming more involved by taking art deco outdoors for living enjoyment. Our compliments to Carol's husband Joe for being the video technician.

Respectfully Submitted: Harold Pieratt

**Notes on Making Your Own
Pique Assiette Pots**

by Carol Seminara

(Ed note: after Carol's demonstration at our September meeting, several called for instructions...here they are).

One of the three top trends in garden art and decoration is recycling, and one of my favorite projects is making pique assiette pots. Those who saw my demo at the last HCMG meeting were introduced to the basics. Here are some more details to help you make something out of nothing.



Definition

Pique Assiette (or Picassiette) is a widespread, popular, and versatile style of mosaic that incorporates pieces of broken ceramics -- plates, dishes, cups, tiles - - and other found objects into the design.

A Little History

Also called shard mosaic, this art form dates back to Ancient Roman times when bits of terracotta and glass from broken bottles were incorporated into mosaic floors and wall decorations.

Victorians made "putty pots," which were jugs coated with plaster or putty and embedded with personal treasures such as pieces of crockery, jewelry, or glass. Making putty pots was considered an appropriate craft activity for Victorian ladies.

African funeral traditions include decorating gravesites and "mourning vessels" with items belonging to and/or reflecting the life of the dead person. Often, these mourning vessels incorporated things found in the pockets of the deceased.

How I Do It

Bases: I like to use terracotta pots for many of my pieces, but you can work on any rigid-walled item such as a glass cylinder or other non-porous, non-flexible item. If you choose to work on something made of wood -- a box or mirror -- then you absolutely must seal the wood to prevent absorption of moisture. Wood can and often does warp when wet and this can and probably will break the grout on your mosaic, thus compromising its structural integrity.

Personally, I like to seal terracotta pots, too. They are porous and, while they don't warp, sealing them prevents excess moisture from weakening the grout. If you plan to use a glazed pot or glass cylinder, then you do not need to seal the item.

Continues on Page 6



Pique Assiette Pots continued from Page 5:

Sometimes I glue together several terracotta pots to make a taller, more interesting piece. For this I use a two-part epoxy. Epoxy bonds tile, ceramic, glass, plastic, metal, and wood; it's waterproof and sets quickly (you can get 90 second, 5 minute or 10 minute sets). Follow the directions for mixing. Keep this stuff off your skin and out of your eyes and don't breathe the fumes. I use a craft stick to mix and to apply the epoxy to the pots I'm gluing together.

If you are making a tabletop, then I recommend using concrete board as your base. Concrete board is used in bathrooms and kitchens as the base for tile work. Durorock is one brand name. This material can be found at home improvement stores. You cut it with a masonry saw blade. ALWAYS wear protective gear -- goggles and inhalation protection -- when cutting this stuff; you do NOT want concrete dust in your eyes and/or lungs. This is no joke.

Sealing pots: I use a masonry sealer that's suitable for stone and brick. The brand I use is Behr, but Ace and Lowe's and almost all home repair places carry this stuff. It comes in two styles: flat (dries matt or dull) or wet-look (dries shiny). I prefer the flat version since I'll be covering up the pot anyway. This stuff is milky and thin; use a disposable foam brush and coat the inside and outside of the pot. I usually allow the pot to dry overnight before further work.

Painting pots: If your base is a terracotta pot and you want to use stained glass, broken bottles, or other transparent materials in your design AND you want the colors to remain true, then you should probably paint the pot white. I use white, exterior latex house paint. Again, allow the pot to dry overnight before further work.

(I know, it sounds like a lot of hurry up and wait, but you'll be glad you did.)

Design: You can sketch your design onto your sealed/painted pot with a pencil or you can bravely jump in and allow serendipity to be your guide.

Stuff to stick on your pot: All the afore mentioned ceramic pieces, broken dishes, tiles, glass, rocks, shells, metal bits, etc. can be part of your design. One quick note: if you're making a tabletop, you want the surface to be relatively level and smooth so save that china doll's head for another project.

A Quick Word About Breaking Stuff: If you don't have a ready supply of broken dishes or you need smaller pieces of tile, then you have a couple of options. But first, wear eye protection! When using a hammer to break things, wrap the item in several thick layers of newspaper and tap gently. You want to break a large item into smaller items, not pulverize it. A glass or tile cutter will give you more control over the size and shape of the pieces but they won't be as spontaneous as the bits you get with a hammer.

Tile nippers, too, allow you to snip tiles into tidy pieces and to nibble edges. Please, please be careful! This stuff can be very sharp.

Sticking stuff on: I've seen a lot of different media used to adhere bits and pieces. I do NOT recommend using a glue gun, no matter how much you may love yours. Instead, use something that's waterproof and made for adhering tile and glass. Weldbond Universal Adhesive is great for tile, glass, ceramics, wood and it's non-toxic and cleans up with water. This product can also be diluted with water and used as your sealer (!). Weldbond can be found in craft/hobby shops with glass and mosaic departments. This stuff comes in a big tube and you apply it like glue to the item you want to stick down.

Or you can use pre-mixed floor and wall tile adhesive -- a.k.a. mastic adhesive -- readily found at home improvement stores. This stuff comes in a tub and you apply it with a craft stick or plastic knife. Spread a dab of this goo onto the back of your item and stick it to your pot.

Let all your bits and pieces dry overnight before applying grout.

Grout: Grout fills in the spaces between your mosaic pieces and seals the joints between tiles. As mentioned in the presentation, grout is available as either sanded or unsanded. If you have large spaces between your tiles/mosaic pieces, then you use sanded grout. If your pieces are really close together (less than 1/8th inch), then use unsanded grout. You can purchase dry grout that you mix with water or you can purchase premixed grout. The color choices are more limited in the premixed variety. Keep in mind your design when deciding on what color grout to use: do you want the grout to be part of the overall design of the piece, do you want the grout to accentuate the individual mosaic pieces, do you want the grout to virtually disappear?

If you're mixing your own grout, make certain there are no lumps. The consistency of well-mixed grout is about that of peanut butter. Again, it's a good idea to wear protective gear -- goggles, rubber gloves -- for this part.

Apply enough grout to fill in all the voids between your mosaic pieces, allow it to set for about 10 minutes, and then carefully wipe off the excess. Avoid removing too much grout from the spaces between your mosaic pieces, but make certain you've wiped off any grout that's covering the surface of your tiles/mosaic pieces. Any remaining hazy on the surface of your tiles/mosaic pieces can usually be buffed off with a clean, soft rag.

Allow the grout to set overnight, then seal using a penetrating grout sealer. This stuff usually comes in a bottle with an attached brush applicator. Follow the application instructions; drying time is usually 2-3 hours.

Have fun: Seriously.