



# Of Leaf & Limb

## Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

*"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"*

**December, 2005**  
**Volume 3, Issue 12**

**Party**  
**Saturday,**  
**December 2, 2005**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**at the Ag Barn.**

The new officers will be installed.

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### President's Message:

Believe it! Fall is finally here. Are you ready? I, for one, am still scurrying around trying to prepare plants for the coming season. Every year it arrives before I'm ready. It is difficult to think about winter when the temperature is eighty degrees in October. Oh, well--maybe next year.

The time has also come to prepare for the holidays that are approaching and the end of the year. This means the Christmas party and the "changing of the guard". This year they will be combined and replace the December monthly meeting.

The organization has almost doubled in size with the certification of the class of 2005. We felt that we should combine the party and the installation of officers for 2006. We felt that, with the increase in size, we needed to hold it in a "neutral" and somewhat bigger place that is easily accessible to all. This year the party will be held in the Exhibit Hall at the Ag Barn complex across from the Extension office. The date is December 2 from 6 pm until

whenever. Please bring a dish to share. Meat, coffee, tea and ice will be furnished. Please bring your own "cheer" and your spouse. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

I hope you have had time to check out our new web site. In case you haven't, please go on <http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org>. There is a section for members only that will contain lots of information for and about the organization. The password to get you in is hcmg. Look it over and e-mail Carol Biggs ([avalon08@yahoo.com](mailto:avalon08@yahoo.com)) and tell her what a great job she did. Check the site often for things you should know.

Ever since the organization was formed, there has been talk of background checks for everyone. Well, the time has arrived. The Extension and Texas Master Gardeners is requiring all Master Gardeners to undergo a check if they have not had one recently. You will receive a form in the mail. There is a place to fill out if you have had a recent check, and section to fill out if you have not. Please

read it thoroughly, fill it out and return it to the Extension office by January 1, 2006. You may drop it off or mail it to Texas Cooperative Extension, 3655 Highway 27 East, Kerrville, TX 78027. There is a \$10 fee. It is very important that everyone comply.

We are preparing for the class of 2006. The class will be a little smaller than last year, but it is a very enthusiastic group. Plan to come to the January meeting to meet them and make them welcome.

As my year as president winds down, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one for your support this last year. Do plan to continue giving your help to the new officers.

May all of you have the merriest Christmas ever and a very prosperous 2006. May there soon be peace in the world.

by Fay Drozd

### HCMG Technology Update

Our HCMG Website is up and running and can be accessed at: <http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org> Liaison Carol Biggs, class of 2003, worked closely with Web master Doug Richards, who is president of Hood County Master Gardeners, on the site's design and content.

The new site includes general information available to anyone who logs on plus password-protected "members only" data for exclusive use by certified MGs.

Included in the general data is info on who we are and what we do, a page for the 2006 class, updates on the 2007 state MG conference, a page of bylaws in PDF (portable document format), which can be printed with formatting intact, and a list of gardening resource links, as well as how to contact the HCMGs for answers to gardening questions by phone or via the new e-mail address at: [hillmg@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:hillmg@ag.tamu.edu)

Volunteer forms and copies of the Leaf and Limb newsletter are already posted in the members only portion of the site. Updates and additional information will be included as they become available. The HCMG Web site links from the Kerr Extension Office as well as from State Master Gardener Web sites



## Nuts to You

by Carol Seminara

When I was in J school in San Marcos, we editors each got a chance to layout the university newspaper's front page, which included writing all the headlines. The above was one of my proudest moments. It's the headline I wrote for a two-inch story about the university grounds keeper granting permission to gather pecans from the myriad nut trees dotting the campus. As if you could stop folks, especially starving students, from filling their pockets with free-fallen protein.

Pecans have, seemingly, always been a part of my life. When I was a little girl, my father would take my sister Debbie and me fishing. We'd spend hours sitting on the bank of the San Antonio River, silently -- lest we frighten the fish -- watching our red-and-white bobbers, waiting for a nibble. When we got bored, we were allowed to search for pecans, silently -- lest we frighten the squirrels. Looking back, I realize these junkets were less about fishing or pecans and more about getting us kids out of the house to give our mother a break so she wouldn't actually kill us.

We had pecan trees at the Basel Street house in New Braunfels. They were paper-shell stock grafted onto native roots; you could tell by examining the bark--there was an obvious demarcation where the trunk had been cut and the new top introduced. Paper-shells, as the name implies, are easier to crack than the smaller, strong-walled natives.

I loved our pecan trees. They produced delicious golden nuts of pie, praline and penuche fame, as well as functioned as superior summer shade and excellent squirrel magnets. Sure there was a lot of tassel drop in the spring and many leaves to rake in the fall, but that's part of the fun of living with a deciduous tree.

At the Sylvan Street house in Los Angeles, we had a pecan tree, a vegetative rarity in the San Fernando Valley. It never produced an abundant crop, just enough pecans to keep our residents squirrels -- Nuts, his wife Nutilla, and their offspring Filbert and Peanut -- fat and sassy, and enough tree-debris to keep our crabby next-door neighbor demanding and tetchy.

Spoiling for a fight, Ida showed up at the gate literally the second day after we'd

moved in to demand we cut down the pecan tree. She said it dropped leaves on their illegal guesthouse and might hurt the roof and, further-more, in the fall all these "balls" fell all over her yard. "Nuts," I said, and closed the gate. That wasn't the last of Ida; she continued to visit weekly, each time with another landscaping complaint: our pine trees were causing mosquitoes, she didn't like our succulents, the birds visiting our yard were too noisy, why didn't we have a grass lawn, yada yada yada.

Falls came and went, and eventually Ida became a kinder, gentler nag. Her complaints about our flora grew less frequent and slightly more civil. By the time we left LA, she'd begun asking for plant cuttings, calling me "dear" and flirting with Joe. Our last day on Sylvan Street, Ida stopped by with a nice plate of ham; we knew it was time to go.

GTT -- Gone to Texas, specifically Fredericksburg, where our scant half-acre is blessed with three mature pecan trees. The fellow from whom we bought the house told us that pecan trees require little attention because, I kid you not, "they are self pruning."

Our first fall, last year, I harvested (picked up off the ground) 27 pounds of pecans. I know it was 27 because we have a man who'll crack pecans for 20 cents per pound and I paid him \$5.40. I knew our trees were non-grafted natives because the nuts were relatively small and thick-shelled and, too, the tree trunks were smooth and unscarred.

That pretty much summed up my knowledge of pecans, that and a recipe for excellent pecan pie. Then I began on the MG path and, of course, I needed to learn more about pecans, in general, and mine, in particular.

Pecans are a member of the walnut family (Juglandaceae) and are classified botanically as a species of hickory native only to North America. In fact, pecan trees are the tallest and fastest growing of the hickories and may grow to more than 100 feet in height. The national champion pecan tree in Weatherford, Texas, was 91 feet tall with a circumference of 257 inches (21.4 feet).

The name allegedly comes from the Algonquin word "pacane," which means "nut so hard it requires a stone to crack it."

Fossil remains of native pecan trees are found along most major streams in Texas and northern Mexico, leading archaeologists to posit that this area is the original home of the pecan, a fact which makes it entirely fitting that in 1919 the pecan was adopted by the Texas Legislature as the state tree. Texas is also one of the leading producers of pecan nuts in the U.S., along with Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Oklahoma.

The nut kernels are delicious with a rich, buttery flavor, due in part to a high oil content, and the wood is used in making furniture, hardwood flooring and as flavorful fuel for smoking meat or cheese.

Nutritionally, the pecan is rich in protein, B vitamins and minerals and contains no cholesterol. Pecan trees generally do not produce nuts until they are five or six years old. The nuts grow in clusters of 3 to 11 and ripen from mid-September until December, where they fall or are knocked or shaken to the ground for harvesting. An established tree averages about 20 pounds of pecans in the shell per year, but with good conditions a tree can annual produce up to 70 pounds or more.

Nuts can safely be stored in their shells for about four months at room temperature before becoming rancid, and they will last up to nine months in the fridge and a year or two when stored in the freezer.

There are literally hundreds of pecan cultivars, but only a few dozen make up the commercial industry. I've got one Burkett and two Stuart trees. Widely used as a nursery seed stock, Burkett is the female parent of both the Apache and Comanche varieties. Stuart is considered the most important pecan cultivar. There are more acres of Stuart than any other pecan trees and it contributes a large percentage of the world's total pecan yield. And, in case anyone asks, "puh-CAHN" is the correct pronunciation around these parts.

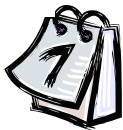
[  
The  
seed  
is  
hope;  
the  
flower  
is  
joy  
]

## **Work-in-Progress – Conference Update**

Anne Brown reported the Inn of the Hills was selected the host hotel for the 2007 Texas Master Gardeners Conference. Contracts were signed with both Inn of the Hills and, for rooms only, with the Y.O.

Carol Johnson is coordinating details with the Scholarship Committee for their help personalizing the canvas tote bags we will be giving conference participants. This is a win-win situation: we will have cool, logo bags at a good price and they will earn more than half of their scholarship money for the year.

Liz Althaus is hard at work developing tour ideas. Annese Thomas is likewise busy developing proposals for sponsors, and Dusty Gilliam will present a list of potential speakers at the January meeting.



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

**Dec 2 - Christmas Party**

### **It's a Party...and You're Invited**

The Hill Country Master Gardeners are celebrating the Holiday Season, so grab your spouse and a bottle of your favorite beverage and join the fun Friday night, December 2, at the Ag Barn opposite the Kerr County Extension Office. Festivities begin at 6 p.m.

The HCMG chapter will be providing turkey, ham, coffee, tea and ice, plus all the paper products. Everyone is encouraged to bring along a favorite dish and a plant for the "gift" exchange.

It's been a long, busy year. We've all worked hard, and now it's time to make merry.

Please RSVP to Fay Drozd (e-mail at: [fdrozd@omniglobal.net](mailto:fdrozd@omniglobal.net)) by Wednesday, Nov. 30, so we can deck the halls with the appropriate number of tables and chairs.

See you there!

**Dec. 7 - Education Committee at Extension Office – 1:00 p.m.**

**Dec. 20 – Deadline for HCMG newsletter articles. Send to Martha at [hnews@ktc.com](mailto:hnews@ktc.com).**

## What's Up with the Bandera Bunch

Eileen Haden, Huibert Vandemmeltraat, and Sherlie and Sherman Vangsnes call themselves the Bandera Bunch and, as such, just planted 8 crepe myrtle trees at their work project with the Helping Hand of Bandera.

Ron Richerson in Ingram provided the trees free of charge.

Jesse Parks, director of the Helping Hand program, is a real flower lover and was so delighted with the gift she invited the Bunch to the Helping Hand volunteers' dinner at the Mayan Dude Ranch.

Of course, as Sherlie pointed out, there's more weeding and planting to be done at a later date, but doing a good deed always generates rewards. The Bunch accepted the invitation with pleasure.

## NEW WEBSITE FOR HCMG UP AND RUNNING!

Check out the new website for the Hill Country Master Gardeners at <http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org>. This site is also linked to the Kerr Extension Office website as well as the Texas Master Gardeners website. There will be changes on the site from time to time. We want to keep things fresh so everyone keeps coming back. Not everything we want to have on the website is there yet as it is a work in progress. Many, many thanks are given to Doug Richards, President of the Hood County Master Gardeners, for creating and maintaining this new website. If you have any comments, suggestions about the site, please e-mail me at [Avalon08@Yahoo.com](mailto:Avalon08@Yahoo.com) Have fun browsing the new site!  
Carol Biggs

## HCMG CLASS SCHEDULE - YEAR 2006

<u>Class Date</u>	<u>Subject/Program</u>	<u>Brought to you by:</u>
Tu, Jan 17	Orientation, Introduction	MG Officers/MG Members
Tu, Jan. 24	MG Program	Roy Walston, Ext. Agt.
	Plant Growth & Development	Dr. Charles Stichler
Th, Jan. 26	Concepts of Insect Mgmt.	Dr. Noel Troxclair
Tu, Jan. 31	Concepts of Disease Mgmt.	Dr. Mark Black
Th, Feb. 2	Landscape Design	Dusty Gilliam (MG) & Katherine Crawford (Golden Eagle)
	Landscape Plant Materials	Dr. Larry Stein
Tu, Feb. 7	Pruning, Fruit & Nut Production	
Th, Feb. 9	Field Trip - Hydroponics	B.B. Browning (MG)
Tu, Feb. 14	Vegetable Gardening	Dr. Jerry Parsons
Th, Feb. 16	Soils & Fertilizers	Dr. Charles Stichler
Tu, Feb. 21	Organic Gardening	Melinda Kneese (Oma's)
Th, Feb. 23	Turf Grasses and Care	Dr. Roger Havlak
Tu, Feb. 28	Hunt School Jr. Master Gardener Program	Marilyn Butcher (Hunt Garden Club)
Th, Mar. 2	Trees – Meet at Riverside Nature Center	Susan Sander, Texas Forest Service
Tu, Mar. 7	Volunteering & Working with People; Texas Cooperative Extension; the Master Gardener Program	Darlene, Locke, Ext. Agt. Brownwood, TX - "Personality Profiling"
Th, Mar. 9	Field trip to Medina Gardens	Ernesto Carino & Ysmael Espinoza
Tu, Mar 14	Plant Propagation Workshop	Fay Drozd, MG

### Committees

#### **Education:**

#### **Greenhouse/Market Days:**

Tony Pacini,  
Chair

#### **Horticultural Inquiry:**

Pam Bresler-  
chair

Carol Johnson,  
Betty West,  
Judy Simmons

#### **Newsletter:**

Martha Stevens-  
editor

Carol Seminara-  
assistant editor

Contributors:

Betty West,

Carol Biggs

Fay Drozd

#### **Nominating:**

Tommie Airhart-  
chair

Otis Fox,

#### **Program:**

Eileen Haden-  
Chair

#### **Volunteer**

#### **Hours/Record**

#### **Keeping:**

Tommie Airhart,  
Chair

#### **Mentoring:**

#### **H/C Garden**

#### **Book**

#### **Publication:**

Christine Millar,  
Chair

## Minutes of the Monthly Meeting November 6, 2005

The monthly meeting was called to order by President Fay Drozd at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2005 at the county extension office conference room. Fay introduced the newly elected Vice-President, Harold Pieratt, to the members. He was not present at the previous meeting.

1. Secretary's Report. The minutes of the October meeting were published in the November Newsletter. There were no additions or corrections from the members present and were approved as presented.
2. Treasurer's Report. Barbara Robbins was not present. Keith Robbins presented the treasurer's report. The organization is solvent and has no outstanding bills. The Market Days plant sales have been profitable. The original treasurer's report is on file with the records of the Hill Country Master Gardener Association.
3. Vice President and Greenhouse Committee Chair Report. Tony Pacini extended his appreciation to Jean Anderson for seeing that the plants are watered every day. John Coleman has been asked to plan a landscape design for the strip of ground by the greenhouse.

Other Business:

4. Judy Simmons is searching for mentors for the 2006 Master Gardener interns. Mentor duties include: touching base with new interns before class starts, calling and getting homework to interns who miss a class, keeping in touch with interns, answering questions and being supportive. Prospective mentors should enjoy telephone work.
  5. Tommie Airhart reminded members that reports of contacts and volunteer hours are due. Since the end of the year is near, please get this information to her promptly so she can finish her records and have them ready for her successor.
  6. Betty West requested volunteers to sign up for the telephone desk for the Wednesday before and Monday after Thanksgiving. Contact Betty to sign up for other days. Volunteers are still needed until the new interns are ready to start taking calls.
  7. Anne Brown, President Elect, reported that the Inn of the Hills has been selected as the host hotel for the 2007 Advanced Master Gardener Training Program. After investigation, it was determined that the YO did not have enough meeting rooms. Also, the physical setup of the Inn of the Hills may attract more vendors. Anne thanked everyone working on the Conference Committee. The conference will be held on April 12,13,14 2007.
  8. Carol Biggs asked for a knowledgeable person to volunteer for editor of our web site. Doug Richards, who does the state web site, is working on our local site. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Carol. Carol passed out a sample of the conference logo, which is a work in progress.
  9. Fay thanked all those who volunteered at the Kerr County Fair. Several fair goers signed up for information and Fay will be calling them to see what they want.
  10. At the last meeting, the following individuals were presented by the nominating committee as officer candidates for next year: President: Anne Brown, Vice-President: Harold Pieratt, Secretary: Sharon Johnson, and Treasurer: Carol Johnson. There were no other nominations from the floor. The officers were unanimously elected by the members present and will be installed at the next meeting, which is the Christmas party on December 2, 2005. The office of president-elect will not be filled at this time. The by-laws will be revised to correspond with the state by-laws. The state bylaws provide for a president, first vice-president and second vice-president. A bylaws committee will be selected in January to address the necessary revisions, including succession of officers.
  11. The Christmas party will be held of December 2. It will be pot-luck and BYOB. Spouses are invited. The party will start at 6:00 p.m. in the Ag barn. The installation of officers will be held at the party. The party will take the place of the regular monthly meeting.
  12. Eileen Haden announced that the regular Education Committee meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. on the date of the regular monthly meeting. We have received 11 applications for new students for 2006. The deadline to apply for next year's class is November 15. There have been advertisements in the local paper and John Coleman's column. Next year's class be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. from January 17 to March 21. All instructors have been confirmed. Refreshments will be provided at an afternoon break. A question and answer period will be held at 4:30. Any current Master Gardener can attend any of the lectures. The tables are reserved for the interns, but visitors can sit in chairs around the perimeter of the room.
- The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m. Eileen Haden introduced the day's speaker, John Osborn, who presented a program on ornamental grasses.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Diane S. Whitney

### Hill Country Master Gardener Association 2005 Executive Committee

Fay Drozd – President  
Anne Brown – President Elect  
Tony Pacini - Vice President  
Diane Whitney - Secretary  
Barbara Robbins - Treasurer  
Kristi Gebauer - Ex-officio Advisor  
Roy Walston - C. E. O. Advisor

### Of Leaf & Limb Newsletter

Editor - Martha Stevens  
Assistant Editor - Carol Seminara  
Contributors – Fay Drozd, Betty Betty West, Carol Biggs  
Fay Drozd

### 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](mailto:hnews@kctc.com). Indicate "Editor HCMG Newsletter" in the subject line.