



# Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

*"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"*

March, 2006

Volume 4, Issue 3

Tuesday,  
March 7,  
1:00 p.m.

Extension Office

Speaker:

Darlene Locke on  
"Volunteering & Working  
with People."

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## President's Message:

Hi everyone!

I'm writing this after spending a very cold weekend, luckily in front of a fire. Hope y'all had a chance to feed and water the birds and protect what vegetation you could. Our poor peach trees – some around the county have already started bud break and are now really confused, if not damaged. If you haven't already, don't forget to spray dormant oil on them now. Prune them just before bud break, and feed them monthly during the time they are setting their fruit.

On to HCMG news. My thanks to all of you who have turned in your dues and either the criminal history form and check or the waiver. If you haven't, please do so quickly. I will be submitting dues to the state next week.

If you have been at the office, you might have noticed that the front beds have been cleaned up and prepared for spring. Thanks to Bev Wiedenfeller and her group for doing that. We look forward with appreciation to your maintaining the beds so we can be proud of them.

You might also have noticed that the area from the greenhouse to the gate has been plowed. We are going to have a demonstration garden and turf grass demonstration project there. John Coleman had volunteered to design the garden. John Osborn has willingly

stepped in and is taking over the project for John C. When we get to the preparation and planting stage, we will let everyone know and hopefully we will have some volunteers to help.

The greenhouse is full of great new plants and awaiting successful market days this spring. A note to everyone who volunteers to water in there: We are extremely grateful to everyone who does so, and especially to Jean Anderson who coordinates the watering schedule. However, we need a favor. Some of the plants are being over watered and some are being under watered. It is very important to test each plant before watering to determine its need. Also, be sure to note in the notebook exactly what you have done. Thanks again for everyone's help.

The convention planning committee is working diligently to do the early preparations. We have a flyer which will be handed out at this year's convention, thanks to Carol Seminara and her husband Joe. Liz Althaus and her committee are road testing tours in order to come up with really great offers. Carol Biggs has been working on the flyer and many other PR projects. Everyone else on the committee has attended every meeting and offered suggestions. Annese Thomas has been hard at work

fund raising for the project. If you have any contacts which might help Annese in her fundraising, please let her know. If any of you wish to be a sponsor, or otherwise contribute to the convention, also contact Annese.

We have decided to purchase some denim short sleeve shirts for those of us who will be attending this year's meeting, with the convention logo stitched on. We have had people ask if they can order one too, and the answer is certainly yes. I will have order forms at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, so bring your checkbooks. The cost of the shirts will be \$25.98. They are 100% cotton denim, garment washed, open collar, double-needle stitching made by Port and Company. They come in men's and women's sizes XS to XL. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please send me your order and check at the extension office by March 7, and indicate your size. We will be happy to order you one.

Hope to see you all at the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup>. We will be distributing your 2006 MG cards to those who were re-certified in 2005 and have paid their dues.

by Anne Brown



## Herbs for Health, Part Two

by Carol Seminara

When I was asked to present a program on medicinal herbs specifically for the treatment of lung disorders last January, I was a little taken aback. My herbal experience and interests lie primarily with culinary plants, yet my research revealed several everyday herbs prove valuable for both eating and breathing. Again, the common sense warning is to consult with your doctor or medical practitioner before using any herbal remedy or beginning any alternative curative regimen. It is wise to be especially cautious if you are pregnant, nursing or taking any prescription medicines.

### Garlic

Garlic has a very long folk history of use in a wide range of ailments and enjoys current status on several lists of the best foods for you. A member of the Allium family -- along with onions, leeks, scallions, chives and shallots -- garlic is reported to help the liver eliminate toxins and carcinogens. Daily use of garlic in the diet has been shown to have a beneficial effect on the blood system and the heart, including slowing the development of arteriosclerosis, reducing glucose metabolism in diabetics and lowering the risk of further heart attacks in myocardial infarct patients. Fresh garlic juice is an excellent antiseptic for treating wounds. Garlic has such a wonderful reputation as both a herbal wonder drug and a super food, that I would like to explore its uses and cultivation in a separate article, with some help from our resident garlic expert HCMG Cheri Bolden, class of 2005.

### Licorice

One of the most commonly used herbs in Western herbal medicine, licorice has a long history of use as a medicine and as a flavoring. It was known to the Romans and Greeks and was mentioned in the Hippocratic texts. It is a very sweet, soothing herb thought to detoxify and protect the liver, and is a powerful anti-inflammatory, especially soothing to mucous membranes. Licorice is used in many cough medicines and as a flavoring in cough drops and syrups. Roots and rhizomes (underground stems) are the edible components of this tall, erect legume. An infusion of the dried, ground roots can be gargled to relieve a dry cough and oral inflammations. CAUTION: Too much licorice can cause headaches and can have serious potential side effects. Licorice root should be avoided by pregnant women and by people with high blood pressure, edema (excessive accumulation of fluid), kidney disease or those taking digoxin-based medication. Lobelia was a highly prized medicinal plant used extensively by Native Americans. It was

considered a panacea and was used for almost anything that ailed them. Medical research shows the plants' constituents are Piperidine alkaloids including Lobeline, which stimulates the respiratory center of the brain, producing stronger and deeper breathing. This makes it very useful for treating many respiratory complaints, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and pneumonia. Homeopathic remedy for healing sores is made from the roots, while an infusion of the leaves is used in the treatment of colds and fevers.

CAUTION: An overdose of lobelia may cause dizziness, nausea, hypotension, vomiting, stupor, tremors, paralysis, convulsions, coma, and death.

### Marsh mallow

Pliny, the ancient Roman statesman and historian, believed that mallows would cure all the diseases of man. A relative of okra, mallows grow wild through-out most of North America. Mallow (or Hibiscus) tea is a well-known alternative medicine for its use as a demulcent to sooth throat inflammations and laryngitis, and as an expectorant for coughs and bronchitis. The flowers are edible and are also used in potpourri.

### Ginkgo Biloba

A native of eastern China, Ginkgo Biloba is the oldest species of tree still living on the earth and can be traced back more than 300 million years. Darwin called it a living fossil, the only species remaining of the genus Ginkgoaceae, which flourished in the time of the dinosaurs. Extracts of the fruit and leaves of the ginkgo tree have been used in China for more than 5,000 years; fresh leaves can be dried and used in teas. Sometimes called an anti-aging herb, studies indicate ginkgo increases blood circulation to the body, especially the brain, increasing mental alertness, memory and overall stamina. Ginkgo has minimal side effects, but in rare cases overuse can cause stomach upset and/or headache.

While I was happy to share my limited research with the Breathers' Club, I'm a HCMG and not a member of the American Society of Pharmacognosy (the professional organization of scientists who work in the area of bioactive natural products). Thus, I felt on firmer ground, leaving them with a suggestion to introduce some environmentally beneficial houseplants to their homes. The following plants can literally allow you to breathe easier by absorbing potentially toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde, benzene and trichloroethylene. These toxins emanate from furniture, carpeting, paint, cleansers, stoves, computers and other conveniences of our modern, high-tech life.

### Ficus

The popular ficus tolerate low humidity well and like to be pot-bound, making them excellent house plants. Ficus benjamina, or weeping fig type, makes a handsome tree, but needs more light -- either filtered sun or bright, indirect light -- than rubber trees (Ficus elastica). The Rubber Tree can endure generally poor treatment. Both like soil that is lightly moist -- neither too dry nor too soggy -- with good drainage. Spider mites and scales are frequent pests of ficus. Most common problem of weeping figs is leaf drop; they react to almost any stress by dropping leaves. If growth conditions are good, the weeping fig will adjust, stop dropping leaves and sprout healthy new growth. ---Reduces trichorethylene.

### Indoor (or Parlor) Palm

Palms need to be kept moist; they should never be allowed to dry out or allowed to stand in water. Protect from root rot and provide extra humidity by filling the pot saucer with pebbles. Most palms need bright natural light year-round; filtered light near a south-east- or west-facing window is best. Like ficus, palms like to have their roots confined and may only need repotting every two to three years. Scales insects and mealybugs are common insect pests.....Reduces formaldehyde and trichloroethylene.

### Philodendron

Philodendrons are among the most popular, tolerant, and durable of all house plants. Perfect for beginners, there are dozens of species to choose, each with its own characteristics -- leaf size, shape and color -- and growth habits -- some climb, while others remain a shrub. All are able to survive neglect and adverse conditions. Generally pest free, but aphids, mealybugs, scales and spider mites can infest them. Reduces formaldehyde.

### Spider Plant

Easily grown, spider plant is especially popular for the ease and speed with which it forms new plants. Excellent in a hanging basket, they look equally charming on a pedestal near a window. Spider plants grow best with bright indirect light. Too much or too little water are the main problems; use a soil mix that drains quickly. Also, if your water is high in soluble salts, use distilled or rainwater to prevent leaf tip burn. Whiteflies, spider mites, scales and aphids are most common insect pest problems. Absorbs formaldehyde and benzene, and reduces carbon dioxide.

[  
 Man, despite his artistic pretensions,  
 his sophistication and his many accomplishments,  
 owes his existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact  
 it rains.  
 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)

March 4 – Rainwater Catchment Workshop, 9:00 a.m – noon at Cibolo Nature Center, Hwy 46 east of Boerne. Class presented by John Knight. For reservations, costs and more info, call Cibolo Nature Center 830/249-4616.

**March 7 - HCMG State Convention Committee Chairs meet at the Extension Office at 10:00 a.m. to discuss progress of the 2007 Texas Master Gardeners Convention.**

**March 7 - HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. The monthly meeting is being combined with the class presented by Darlene Locke on “Volunteering & Working with People.” Please note the monthly meeting is on Tuesday this month – not Wednesday.**

March 7 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, will meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Riverside Nature Center (R.N.C.), 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville.

March 7 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Boerne Chapter, meets at 7:00 p.m., Cibolo Nature Center, Hwy 46 east of Boerne.

March 8 - Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2:00 p.m. at the Central TX Electric Co-Op Bldg, 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. Program will be on “Edible Flowers.”

March 9 – Riverside Nature Center’s lunchtime “Brown Bagger series. Program will be on “Hill Country Wine Making” by Danny Hernandez of Sister Creek Winery. Bring a sack lunch, Noon – 1:00 p.m. Cost is \$3. RNC members free.

March 11 – Cibolo Nature Center Second Saturday Nature Walk – 9:30 a.m. at Cibolo Nature Center, Hwy 46 east of Boerne.

March 11 - Native Plant Society of Texas, Bandera Chapter, will meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Medina Community Library meeting room, in Bandera.

March 14 – Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center – 7:00 p.m., Gillespie County Ag Extension Bldg., 95 Frederick Rd., Fredericksburg. Presentation on “dragonflies” by James Lasswell.

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

**March 21 – HCMG 2006 classes completed. Pot Luck Party and Intern Certificates awarded. Kerr County Extension Office. All members are invited!**

March 21 - Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

March 27 – Texas Master Naturalists meet in Kerrville at Riverside Nature Center at 7:00 p.m.

March 28 - 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.

## 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, Roy  
Walston

**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

Master Gardeners in order to retain the title of Master Gardener, a volunteer must complete 12 volunteer service hours plus 6 hours of training per year.

For the year of 2005 several of our volunteers exceeded this requirement and went beyond the call of duty. We gratefully acknowledge and commend these individuals. The generosity of their time and assistance will forever be seen directly and indirectly in our community.

2005 HOURS	
Tony Pacini	524
Fay Drozd	277
Betty West	246
John Coleman	225
Tommie Airhart	208
Eileen Haden	160

Several of our members have already shown the same kind of dedication to this service. The following volunteers have completed, in the first month, their required hours for recertification for 2006. Anne Brown, Fay Drozd and Tony Pacini well done.

Master Gardeners all volunteer work is to be reported monthly to the Chairperson of the Tracking Committee, using the form provided. You may use the form online or pick up a copy from the Extension Office.

## Get Well Soon, John!

HCMG John Coleman continues to mend from a concussion and three fractured vertebrae in his neck suffered in a fall at his ranch earlier this winter. John, who has a tracheotomy tube and neck brace, is able to talk a little and walk some each day. He is currently in a San Antonio hospital: Healthsouth Riosa Re-Hab; 9119 Cinnamon Hill; San Antonio, TX 78240; phone: (210) 691-0737.

According to his wife Anne, John should be transferred to Sid Peterson Hospital in Kerrville after the trach tube is removed.

In the meantime, John enjoys hearing from his Master Gardener pals. Get well cards (especially humorous ones) and notes of encouragement can be mailed to his home address: 5001 San Antonio Highway; Kerrville, TX 78028.)

## March Class Schedule

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
Th, Mar. 16	Horticulture Inquiry Desk Training and "Volunteer Job Fair"	Pam Bresler, Carol Johnson, Judy Simmons & Betty West, MGs; Officers; Committee Chairs
Tu, Mar. 21	Environmental Horticulture; Award Intern Certificates; Pot Luck Party	Dr. Doug Welsh, State Director of Master Gardener Program

## HCMG February 1, 2006 Monthly Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Anne Brown at 1:00 PM on February 1, 2006.

### 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, Carol Biggs  
Anne Brown, Pam  
Bresler, Ida Luckey,  
Roy Walston

### 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.

1. Volunteer Opportunity. Cass Keen, Executive Director of the Riverside Nature Center spoke briefly about the Habitat for Humanity beautification project, extending an invitation to the group to volunteer as a plant coach. The plant coach would work with individual home owners to select suitable plants for the homeowner's landscape. Hours would count toward Master Gardener volunteer hours. Other volunteer opportunities at the Nature Center also exist.

2. Updates.

**Criminal History Background Checks.** Minimum guidelines will be implemented, ie anybody working with youths must have a background check. Anybody choosing not to have the background check must sign a form stating they are not working directly with youths. Turn the forms in to Anne.

**Convention Planning.** A tentative agenda has been mapped out. A volunteer is needed to check out eight or nine tours as a dry run. Letterhead design is complete. The letterhead will be on stationary that will be used until the convention is over. Work is in progress on lining up speakers. The 4-H group is working on the banquet. Denim shirts with an embroidered logo will be available. There will be order forms at the next meeting for anybody that would like one this year. Price is dependent on volume and is expected to be in the twenty to thirty dollar range. Overall planning for the conference is on schedule and moving along.

3. Treasurer's Report. To date there is a total of \$6,390 of unencumbered funds. The convention will have its own account but there may be a need to loan funds to the convention account until convention money comes in. A motion was passed to loan up to \$4,500 to the convention fund account. The books have been audited by Randy Simmons and certified okay.

4. Dues. Annual dues are \$18.00 and are due by March 1. Make checks payable to Hill Country Master Gardeners and give them to Anne.

5. Bylaws committee. Tommie Airhart gave an update. The committee held their first meeting in January and will meet again in February to work on updating the bylaws. They will keep the group posted on the progress.

6. March meeting. The next HGMG meeting will be on Tuesday, March 7 at 1PM. This is a one-time change from the first Wednesday of the month schedule.

7. Microscope for the office. A motion was passed to purchase a microscope for the MG office to be used for identification of insects, etc. Some of the reference books have disappeared from the office. If anybody has them at home, please return them to the MG office.

8. Extension Office plant beds. A group is needed to commit to one day a month to take care the beds in front of the Extension Office. A signup sheet was passed around.

9. Tom Daniels volunteer project. Fay would like six volunteers for a project at the Tom Daniels school from 8-12 AM on February 27. Contact Fay by email if interested.

10. Fruit and Nut Tree Pruning Workshop. Larry Stein will conduct a fruit and nut tree pruning workshop on Tuesday morning, February 7. Anyone interested is encouraged to participate.

11. Market Days. Tony reported that we will again be participating but the 2006 schedule is not out yet.

The meeting was adjourned and followed by a presentation by Anne on Oak Wilt..

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon K Johnson

### HCMG Website of the Month

<http://tmgc.tamu.edu> Please immediately pass on the 2006 Texas MG Conference website to all your MGs far and wide. It is live and accepting registrations...the tours have limits and they will fill fast...

Submitted by Roy Walston

## Beyond Organics

by Pam Bresler

The 5th Annual Texas Conference on Organic Production Systems was held Jan. 25-27, at the Inn of the Hills in Kerrville. Sponsored by the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (TOFGA), the three-day conference was titled "Texas Farms to Texas Tables" and focused on all aspects of organic farming. TOFGA ([www.tofga.org](http://www.tofga.org) <<http://www.tofga.org/>>) is a publicly supported, non-profit association whose members include commercial plant growers, ranchers, farmers, retailers, wholesalers, processors, distributors, consumers, and anyone desiring to support the organic industry in Texas.

Keynote speaker Dr. John Ikerd from the University of Missouri inspired attendees with his talk "Beyond Organics to Local and Sustainable." According to Dr. Ikerd, organic food sales increased 20% per year during the 1990s, with consumers willing to pay a premium for food safety and better nutrition. Organic techniques utilize more labor and require more monitoring, which was an advantage to small family farms. A 1998 survey reported that 90 per cent of organic farms are single-family or family-partnership operations. Small organic farmers began selling directly to consumers through farmers' markets, farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture. The new "organic" became "local" and "sustainable." Farmers' co-ops began to emphasize local, sustainable food products in their private branding. Dr. Ikerd believes consumers want to purchase high quality, healthful food from local growers they know and trust, instinctively desiring to connect with their community and with the land. These new community-focused food movements are taking consumers "beyond organics." The "Slow Food" movement ([www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com)) is growing rapidly as a worldwide phenomena that also goes "beyond organics." For more info see the Association of Family Farms' website ([www.associationoffamilyfarms.org/overview.asp](http://www.associationoffamilyfarms.org/overview.asp))

Workshops offered the first day, included: Balancing Soil Chemistry; Organic Vegetables: Healthy Plants, Healthy Soils; Permaculture Swales and Soil Rejuvenation; and Going Beyond Compost Teas: Biological Inoculants. The first day closed with George deVault, "How to Make \$25,000 Farming One Acre," and Gary Zimmer, ending where the day began, with "Going Beyond Organics."

For 25 years, de Vault was editor of Rodale's New Farm magazine ([www.newfarm.org](http://www.newfarm.org)). He and his family operate Pheasant Hill Farm -- 16 acres with beautiful soil in the Delaware River Valley of Pennsylvania -- where they grow produce for the Emmaus Farmers' Market. Such gardening on Hill Country rocks would require local adaptations, but George was an inspiring speaker!

Zimmer, a dairy nutrition consultant among his many other titles, raises dairy cows in "cow comfort" with excellent organic forage. The life of his milk cows is 14-15 years, versus the one year for cows that are "turned into pigs." His milk yields are also higher from cows pastured on quality forage. Zimmer explained 95 per cent of crop weight is from photosynthesis and 5 per cent is from the soil. Just like maintaining your bank account, replenishing withdrawals from your soil with minerals and organic matter is a key component for sustainability.

The second day of the conference focused on raising poultry, swine and beef organically. Outstanding examples of quality, grass-fed Texas beef are: Betsy Ross Grass-fed Beef ([www.rossfarm.com](http://www.rossfarm.com)), Shudde Ranch Beef ([www.shudderanch.com](http://www.shudderanch.com)), Burgandy Pasture Beef ([www.burgandypasturebeef.com](http://www.burgandypasturebeef.com)), and Davis Mountain Organic Beef Company ([www.davismountainorganicbeef.com](http://www.davismountainorganicbeef.com)). Sessions were offered on pastured poultry and pigs in paddocks.

The third day was the "New Farmers Workshop." Malcolm Beck spoke on "Composting on the Small Farm." Other topics ranged from criteria for buying farmland to soil fertility, weed control, insect control, marketing, and economics of the small farm.

The speakers, all of whom successfully grow and market organic produce, shared their experiences with enthusiasm and generosity. Question-and-answer sessions followed each presentation and many excellent ideas were shared by attendees and speakers. I walked away from the conference inspired and carrying armloads of handouts for our Master Gardener files in the Kerrville Extension Office.

Next month's report from the TOFGA conference: Beyond N-P-K.