



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

February, 2007

Volume 5, Issue 2

Next meeting is February 7th, at 1:00 p.m. at the Extension Office. Speaker: Katherine Crawford on "Enclosures: Ideas and Methods in the Texas Hill Country"

She will cover why you need an enclosure, how to determine where to place it, what materials to use and other design considerations.

New MG students are invited to attend our monthly meetings.

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President's Message:



Anne Brown

Hi Everyone

The new class is off and running. We have 15 students who have varied backgrounds and interests, and are eager to learn. They had their orientation on the 17th, and began classes on the 24th. We wish them well during their training, and look forward to the completion of their intern period and becoming Certified Master Gardeners.

We have received notice from Doug Welsh, the horticulturist from A&M who is the coordinator for the Texas Master Gardener program, about the for now final answer on the criminal history checks. The current position is that only MGs

who work with youth have to have the checking done. Therefore, those of you who have sent in your checks will have them returned along with the form. We will be identifying those who do need the criminal history check and will be getting with you. However, all MGs will have to sign a form indicating that they do not work with youths. I will write that form and bring it to the February meeting so we can put this particular issue behind us.

A lot of you turned in your dues at the last meeting, and big thanks for so doing. However, we have to pay dues to the State by March 1, so I would appreciate all of you that have not paid them to please do so quickly. Thanks for your help in this matter.

We had the first meeting of the bylaws committee in January. Tommie Airhart chairs the committee and members are Anna Osborn, John Osborn, Otis Fox, Howard Platte, Fay Drozd and myself. The intention is to review the current bylaws, review the State ones, and create a document which can be a guide for the organization for the coming years. We will keep you posted on the progress.

I have invited Cass Keen, the Executive Director of Riverside Nature Center, to our February meeting. She has obtained a

grant to do some work with Habitat for Humanity and needs some plant coaches. She will explain the entire program to you and perhaps some of you will want to volunteer to help. Any of you who are interested in the Specialist programs should go to the state website (texasmastergardeners.com), look under calendar of events, and see which ones are being offered this spring and summer. Currently there are specialists programs available in Junior Master Gardener, Plant Propagation, Oak Wilt, Etymology, and the new one, Rainwater Harvesting. As you know, the programs are open to Certified Master Gardeners, must be approved by Roy Walston, are usually 1 and 1/2 days long, require an overnight stay somewhere, and have a registration fee. After the training, the Specialist is required to do an extra 12 hours of volunteer work in their specialty

Most of you know that John Coleman suffered a serious accident on his ranch. Please keep John and his family in your thoughts and prayers as he continues his recovery.

HCMG Website of the Month - Ours

<http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org>

This is our website. Special member access is [hcmg](http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org).

Common Sense about Roses –

By Harold Pieratt



Roses by and large are known as the oldest cultivated flower in the world and are commonly known as the “Queen of All Flowers”. A large family of plants, the Rosaceae, characterized by showy flowers with five separated sepals and numerous stamens borne on the margin of a cuplike structure (hypanthium), includes important fruit plants such as apple, cherry, pear, plum, strawberry, as well as ornamentals such as the rose and pyracantha. Roses as dicots (seed with two parts) are members of the plant genus Rosa. Within that genus, roses are grouped into classifications based on the characteristics that each particular plant displays.

There are 5 different types of Roses: bush, shrub, climber, rambler, and groundcover. And there are 3 different kinds of rose blooms: single, semi-double, and double. All roses need a minimum of 6 to 8 hours of sun, good air circulation, and 3 to 4 gallons of water each week during the Texas summers. Proper watering causes roses to become larger and hardier which in turn produces a greater volume of quality blooms. The best application of water for roses is by a drip irrigation system to avoid the rose leaves from getting wet which

promotes fungal disease. And rainwater harvesting is a great conservation approach as well in avoiding our high pH salty potable water. Filtered graywater (excluding toilet waste) is most beneficial in containing nutrients for nonedible plants and more importantly the reuse of water.

The rose varieties that dominate gardens today are the Hybrid Teas and the Grandifloras with flamboyant colors, large flowers, long stems, and are repeat bloomers. The breeding of Hybrids was driven by show-bench performance and not garden worthiness. These hybridized varieties are tetraploids (4 sets of chromosomes) and through in-breeding have lost valuable traits such as disease resistance, hardiness, hips (seed pods), sexual reproduction, and fragrance.

I recommend choosing Antique Roses, especially the Teas which seem to thrive well in the Hill Country. The Antiques or Heritage Roses are diploids (2 sets of chromosomes) and in two words “Texas Tough” as they exist on their own root systems as opposed to the Hybrid Roses which are cloned and budded (grafted) on to another root system. These Old Fashioned Roses have smaller flowers that are more in proportion to the plant. The colors are often soft pastels and the bushy foliage will display striking leaves with intricate edging. The antique China and Tea varieties are demonstratively remontant where the other antiques are once blooming. Finally, great additions to any Texas Rose bed are the Texas A&M Superstars and EarthKind designates which are all floriferous, versatile, and disease-insect resistant. Also, if you can keep in ”

Rose Adoption !

By Pam Bresler

John Coleman always told me someday I'd reduce my rose population. Guess what? He was right! If you are interested in adopting any of these beauties, just e-mail me (bregal@ktc.com) and they are yours. We should dig them in February so they can get established before the hot weather.....written while looking out at 2" of snow and ice!

'Folksinger' and 'Prairie Star' are roses bred by the late Dr. Griffin Buck of Iowa State. Dr. Buck was interested in cold hardy, disease-resistant shrub roses. Although it sounds counter-intuitive, researchers are discovering that the genes that confer cold tolerance often provide heat tolerance as well.

Folksinger
<http://www.helpmefind.com/rose/pl.hp?n=1781>

Prairie Star
<http://www.helpmefind.com/rose/pl.hp?n=4948>

'Sea Foam' is designated by Texas A&M as an "Earth-Kind" rose. It has a fragrant, creamy white flower and is my gardenia replacement.
<http://www.helpmefind.com/rose/pl.hp?n=5664>

'Jeanne Lajoie' is a miniature climber with a pink bud like a hybrid tea.
<http://www.helpmefind.com/rose/pl.hp?n=3488>

mind the old Texas garden axiom “Polly likes all the Tea's in China” then you won't go wrong in growing roses here in the Hill Country. The Polyanthas, Teas, and Chinas are very hardy, sturdy, constant bloomers, drought, and heat resistant for our central Texas area.



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.)

February 6 – HCMG 2007 Class Scheduled on “Pruning, Fruit & Nut Production” by Dr. Larry Stein. 1-5 p.m. at Kerr County Extension Office classroom.

February 6 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, meets at Riverside Nature Center (RNC) at 2:00 p.m., 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville. Rebecca Rogers, Co-Chairman of Native Instead of Common Exotics (N.I.C.E.), will speak.

February 7 – HCMG State Conference Steering Committee Chairs meet at 10 a.m. at the Extension Office

February 7 – HCMG monthly meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. Katherine Crawford, of Golden Eagle Landscape, will address “Enclosures: Ideas and Methods in the Texas Hill Country.”

February 7 – A meeting of the Committee Chairs will follow the regular monthly meeting. Committee Chairs please schedule your day accordingly.

February 10 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Bandera County Chapter, will meet at 2 p.m., in the Medina Community Library meeting room, Medina. Bill Lindemann discusses “Butterflies and Their Relationship to the Native Plants of South Central Texas.”

February 13 - HCMG 2007 class scheduled on “Job Fair/Horticultural Desk/Greenhouse” by our Master Gardeners. 1-5 p.m. at Kerr County Extension Office classroom.

February 13 and 14 – Texas Forest Service is offering classes in “Wildfire Threat Mitigation” at the Gillespie County Cooperative Extension office in Fredericksburg. Registration is \$50 and class is limited to 30 trainees. To register, call Priscilla Stanley at (830) 257-2094. Texas Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter, is the host. Please note, these hours will NOT apply to your CEU's.

February 14 – Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2 p.m. at the Central Texas Electric Co-Op Bldg., 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. Diane Matthews will discuss “Gardening in the Texas Hill Country.”

February 20 – Harold Pieratt, our own V-P, will speak to the Hunt Garden Club on “Hill Country Garden Roses” at 10 a.m. at the Hunt United Methodist Church.

February 20 – HCMG 2007 class scheduled on “Volunteering and Working with People” by Darlene Locke. Harold Pieratt will also lecture on “Roses and Perennials.” 1-5 p.m. at Kerr County Extension Office classroom.

February 20 – Deadline for HCMG newsletter articles. Send to Eleanor Baldwin at baldwin@ktc.com. Please note our new Newsletter Editor and her address.

February 20 – Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

February 22 – HCMG 2007 Class scheduled is a fieldtrip for the students.

February 26 – Hill Country Master Naturalists meet at 7:00 p.m. at Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville.

February 27 – HCMG 2007 class scheduled on “Horticultural Biology” by Dr. Charles Stickler. 1-5 p.m. at Kerr County Extension Office classroom.

February 27 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter, meets at 7 p.m. in the Gillespie County Historical Society Bldg., 312 W. San Antonio St., Fredericksburg. This month's program presented by Jan Wrede is “Priority Plants in the Texas Hill Country” and will focus on 12 native wood plant species that are in decline and need special conservation efforts.

**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 and
Betty West
Regular Contributors –
Anne Brown, Ida
Luckey, Carol Biggs,
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.
Indicate "Editor HCMG
in the subject line.

Another Denim Shirt, Anyone

If anyone wants to order a 2007 State Conference denim shirt (or another one) and you've already registered, you can still order that shirt without having to fill out another registration form.

Students, Interns and MGs may order shirts, but you have to act fast: the absolute deadline for submitting your shirt order is March 5.

Order forms are available in the MG office, or you can e-mail me, Betty West at: dwest@omniglobal.net for a form to download. Shirts are \$25 each. Leave your completed form & check payable to HCMG in our Treasurer Carol Johnson's tray in the MG office. We will place the total order for all shirts on March 5th and should have the shirts in hand just prior to the State Conference.

2007 HCMG Annual Dues

Our Treasurer, Carol Johnson, says it's not too late to pay your 2007 dues. Annual dues are \$18 and while the official deadline was the end of January, payments will be accepted through February 7.

Please make your check payable to Hill Country Master Gardeners (HCMG) in the amount of \$18 and note on your check this is for '07 dues.

You may mail your check to Hill Country Master Gardeners, P.O. Box 290464, Kerrville, TX 78029; drop it off at the Extension Office and leave it in our Treasurer Carol Johnson's tray; or bring it to the February 7 meeting.

Our Convention Needs You

By Tommie Airhart

Volunteers are needed to help with the upcoming state Master Gardeners' convention being hosted by the HCMG chapter. Tommie Airhart, who chairs the Volunteers Committee, has a list of the volunteers needed and will be available to take your name after our February 7th meeting.

We hope all of our MGs have already registered because our goal is to schedule workers' hours

Kudos to...

Mary Ruth Segner and Nina Wagner, our newest Interns to complete volunteer hours and become "certified" Master Gardeners.

Anne Brown, Fay Drozd and Harold Pieratt for volunteering their time to teach classes in the Club Ed Program. Anne Brown will teach "Rainwater Harvesting" on April 24 and "Oak Wilt – Theory, Treatment & Prevention" on April 25. Fay Drozd will teach "Gardening in the 21st Century" on February 5 and "Plant Propagation" on March 10. Harold Pieratt is the instructor for "Hill Country Garden Roses" on March 20.

The Education Committee Members (Debbie Russell, Chair; Eileen Haden, Co-Chair; Cheri Bolden; Nina Wagner; Sandy Martin; Diane McMahan; Marie Brown; Beverly Weidenfeller; Connie Townsend; Judy Russell; Fay Drozd; Mary Allen Meriwether and Huibert VanDemmeltraadt) for organizing and recruiting such a great group of new students. This looks like an outstanding class!

And a special "Kudos" submitted by Harold Pieratt, our VP, to:

The entire Hill Country Master Gardeners Chapter for their enthusiasm and willingness to get behind the plough and make our State Conference happen. What this little MG chapter in the hills can do by pulling together is truly amazing. We cannot but praise the Conference Planning Committee as well for doing a yeoman's job. And last but not least, an additional tribute to President Anne Brown for her leadership capacity. I think we are on track to make this state conference one of the very best.

around the tours/speakers' programs you wish to attend. We want our volunteers to lend a hand without missing out on your favorite tours and programs.

Tommie will soon be sending an e-mail to our members with scheduling information. It's going to take a lot of work by all our members to make this an outstanding conference and we know we can count on everyone's help.

Remember our website:

<http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org>



Committees

Archivist – Judy Russell, Chair

Demonstration Garden: Tony Pacini, Chair

Education: Debbie Russell, Chair

Greenhouse: Marie Brown, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry : Diane Whitney-chair

Jr. Master Gardener Program: Fay Drozd, Chair

Market Days: John Osborn, Chair

Mentors: Judy Simmons, Chair

Newsletter: Eleanor Baldwin-Editor
Assistant Editors: Carol Seminara, Betty West
Regular Contributors: Ida Luckey, Anne Brown, Carol Biggs, Sharon Johnson

Nominating: Randy Simmons-Chair

Programs: Dusty Gilliam, Chair

Public Relations: Sally Ritch, Chair

**Record Keeping/
Volunteer Hours** Ida Luckey, Chair

Speaker's Bureau: Pam Bresler, Chair

Volunteer Coordination: Tommie Airhart, Chair

**HCMG January 3, 2007
Monthly Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by President Anne Brown at 1 PM on January 3, 2007.

Dues. 2007 membership dues are due in January. Annual dues are \$18.00. Checks can be made out to HCMG. Members who pay dues in January will be included in the directory. Those paying dues after January may not be included.

Denim Shirts. Another order for denim shirts will be placed on March 5. This will be the last opportunity for members and interns to purchase a shirt before the April convention. Shirts are \$25.00. Forms are available in the MG office.

Treasurer's Report. Carol Johnson reported a December beginning balance of \$8,105.82 and ending balance of \$24,188.74 which includes conference registrations.

New Certified Master Gardener. Anne introduced Kathy Binney, a certified master gardener, who has recently moved to Fredericksburg from Port Aransas.

Bylaws. In order to participate in the State Master Gardener umbrella 501 (c) (3) to meet IRS regulations it is necessary to add required wording to the bylaws. A vote was taken to add the wording. All members in attendance as well as 7 proxies voted in favor of the change. There were no opposing votes. The required two thirds of the membership were determined to be present or by proxy and the bylaw changes were approved.

Mentors. Judy Simmons, mentoring chairperson, asked all mentors to introduce themselves and their mentees.

Committee Chair Recognition. Anne thanked all those who volunteered to chair the various committees this year with special thanks to Tommie Airhart for coordinating the volunteers.

Education Committee. Debbie Russell extended an invitation to all certified members to sit in on any of the 2007 classes.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM followed by refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon K. Johnson

**Bylaw Changes Approved on
January 3, 2007**

To Article II –

Delete:

This organization is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) by organization contributions which are deductible under Section 107 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Add:

Said organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Add:

Article XIII – Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding sections of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such asset not disposed of shall be disposed of by the court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.



Slugs and Snails and Caffeinated Tales by Carol Seminara

One of HCMG's intrepid organic gardeners passed along an item in the Midland, Michigan MG newsletter *The Green Scene* about using caffeine to battle slugs and snails. While coffee grounds have long been recommended as an effective, non-toxic home remedy for repealing snails and slugs, the article touted the use of caffeine solutions as being more efficient since caffeine may be a slug neurotoxin.

The article referenced a report in the June 2002 Nature magazine citing the work of Dr. Robert Hollingsworth of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Hilo, Hawaii. Hollingsworth was testing caffeine sprays to control an introduced species of frog infesting potted plants. Caffeine solutions of as little as 1 to 2 percent killed almost all the slugs and snails in the test area within two days, while concentrations as low as 0.01 percent proved successful at repelling the pests.

To illustrate the strength of these concentrations, a cup of instant coffee contains about 0.05 percent caffeine and brewed coffee has about 0.07 percent.

Dr. Hollingsworth reported that in some trials caffeine proved even more effective against slugs than metaldehyde products.

The FDA classifies metaldehyde as a GRAS (generally recognized as safe) product; conversely, products containing this chemical are classed as Restricted Use Pesticides by the EPA and must carry label warnings against use around edible vegetables and because of potential effects on wildlife (particularly birds) and domestic pets, which can eat the molluscicide bait.

But the use of caffeine, too, has suggested warnings. As all organic gardeners know, just because a product is "natural" doesn't mean it's safe.

Further study by Louise Simms and Dr. Michael Wilson at the University of Aberdeen suggests that caffeine might be less effective than previously thought. Too, their tests using low-dose caffeine sprays proved toxic to three earthworm species and generated some phytotoxicity (injury or damage to a plant due to chemical treatment). Simms and Wilson concluded that caffeine has "no environmental or efficacy benefits over metaldehyde," which has little effect on earthworms and no phytotoxicity.

So, what's a dedicated organic gardener to do?

Even though coffee grounds may not be an actual slug or snail deterrent, they do make a good soil amendment, especially for plants that like a more acid soil. Added to the compost pile, coffee grounds -- filter and all -- decompose along with other organic materials into compost.

As for controlling slugs and snails, there are several natural methods. Here's a sampling:

- Adjusting your watering schedule. Since slugs and snails are most active at night, avoid watering your garden in the evening. In addition to warding off potential fungal problems, morning watering can reduce slug and snail damage by up to 75 percent.

- Setting a trap. Bury a shallow, wide jar up to its neck in the garden. Partially fill jar with flat beer. Snails and slugs love beer and, when they crawl into the jar for a sip, they drown. Make certain your container is deep enough so the snail or slug can't simply crawl out after knocking back a few.

- Mulching with seaweed. Probably not practical for the land-locked Hill Country gardener, however, seaweed not only makes a good soil amendment, but slugs and snails hate it, probably because it's salty. When using seaweed as mulch, keep it away from plant stems and pile it 3-4 inches thick.

- Placing copper barriers on your pots. Wrapping a wide strip of copper tape around a flowerpot theoretically makes a barrier that snails and slugs will avoid crossing because it generates a small electrical shock. This method works if the copper is wide enough so the snails can't raise their bodies over it and if there are no bridges (hanging leaves, etc.) for them to avoid contact with the copper. Also, the copper must be tarnish-free or it won't shock the slimy little buggers.

- Using a product containing iron phosphate, such as Sluggo or Es-Car-Go. A naturally occurring nutrient in the soil, iron phosphate doesn't have the toxicity issues of metaldehyde and can be safely used around people, pets, wildlife, and edible plants. The only beneficial harmed by using iron phosphate is the predatory decollate or snail-eating snails.

- Picking. As low tech as you can go, hand picking snails is easier than picking slugs, in part because the snail has a built-in handle on its back. You can then kill them, toss them over the fence (not neighborly) or drop them into a bucket of soapy water. Increase your success rate by placing an upside down flowerpot or hollow grapefruit half in a damp area of your garden as a snail/slug meeting place. The next morning, you can remove several at once.

- Raising ducks. Seriously, ducks love eating snails. Of course, you'll need to check your local city's regulations on keeping livestock before you bring home a Donald or Daffy.

- Attracting fireflies. Lightening bug larvae are mollusk feeders and primarily eat snails and slugs. And they're a cheerful sight.

While the last two suggestions might be a little fanciful, the best way to control snails and slugs in the garden is with a combination of methods.

As for the caffeine, I like mine with extra cream, no sugar.