



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

President's Message:

January, 2007

Volume 5, Issue 1

Wednesday,
January 3, 2007
1:00 p.m.

Extension Office
Garden Party

The 2007 class will be introduced and we ask all members to wear their name badges and favorite garden hats. Refreshments will be provided by the Education Committee so **NO potluck.**

Highlights:

President's Message	1
Website of the Month	1
Another Chance at Paradise	2
Calendar	3
Annual dues	4
Kudos	4
Educational Committee and Class Schedule	5

Hi Everyone!

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas, and that you all will have the New Year that you want.

As you know, the President is charged with the responsibility of appointing members to chair committees. This year, Tommie Airhart did a great job of "recruiting", and all of our committees have Chairs effective January 1. The only exception to this is the Education Chair, Debbie Russell, who is appointed in June due to the scheduling of the classes. My thanks to Tommie, and each of the following people who volunteered to chair a committee.

- Horticulture Inquiry – Diane Whitney
- Speaker's Bureau – Pam Bresler
- Nominating – Randy Simmons
- Programs – Dusty Gilliam
- Public Relations – Sally Ritch
- Archivist – Judy Russell
- Volunteer Coordinator – Tommie Airhart

- JMG – Fay Drozd
- Greenhouse – Marie Brown
- Market Days – John Osborn
- Demo Gardens – Tony Pacini
- Mentors – Judy Simmons
- Newsletter – Eleanor Baldwin
- Education – Debbie Russell

Each of the above individuals will need help on their committees. I hope that when they contact you, you will volunteer to help them as necessary.

As you notice, some of the committee chairs have changed. Pam Bresler and her committee did an outstanding job of organizing the horticulture inquiry committee. She, along with Betty West, is retiring from this committee, and Pam is going to be responsible for our new Speakers Bureau. Diane Whitney will chair the horticulture inquiry committee. Randy Simmons is taking over from Otis Fox on the Nominating Committee. Otis

did a great job for several years. Dusty Gilliam is replacing Phyllis Knight, who got us such wonderful programs last year. Marie Brown is taking over the greenhouse from Jean Anderson and Eleanor Baldwin is taking over the newsletter, after Martha Stevens has done such a yeoman's job for years. Sally Ritch, Judy Russell, and Tommie are chairing new committees, or committees which have never had a chair. John Osborn will coordinate Market Days, and Fay Drozd and Tony Pacini will continue chairing JMG and the Demo Garden respectively.

When you see any of these individuals, thank them for volunteering the chair a committee.

Don't forget to send me your proxy on the bylaws change that was emailed to you and is in this document, if you can't make the meeting.

See you on January 3.
Anne Brown

HCMG Website of the Month

<http://www.seedsofchange.com> This site not only has a wonderful selection of organic seeds and catalogue but also has a page on their organic food products along with recipes and other information on organic growing.



Another Chance at Paradise

by Carol Seminara

January was named after the Roman god Janus, who oversaw the gate to the New Year and was usually portrayed with two faces -- one that looks back and one that looks forward.

That's how I feel: nostalgic for the past and expectant about the future. When I reflect on the past twelve months in my garden, I remember some successes and a few failures I'd be just as happy forgetting.

Among the highpoints, I count - the reemergence of the Bat Face Cuphea (*Cuphea llavea*) that survived 17 degrees and three consecutive weekends of hail to spread well over four feet in diameter, taking over most of one flower bed and attracting myriad hummingbirds - the unruly stand of exuberant sunflowers that grew from bird seed dropped by our perpetually ravenous squirrel - the thrilling and worthwhile devastation of my entire bed of fennel by Anise Swallowtail butterfly larvae - the snowy blossoms on the now-vigorous lantana that grew from a cutting taken in Faye's propagation class in '05.

In the loss column, I sadly include: - the flat of purple verbena (*Verbena canadensis*) that never got planted and, forgotten, withered away in the sun - the half dozen pricey, store-bought bluebonnets that died despite being planted in the same bed as eight hardy volunteers - numerous ill-suited seeds, bulbs and plants I killed through either ignorance or willfulness.

So begins another year and, with it, another chance at creating paradise on a scant half-acre.

I've already filled my beds with the requisite colorful annuals: pansies, snapdragons and calendula. I've pruned and mulched, and composted the majority of our zillion pecan leaves. I've collected a stack of seed and/or plant catalogues a foot high, drawn an outline of my yard on grid-paper, and sharpened two no.2 pencils. It's time to get to work planning for spring.

Following is a January to-do list, gleaned from experience, fellow MG's advice, all my gardening month-by-month articles and books, and some wishful thinking brought on by Christmas nursery gift-cards.

In addition to pansies, snapdragons and calendula, some other cheerful annuals to plant now are dianthus, ornamental kale and, of course, Johnny-Jump-Ups (violets). All these plants thrive in cool weather and most will bloom any time the temperature is above freezing. Mulch these plants thoroughly (at least 2 inches) to retain soil warmth and moisture, and to retard weed growth. If it's a particularly dry winter, water these annuals thoroughly once a week. These plants will peak in the spring and should be pulled up with the onset of summer's heat.

Now's the time to plant spring bulbs like daffodils, paper-whites (narcissus) and freesia (okay, freesia are grown from corms, but this is still a good time to plant them). Bulbs need an extra-thick layer (up to 6 inches) of mulch if a really hard freeze (temperature in the teens) is expected, and they should be watered as needed.

Some bulbs, such as tulips and hyacinths, require several weeks of pre-chilling in the refrigerator before planting. According to my research, if you haven't already pre-chilled these bulbs, then they probably won't bloom and should be discarded. I say why not just stick them in the ground anyway; you might be surprised. That's what I did two years ago with a bag of tulip bulbs I found in the garden shed and was rewarded with several March blooms. It's always a good idea to keep notes on where and what bulbs you plant for future reference.

We have successfully eliminated the majority of our turf grass, but the patches that remain need only minor attention during January such as watering if needed and, of course, this is a good time to dig out any winter weeds that are growing.

This month give your perennials a good pruning to remove old, dead or unsightly branches. Mulch and weed the beds, and water plants, as needed. Tender perennials such as salvias, lantana, ferns, etc., should have their crowns covered by a 2-4 inch layer of mulch when freezes are expected.

Roses, too, benefit from pruning during their dormant period, but this is a

topic best addressed by our resident rosarian, Harold Pieratt.

Since they are dormant during this time, January is a good month to plant and/or transplant shrubs, but not immediately before a hard freeze (temperature in the teens) is predicted. Watering shrubs during this month is generally not necessary, but if a hard freeze is expected and the soil is dry, the plant should be watered thoroughly before the low temperature arrives. Moisture around the roots can help a plant survive freezing weather.

Generally, trees don't need much attention or watering during January. You should, however, be alert to any damage caused by winter storms -- ice and wind can break branches, which will need to be pruned. This is also a good time to prune shade and most types of fruit trees. Proper pruning, especially of fruit trees, is specific and you may want to first consult an arborist or tree surgeon, or pick up a brochure from the Extension Office for precise details how-to-do it.

Too, January is a good time to plant new trees, both deciduous and evergreen. Newly-planted trees should be watered-in thoroughly; deciduous trees won't need to be watered again, but evergreens will need additional watering if the weather is very mild and dry.

Of course we can't forget our houseplants. Heating your home causes low humidity, so it's a good idea to group houseplants so they can transpire together. Water them when needed, being certain to check the soil first. You don't want to over water and you do want to keep houseplants away from extreme temperature fluctuations -- from heating vents and cold drafts from open doors or windows.

I guess no musing on the New Year is complete without at least one resolution. Here's mine: This year I will not buy any plant unless I have already picked out a spot for it in my garden and, preferably, already dug its hole. Check back with me next December and see how I did.

[

The trees, like the longings of the earth,
stand a tiptoe to peep at the heaven.
- Sir Raindranath Tagore

[



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

January 3 – HCMG State Conference Steering Committee Chairs meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Extension Office.

January 3 – HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Extension Office. The 2007 class will be introduced and we ask all members to wear their name badges and favorite garden hats. Refreshments will be provided by the Education Committee so NO potluck.

January 9, 2007 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, will meet at Riverside Nature Center (RNC) at 2:00 p.m., 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville. Trina Cullins from Plant Haus II will discuss “Texas Natives in Small Gardens”.

January 10 – Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2:00 p.m. at the Central Texas Electric Co-Op Bldg., 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. This month’s program is “How to Eat Fried Worms” by HCMG Beverly Weidenfeller. No, you don’t have to eat them - but she’ll tell you how to create and keep a worm bed.

January 13 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Bandera County Chapter, meets 2:00 p.m. in the Medina Community Library meeting room, Medina. Brian and Shirley Loflin will present “Grasses of the Texas Hill Country.”

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

January 20 – Deadline for HCMG newsletter articles. Send to Eleanor Baldwin at Baldwin@ktc.com <<mailto:Baldwin@ktc.com>> . Please note our new Newsletter Editor and her address.

January 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. Robert Edmondson of the Texas Forest Service will discuss “Life After Oak Wilt.”

February 7 – HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Kerr County Extension Office. Our speaker will be Katherine Crawford, and she’s going to discuss ornamental grasses.

Committees

Archivist - Judy Russell, Chair

Demonstration

Garden: Tony Pacini, Chair

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:

Marie Brown, Chair

Market Days:

John Osborn, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry:

Diane Whitney-chair

Jr. Master Gardener

Program: Fay Drozd, chair

Newsletter:

Martha Stevens-editor
Carol Seminara-
assistant editor
Contributors: Betty West, Ida Luckey,
Anne Brown, Carol Biggs

Nominating:

Tommie Airhart-chair

Program:

Dusty Gilliam, Chair

Public Relations –

Sally Ritch, Chair

Volunteer

Hours/Record

Keeping:

Ida Luckey, Chair

Mentoring:

Judy Simmons-Chair

H/C Garden Book

Publication:

Christine Millar, Chair

Speaker's Bureau –

Pam Bresler, Chair

Volunteer

Coordinator –

Tommie Airhart

2007 HCMG Annual Dues Are Payable Now

Don't forget your 2007 Hill Country Master Gardeners dues need to be paid this month. Make your check payable to Hill Country Master Gardeners in the amount of \$18 and please note on your check this is for '07 dues. You can 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 January 3 meeting.

Also, please make sure you have turned in your volunteer and continuing education hours to Ida Luckey. She has to verify whether you are qualified for recertification.

Kudos:

Bernadell Larson, Eleanor Baldwin and Bill Burger, our latest Interns to complete their volunteer hours and become "certified" Master Gardeners.

Carol Johnson for preparing the database/spreadsheet for the upcoming state conference (and a personal thanks for taking the time to explain how her spreadsheet can help each of us perform our jobs more easily).

Diane McMahon, who was recently elected to Headwaters Groundwater Conservation District, Precinct 3. Way to go, Diane!

Doug Richards, our web master, for getting our website up and running, posting our newsletter each month and making sure all our State Conference information is online. Talk about over and above the call of duty!

Our Education Committee: Debbie Russell, Chair; Eileen Haden, Co-Chair; Cheri Bolden; Nina Wagner; Sandy Martin; Diane McMahon; Marie Brown; Bev Weidenfeller; Connie Townsend; Judy Russell; Fay Drozd; Mary Allen Meriwether; Huibert VanDemmeltraadt and Judy Simmons, Mentor Committee Chair. This entire committee has spent a tremendous amount of time and effort preparing for our 2007 classes.

Marguerite Belec, Pam Bresler, Fay Drozd, Eileen Haden, Natalie Morgan, Tony Pacini, Randy Simmons, Beverly Weidenfeller and, of course, **our Supervisor John Coleman** for trimming and making the front and demo gardens look so much better.

Co-Chairs Tommie Airhart and Debbie Russell for the wonderful Christmas party. Thanks also to **Carol Johnson** for arranging for the festive holiday decorations. Thanks, too, to Cheri Bolden, Natalie Morgan and members of the Convention Planning Committee who helped set up and then cleaned the room after our party.

Pam Bresler for all her hard work on the Horticulture Inquiry Committee.

Betty West for chasing all the Interns over the phone desk schedule.

Phyllis Knight for arranging such good speakers for our regularly scheduled meetings during 2006.

Martha Stevens for publishing the newsletter for so many years and giving us a publication of which we are so proud.

Education Committee and New 2007 Classes

Our Education Committee's tail feathers are really dragging. Most of the year they work incognito but come January, all the behind-the-scenes work gels and voila ... another school year begins! Committee Chair Debbie Russell announced we will have about 20 new students in the '07 class, maybe a few more.

We will all have a chance to "meet and greet" our new gardeners at the Jan. 3 Garden Party. Be sure to wear your name badge and your favorite gardening hat. Well, maybe not your "fav." I'd look like a bag lady if I showed up wearing my usual gardening togs.

Debbie has allowed us to have a "sneak preview" of the '07 class schedule (see below), and we're invited to audit any of the classes. If any of you feel a refresher is in order, here's your chance. Some new topics will be covered this year, so be sure to mark your calendar for those classes: Rain Water Harvesting, Oak Wilt, and Perennials/Roses. Remember that these classes apply to your annual CEU requirements (6 CEU's required for recertification). Because this year's field trips will be to private homes, it is suggested that you limit your visits to classroom training only.

After our celebratory "meet & greet" Garden Party (from 1:00-2:00 p.m.), new students will begin orientation and mentors will be assigned. Classes will be completed on March 26, just in time for the State Conference. It shouldn't take the '07 class long to get certified once Tommie Airhart, who's in charge of Conference volunteers, gets their number.

Members of our Education Committee are: Debbie Russell, Chair; Eileen Haden, Co-Chair; Cheri Bolden; Marie Brown; Fay Drozd; Sandy Martin; Diane McMahon; Mary Allen Meriwether; Judy Russell; Connie Townsend; Huibert VanDemmeltraadt; Nina Wagner; Bev Weidenfeller; and Judy Simmons, Mentor Committee Chair. It takes a lot of people to organize and schedule the classroom training sessions. We appreciate their hard work and are looking forward to our new classes.

Class Schedule 2007

Class - Date	Subject/Program	Presenter
Wed., Jan. 3	Monthly meeting- Meeting and greeting and orientation	by Master Gardener Officers and Members. Ext. Office Staff
Tue., Jan. 9	Master Gardener Program and Organic Gardening	Roy Walston, Melinda Kneese
Tue., Jan. 16	Concepts of Insect Management	Dr. Noel Troxclair
Thur., Jan. 18	Hydroponics	B.B. Browning's greenhouse
Tue., Jan. 23	Concepts of Disease Management	Dr. Mark Black
Tue., Jan. 30	Oak Wilt /Water Harvesting	Anne Brown, Sandy Martin,
Tue., Feb. 6	Pruning, Fruit and Nut Production	Dr. Larry Stein
Tue., Feb. 13	Job Fair/Horticultural Desk/Greenhouse	Master Gardener Staff
Tue., Feb. 20	Volunteering and Working with People:	Darlene Locke, Ext Agent
	Roses and Perennials	Harold Pieratt.
Thurs., Feb. 22	Prepping the garden for spring	Troy and Anne Little's garden in Fredericksburg
Tue., Feb. 27	Horticultural Biology	Dr. Charles Stickler
Tue., March 6	Environmental Horticulture	Dr. Doug Welsh
Tue., March 13	Turf Grass Care/ Soils and Fertilizers	Dr. Chalmers
Tue., March 20	Plant Propagation	Fay Drozd
Thur., March 22	Jr. Master Gardeners	Hunt Elementary School
Mon., March 26	Graduation /Vegetable and Flower Gardening	Dr. Jerry Parsons

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

Editor - Martha Stevens
Assistant Editor - Carol Seminara
Contributors –Betty West, Anne Brown, Ida Luckey, Carol Biggs

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. Indicate "Editor HCMG Newsletter" in the subject line.