



Of Leaf & Limb

Hill Country Master Gardeners Association

"Promoting education on horticulture and the environment"

January, 2008
Volume 6, Issue 1

Garden Party
1:00 p.m.
January 2, 2008

We will meet the new class and the mentors will introduce all 24 and tell us a bit about each one of them.

So wear your garden hat and come to meet the '08 class. The mentors will provide the food.

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President's Message



Randy Simmons

As the first action as your new president, I would like to wish all of the Hill Country Master Gardeners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We are at the end of a very successful year and I am

looking forward to extending that success thru 2008. We have a very talented membership that knows how to work together as a team. A famous unit in the US Army is the 22nd Infantry whose motto is "DEEDS, NOT WORDS." That motto is exemplified in the Hill Country Master Gardeners' accomplishments in 2007. Hosting an incredibly successful State Master Gardeners' Convention and planting a beautiful demonstration plot are just two examples of which we can be proud. Thank you, Anne Brown, for your vision and leadership in 2006 and 2007.

We have 24 students signed up and ready to go in our 2008 class thanks to a successful publicity campaign this past year. They will be introduced by their mentors at our regular January 2nd meeting. A big thank you is owed to Debbie Russell, Education Chairman, and her assistant, Eileen Haden, who work throughout the year scheduling the classes and speakers, and organizing the recruitment of students, as well as conducting the interviews and overseeing the classes plus handling the

mounds of paperwork involved. When one class ends, preparations begin again for the next class.

Another around-the-year volunteer who works longer and harder than any of us realize, is Ida Luckey, our keeper of the volunteer hours. It is very important to Roy and the Extension Office that these hours are recorded for a variety of reasons and Ida has been very good to keep that count current. That brings up the point that Ida can only record the hours which are given to her: i.e.: it is our responsibility to make sure we all turn in our hours on a regular basis once a month.

Remember to bring your \$18.00 check for the 2008 membership dues to the January 2nd meeting or mail them to the Extension office. The deadline for the 2008 dues is January 31st.

We are off and running in 2008 with a solid foundation laid for us in the past 5 years giving us a launching pad for new visions and new projects. I am looking forward to working with Roy, the officers, the committees and having the opportunity to know everyone better within the HCMG program.

Happy New Year

To jumpstart your 2008 plans, in this issue we welcome articles by two of our best gardeners, Connie Townsend and Christine Millar.



Betty West

Calendar of Events: Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional; events are listed for those wishing to attend other educational offerings. Be sure to call and confirm event.
Betty West

January 2, 2008 – HCMG monthly meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Extension Office. Our 2008 class will be introduced and we ask all members to wear their name badges and favorite garden hats. Mentors are bringing “finger food” to share.

Beverages will be provided.

January 29 – Native Plant Society of Texas – Fredericksburg Chapter will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Gillespie County Historical Society Bldg, 312 West San Antonio St., Fredericksburg. Speakers David and Margaret Bamberger will talk about their work with the “Texas Snowbell (*Styrax texana*), an endangered plant species endemic to the Edwards Plateau.”

Kudos to:

Joan Bryson and Betty Burton, our latest Interns to complete their volunteer hours and become “certified” Master Gardeners.

And a BIG "Thank You" from Tommie Airhart to ALL of the volunteers during 2007. This was an exceptional year for our organization and our dedicated and generous volunteers set the standard for our future.

January 8, 2008 – Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter, will meet at 2:00 p.m. at Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville. Ken Cave, Executive Director of the Texas Hill Country River Region, will discuss the recently completed “Cooks Slough Wetlands Project.”

January 9 – Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2 p.m. at the Central Texas Electric Co-Op Bldg., 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. Robert Edmonson will discuss “Recommended Trees for this area of Texas.”

January 12 – Native Plant Society of Texas – Bandera County Chapter meets at the Medina Community Library Meeting Room, 1:00 p.m. Kip Kiphart will present “Monarchs Ask: What is a Garden?”

January 15 – Kerr Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Butt Holdsworth Library, 505 Water St., Kerrville

January 20 – Deadline for HCMG newsletter articles. Send to Eleanor Baldwin at baldwin@ktc.com

January 28 – Texas Master Naturalists meet at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Damon E. Waitt, in a tribute to Lady Bird Johnson, will “Recount His Personal Experiences Botanizing with Lady Bird Johnson.”

Another Reminder for the 2008 Mentors

Since the January meeting is centered around the introduction of the new students by their mentors, we thought it would be a special treat if the mentors would provide the refreshments. If you are so inclined, please bring a plate of your favorite finger foods. Randy and Judy will bring the drinks and ice.



Judy Simmons

Website of the Month
Southern Living Magazine Archives
<http://www.southernliving.com/southern/search/results/1,14892,,00.html>



VEGGIES?? IN JANUARY???



Connie Townsend,
Guest Columnist

Now that you've finished celebrating the arrival of 2008, it's time to get started on your spring garden. Okay, so maybe you're not actually headed for the garden itself, but if you plan to start seeds to grow your own transplants, it's time to select the seeds, the planting mix, etc.

First, think about what seedlings you want to grow to set out when the frost has gone. By this time our local nurseries probably have seeds in stock. The most successful seedlings to grow are tomatoes, bell peppers and chilies, eggplant, and lettuce. If you just want a good red tomato and perhaps Black Beauty eggplant, the local nurseries will do fine; for a bit more exotic variety head for the catalogs (or online catalogs). Remember, each seed packet will have 5 to 10 times as many seeds as you need; don't start all of them!

Use some seed starter kits, margarine tubs, whatever, to start the seedlings. They will need to be moved out into individual pots, soon, however. Whatever container is used, let the babies get 1-1/2 to 2" in height before trying to move them. Find a light loose soil medium recommended for starting seeds. When moving the baby seedlings into pots, the planting medium needs to have a bit more texture and some nutrients. Add a little root stimulator and perhaps some fish emulsion when watering after they've moved into the pots.

These little seedlings need 6-8 weeks to grow before time to set them out in the garden, so plan your seed starting accordingly. Usually the last week in January is good. The soil needs to be kept damp but definitely not wet. They need light; grow bulbs over them are great. If placing them in front of a window, they will grow toward the light, so turn them often. Pepper seedlings particularly like to be warm. They'll love an old heating pad or heated brick to sit on. Just don't get the electrical parts wet.

It's exciting to do this first step in getting your spring garden underway. However, if you're not starting your own transplants, just be planning what you intend to plant.

HCMG December 5, 2007
Monthly Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Anne Brown at 1:10 pm after 30 minutes of socializing and on-site preparation for the Christmas Party.

- Two newly certified Master Gardeners were recognized - Joan Bryson and Betty Burton.
- The instillation of 2008 officers was completed . President - Randy Simmons, Vice-president - Roy Eliff, Treasurer - Pat Moore, and Secretary - Cheri Bolden.
- Remarks of appreciation to the former officers for the excellent job done in 2006 and 2007 were made by Randy Simmons and Harold Pieratt. A gift cache was presented to outgoing President Anne Brown.
- The Committee Chairs for the 2008 year were announced by Randy Simmons.

Archivist	Anne Moss
Demo garden	Dorothy & David Buchen
Education	Debbie Russell
Greenhouse	Anne Brown
Inquiry Desk	Diane Whitney
Jr MG Program	Fay Drozd
Market Days	Lee Fry with Roy Eliff as Co-chair
Mentors	Judy Simmons
Nominating Programs	Maryallen Merriweather
Public Relations	Kathie Marlow
Records	Carol Seminara
Speakers Bureau	Ida Luckey
Volunteer Coordinator	Sandy Martin
	Tommie Airhart
- Reminder for all MG to be present wearing their gardening hats at the next meeting to be held Jan 2, 2008 at 1:00 pm.
- The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheri Bolden





COLLINS' RANCH RECEIVES TEXAS FOREST STEWARDSHIP AWARD

According to the Texas Forest Service, "Texas landowners now have another opportunity to brag about the good things they are doing on their property. They realize that owning land is a right valued by many, but with this right comes the responsibility to take care of it for the future. The Texas Forest Stewardship Program now recognizes these good stewards of the land with the Certified Forest Steward award."

"This award is presented to any Texas landowner that meets the qualifying requirements of owning at least 10 acres, having a written Stewardship plan, and implementing aspects of that plan. It comes in the form of a metal sign for your property and a certificate signed by the State Forester."

"Many landowners are already practicing good stewardship on their land. A few examples of this are using voluntary Best Management Practices, reforestation, and installing food plots."

Sherry and Tom Collins (HCMG) received the Forest Stewardship certification from the Texas Forest Service earlier this year. Their ranch located in Center Point is being managed under an Agricultural Wildlife Valuation plan. The wildlife plan objectives are to improve the habitat for Hill County birds – resident, winter grassland, spring migratory, and breeding species.

Activities include:

1. Providing shelter – Nest boxes and brush piles
2. Supplementing food – Feeder stations and food plots
3. Supplementing water – Wildlife guzzlers, drips and small ponds
4. Habitat Enhancement – Planting and protecting woody plants and forbs
5. Predator Control – Cowbird trapping

Census – Flora and fauna on ranch are being recorded using several protocols

(Photo right top of Collins' receiving award)



From left: Susan Sander (TFS), Sherry Collins, Clay Bales (TFS), and HCMG Tom Collins

Christmas Party Photos



Mrs. Claus (aka Debbie Russell) preparing for the Christmas party



Carol Seminara building an arrangement for the Christmas party table.



IMPORTANT REMINDER FROM IDA LUCKEY

Master Gardeners, thank you very much for all your volunteer time this past year. All who wanted to be certified has now done so. I am very pleased that everyone is handing in their hours in a in a timely manner.

I will be requesting the December hours as soon as the year is ended. Please comply; Roy needs the hours the first week in January of 2008.

Tracking Hours and Timekeeping - Ida Luckey,

It is up to the Executive Committee and the Extension Agent what constitutes volunteer time. Here are some examples of questions that have been answered.

As an Intern, you can count any work that you do as a Master Gardener. If you work at Market Days, do a speaking engagement at a garden club, work on an authorized project, clean the flower beds at the Extension Office, work on the Demonstration Garden, water the Green House, help your neighbor start a landscape flower bed, help your subdivision plant natives around the entrance or elsewhere. Any meetings count as volunteer time if you are working on a committee. Anytime you volunteer your time while doing it as a Master Gardener, you can claim the actual time you spend doing the physical work. As an Intern you cannot claim the time it took you to travel to your destination to do the work. You will be able to count it once you are certified as a Master Gardener.

As a Master Gardener, you can claim the above duties as well as the time it took you to travel to the work site. You may only claim one hour of travel time.

As a Master Gardener you can claim the monthly meeting. Usually it consists of one hour of volunteer time and one hour of continuing education if there is a speaker. If you talk to your neighbor in person or on the phone about native plants, that is considered a contact and not volunteer time. Anytime you spent answering the phone at the Extension Office is volunteer time.

If you travel to another Garden Club and listen to a speaker about horticulture, you can claim the actual time the speaker spoke as Continuing Education. You do not claim travel time for that event.

Every year you must have **volunteered** a total of **25 hours** and received a total of six hours of continuing education.

Document your hours on a monthly basis. Total each month separately. The Extension Office requires the volunteer time every month.

Below are some Christmas Party attendees.



Left: Carolyn Nall seated in front of Jack Cremin. Man in white shirt is Lee Fry. Judy Simmons is on the right.

Below behind John Coleman on the left are Randy Simmons and Cheryl Andrews. On the right foreground is Maryallen Meriwether, behind her is Kathie Marlow.

Group photos courtesy of Anne Brown.



Don't forget our website:

<http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org>



Welcome the New 2008 Master Gardener Class in January!

The new class of '08 is starting Tuesday, January 15th and runs to April 29th. There are a few new classes added to the schedule below. You may save this page for reference. Auditing the classes may be limited; we'll see how the first few classes go.

Class Schedule 2008		
Class/Field Trip Date	Subject/Program	Presenter
Tuesday Jan. 15	Meeting, greeting, and orientation 1-3 Native Plants, Trees, and Shrubs	Roy Walston Ext. Agent, Master Gardener Officers and Ext Office Staff Pricilla Stanley Master Naturalist
Tuesday Jan. 22	Vegetables and Flowers	Dr. Jerry Parsons
Tuesday Jan. 29	Landscaping and Design	Katherine Crawford and Dusty Gilliam M.G.
Tuesday Feb. 5	Concepts of Insect Management	Dr. Noel Troxclair
Tuesday Feb. 12	Concepts of Disease Management	Dr. Mark Black
Tuesday Feb. 19	Pruning, Fruit and Nut Production	Dr. Larry Stein
Tuesday Feb. 26	Soils and Fertilizers	Dr. Dan Fromme
Tuesday March 4	Oak Wilt Job Fair	Jim Houser Master Gardener Staff
Tuesday March 11	Horticultural Biology	Dr. Dan Fromme
Tuesday March 18	Rain Water Harvesting	Billy Kniffen
Tuesday March 25	Turf Grass Care	Dr Chalmers
Tuesday April 1	Environmental Horticulture	Dr Doug Welsh
Tuesday April 8 *	Medina Gardens Field Trip	
Tuesday April 15	Plant Propagation	Fay Drozd, MG
Tuesday April 22 *	Hunt School Field Trip	Connie Townsend and Sandy Martin MG
Tuesday April 29 Graduation	Organics	Dr. Skip Richter

12/07/2007

* The field trips are not open to the membership due to class size.



**Hill Country Master
Gardener Association 2008
Executive Committee**

Randy Simmons - President
Roy Eliff - Vice President
Pat Moore - Secretary
Cheri Bolden - Treasurer
Anne Brown -
Ex-officio Advisor
Roy Walston -
C.E.A. Advisor

Committees

Archivist

Anne Moss, Chair

Demonstration Garden:

Dorothy & David Buchen,
Chairs

Education:

Debbie Russell, Chair

Greenhouse:

Anne Brown, Chair

Horticultural Inquiry:

Diane Whitney, Chair

Jr. Master Gardener Program:

Fay Drozd, Chair

Market Days:

Lee Fry & Roy Eliff, Co-Chairs

Mentors:

Judy Simmons, Chair

Nominating:

Maryallen Merriweather, Chair

Programs:

Kathie Marlow, Chair

Public Relations:

Carol Seminara, Chair

Record Keeping & Volunteer

Hours:

Ida Luckey, Chair

Speaker's Bureau:

Sandy Martin, Chair

Volunteer Coordination

Tommie Airhart, Chair

Newsletter

Editor – Eleanor Baldwin
Assistant Editors - Betty West,
Kathie Marlow
Columnist - Christine Millar
Photographer - Roy Eliff
Submissions to
baldwin@kctc.com



The January Kitchen Garden

by Christine Millar

El Jardin de la Cocina, a kitchen garden network group, was started about 2 years ago in Kerrville when a few of us decided that we needed

help with vegetable gardening. We invited some very successful vegetable gardeners and others interested in our group. Our aim was to investigate what vegetables, herbs and flowers grow well in this region and how to grow, use and preserve the harvest.

The network meetings are open to anyone – you do not even have to grow veggies. If you like plants and/or cooking then you are always welcome. Betty West is on our email list and knows where we are meeting every month to six weeks in private homes. There is typically a set topic for discussion such as pests and their control, best producing varieties for the year, garden diaries, or seed starting. A highlight of the meeting is often the tour of the host garden. There is always something to learn and apply to your own backyard!

The Sunday, January 20th meeting will be held at Ida Luckey's house at 2 pm. Email me at jdmillar@hctc.net or leave a telephone message on 830-634-2371 for directions. Bring along a notepad. Everybody is encouraged to keep some sort of garden diary. January is one of those very few months where there are few garden chores outside. It is a great month to think about what vegetables your family willingly eats and research what you can grow here. The local library keeps a collection of older local recipe books that predate the modern extensive transport system that now hauls fresh produce in excess of 1500 miles to our local supermarkets. The recipes in these old cookbooks give a good snapshot of what grew well in the local region at that time. There is mounting concern about how sustainable our transport system will be in the future due to rising costs of energy and climate change. There are a number of local producers now available in the area that offer locally grown

produce. If you do not have the space or inclination for vegetable gardening then you might reconsider changing your buying habits to support these local producers.

January

- Cabbages, broccoli, brussel sprouts, lettuces, bunching leeks, etc. are being harvested. Keep them well fertilized and water if the weather is dry.
- Finalize seed orders so that you are ready to start your seeds in February indoors under lights. Most networkers seem to have better luck with seedlings by starting them under lights inside rather than direct sowing outside.
- Now is a good time to get your equipment and area prepared for raising your seedlings inside under lights in February and March.
- Begin a garden diary. Carol Seminara presented an article on keeping a garden diary in Leaf and Limb, October, 2006. Visit the website www.homesteadharvest.com and print out their free garden journal pages and set up your own garden diary in a 3 ring binder. Many networkers keep an informal journal during the year and organize it into a final diary during the winter.
- Copy new recipes, growing information and harvest tips for all those vegetables, herbs and flowers you plan to be growing this year into your new garden diary now. You won't have time to go back and find them once the warm weather begins.
- Now is the time to seed your tomatoes under lights inside if you are competing for the first tomato in your neighborhood. We have found Roma types such as 'Enchantment' and another type 'Juliet' to be our overall best varieties the past couple of years in terms of length of production (until killing frost in fall), resistance to cracking, fungal diseases and insects. We plant a lot of other varieties as well but these two always seem to be the favorites.
- Plant onion sets now and you will be harvesting them in late May or June when the tops die down.

