



**Texas Master Gardener Association
2008 PROJECT AWARD**

Association Membership/Size: Med. Large (Small, Medium, Med.Large or Large)

Number of Members: 162

County: Victoria

Address: 442 Foster Field Drive

City: Victoria, TX **Zip** 77904

Phone: (361) 575-4581 **Agents e-mail:** j-janak@tamu.edu

Project Title: Painting Texas With Wildflowers (PTWW) – Phase I

Maria Sobczak; msgarden03@suddenlink.net
Name(s) of person(s) submitting the nomination e-mail

Joe Janak, Victoria County Estension Agent – Ag/NR
Name of County Extension Agent or County Program Coordinator

THIS SUBMISSION SHALL NOT EXCEED TWO (2) PAGES TOTAL.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT (10 pts)
In 150 words or less please describe the project.

Painting Texas With Wildflowers (PTWW) project began as one of 13 goals of a 5 year statewide plan proposed by Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA). The Victoria County Master Gardener Association (VCMGA) chose to take on the challenge and in May, 2008 created a mission statement, created a state logo and set in motion the process of contacting State Directors of each of the 76 Master Gardener Associations (MGA) across Texas to join the project. The goal of this phase was to involve as many MGAs in the project, hoping to reach out into the larger communities in the state in future years. To date, MGAs in 31 counties (39 %) are committed to the project with some having more than one wildflower site per county. This has brought innumerable community and educational groups into the project as well as educated the general public on beautification of Texas with wildflowers.

**Please answer the questions as they relate to the 2008 entry year.
VALUE 10 POINTS EACH**

1. Who is the target audience? Primarily the numerous county Master Gardener Associations in Texas, their membership, and then the general public, with special attention to school classes (all educational levels), members of garden clubs, community organizations and civic clubs.

2. What is/are the objective(s) of the project? This project encourages Texas Master Gardeners to plant and conserve wildflowers throughout the state so that the public will become more appreciative and gain a better understanding of the natural history thereby promoting the beautification of Texas. (This is our mission statement.)

3. How many Master Gardeners were involved and how many volunteer hours were reported? In Victoria County, the committee, consisting of 12 Master Gardeners, turned in a total of 316.5 volunteer hours, since the project's beginnings in May, 2008. Besides Victoria, there were 24 other Master Gardener Associations across the state that became involved (31 counties) but there is no record of how many members participated in their projects nor how many hours were recorded. That will be one of the goals of Phase 2.

4. What was the role of Master Gardeners and Texas AgriLife Extension in the project? Upon accepting the challenge to encourage the statewide planting of wildflowers, we met to set out our objectives. We were guided by and collaborated with our Extension Agent, Joe Janak, through the planning and development of the project, including 15 planning sessions and communication about the program to state directors of each MG county and their Extension agents.

5. How was accuracy of information assured? We organized a meeting with Dr. Damon Waitt - Senior Botanist, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; Richard De Los Santos - Texas Dept. of Agriculture (TDA); and Bill Kirwin - Texas Dept. of Transportation (TxDot) Design Division to obtain expert advice and buy-in of the project. Research was done on wildflower varieties for specific state regions along with methods of seed distribution which evolved into the promoting, making and dispersing of wildflower seedball recipes.

6. Were any other organizations involved? Explain. TDA, TxDot, Texas AgriLife Extension, TMGA, 25 county Master Gardener Associations and 31 counties across Texas were involved. After the MGA's indicated their interest, we sent our project mission statement and a description form for their endeavor. Once the county returned the necessary documents, they were sent the names of the contact persons with TDA and TxDot, who would be instrumental in helping them with supplies, direction and authorized use of property under TxDot's jurisdiction.

7. How many people were educated?

36 attended Victoria's PTWW grand opening; 3 news articles were written and featured in The Victoria Advocate with 95,000 daily readership, 1 program was presented on KAVU-TV, and it is featured on the VCMGA and TMGA websites, each with thousands of hits. If half of the 31 participating counties did half of this, the numbers are still in the hundreds of thousands.

8. How was the project promoted? We contacted the MGA State Directors and their County Extension Agents explaining and requesting participation. Posting information on the TMGA website reached beyond the 31 participating counties. Locally, the project was publicized through KAVU TV; The Victoria Advocate (area newspaper); VCMGA website; the Kick-Off event at the South Texas Farm and Ranch Show where both Victoria County Judge Don Pozzi and the Honorable Senator Glen Hegar spoke about the project, and to various community organizations by Master Gardener speakers.

9. Describe how the project met the intended objective(s). Participation seemed to grow exponentially once the idea was presented to the community. For example, Collin County is working with Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation to enhance a pioneer cemetery; Parker County established 5 gardens (wildflowers in one) in front of the City Library, with signage for plants and the title/author of a book in the library containing said plants. Comal County collaborated with New Braunfels Conservation Society to obtain a wildflower site in their Plaza.

Victoria County Master Gardener Project Photo Entries



Logo designed and created by the Victoria County Master Gardener PTWW committee for the project.



Victoria County Master Gardeners and guests “having a ball” making seedballs.



Victoria wildflower committee members taking a “photo break” during ground prep time.



“Celebrities” attending the PTWW Kick-Off event at the South Texas Farm and Ranch Show namely: (L-R) Jeff Ripley, District 11 Extension Administrator; Joe Janak, Victoria County Extension Agent; Maria Sobczak, PTWW State and County Committee Chairperson; Glenn Hegar, Texas Senator – District 18; Don Pozzi, Victoria County Judge; Helen Boatman, Victoria County Master Gardener Association President.



This picture is similar to the one used at the Grand Opening of the PTWW project showing the 31 counties from throughout the state participating in this project.