



**Texas Master Gardener Association
2008 ASSOCIATION AWARD**

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

Number of Members: 60

County: Hood

Address: Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 1410 W. Pearl

City: Granbury, TX Zip 76048

Phone: 817-579-3280 Agents e-mail: m-vahlenkamp@tamu.edu

Association Title: Lake Granbury Master Gardeners

Phyllis Webster, pwebster@gmail.com

Name(s) of person(s) submitting the nomination e-mail

Marty Vahlenkamp

Name of County Extension Agent or County Program Coordinator

THIS SUBMISSION SHALL NOT EXCEED FOUR (4) PAGES TOTAL.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION (10 pts)

In 150 words or less please describe the association.

Lake Granbury Master Gardeners focus their limited resources on providing horticultural education to thousands of residents of all ages and backgrounds in Hood County and beyond. They reach the public continuously through monthly education workshops, the LGMG website, a weekly newspaper column (cir. 31,000), annual seminars, the LGMG published plant book, a speaker's bureau and more. And they counsel homeowners, businesses and non-profits as to best landscape practices. In the past two years, they raised funds for and built a new demonstration garden, which includes EarthKind Rose trials as well as rainwater harvest/drip irrigation instruction and Texas SuperStar and native plant demonstration beds. Known for their active community support, the LGMG are respected for their horticultural expertise and the association is regarded as a valuable community resource. In 2008, they provided 5,774 volunteer hours of service worth \$112,650.74 to the county.

**Please answer the following questions as they relate to the 2008 entry year.
10 points each**

1. What is the leadership structure? How is it selected?

All association operations are subject to the LGMG by-laws and overseen by the Texas AgriLife Extension. Officers, Past President and the Extension Agent comprise the Executive Committee. Officers include President, VP Programs, VP Community Education, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. The President, with Executive Committee approval, appoints Committee and Project Chairs based on member qualifications and interests. Chairs recruit and select members to serve on committees using surveys, sign-up sheets, e-mails, etc.

2. How do leaders solicit input/ideas from members and Texas AgriLife?

Leaders solicit input through meetings, e-mail and individual contacts. The Executive Committee, which includes the Extension agent, conducts an annual meeting to review all current and proposed projects. New projects are presented to the whole association for input and consideration. If necessary, a feasibility committee is formed for the purpose of gathering more information and bringing it back to the membership. Once projects are determined for the year, chairs are appointed and committees are formed. These committees meet regularly. The Extension agent is included in all Executive Committee meetings, monthly membership meetings and as requested at project meetings. The agent makes a presentation at all monthly membership meetings.

3. How does the association inspire support and participation in projects and programs?

Efforts to inspire support begin during intern training when the interns are introduced to various projects and are encouraged to participate in all activities. Interns are also assigned mentors to provide guidance and support during the first year of internship/membership. Generally, leaders inspire support on an ongoing basis. The officers and chairs make presentations monthly to generate enthusiasm for projects and encourage participation through sign-up sheets and special meetings. Members who make outstanding contributions are recognized monthly through the Master Gardener of the Month/Year Award and articles published on the group's website. To provide another level of recognition, an Emeritus program was established in 2008 to honor long-term members and their accomplishments.

4. How are volunteer hours reported and recorded?

All but four members submit their hours electronically using the group's website. Those without computer access report their hours to the webmaster who enters the hours electronically.

5. Describe the multi-year plan for goals and objectives.

The overriding goal of LGMG is public education and support of the Extension; this goal drives the multi-year plan. Each year, all aspects of the LGMG long-range plan are reviewed. Leaders solicit input from the members to determine what projects/programs will continue to engage/train members while providing superior community education. Many programs are continued, some are eliminated and others are adopted. Committee chairs are responsible for developing the goals and objectives for individual projects, subject to Executive Committee review. The chairs are responsible for measuring success in meeting goals and objectives. Aspects of the LGMG multi-year plan include:

- Expand the demonstration garden in ways that benefit member/public education.
- Continue community education programs including a speaker's bureau, monthly workshops, weekly newspaper articles and regular cable television presentations.
- Expand internal education by providing speakers, field trips and specialized training.
- Provide a scholarship for at least one horticulture student per year.
- Encourage MG participation through recognition programs.
- Capitalize on technology for communication and teaching.

6. How, when and by who are the plans made?

Newly elected officers attend the December Executive Committee meeting to provide year-to-year continuity. Past and present leaders and committee chairs review the past year's progress toward meeting goals/objectives, brainstorm and make suggested updates to both short-and long-range plans. The new officers finalize proposed plans/goals and review them with the Extension agent. Plans are presented to the association in January for additional membership input. Officers finalize the plans and communicate them at the February membership meeting. As programs are implemented, adjustments are made to plans as suggested by chairs.

7. How are specific portions of the community targeted?

(i.e. children, seniors, disabled, minorities etc.)

- LGMG/Texas AgriLife Extension offers a summer gardening workshop for children.
- LGMGs developed and continually update a home landscape manual that is given to new Habitat for Humanity homeowners in Hood County. It is produced in English and Spanish.
- The Senior Education committee provides speakers and conducts hands-on workshops for residents of senior living communities.
- The demonstration garden is handicapped-accessible.
- Children's workshops have been held at the Habitat for Humanity community center.
- All monthly programs are open to the entire community.

8. Describe how the Association responds to seasonal or emerging educational needs of the community.

With a circulation of 30,000 plus, the LGMG's weekly newspaper column satisfies seasonal and emerging educational needs, as does the Extension agents' weekly television show. Timely articles are also published on the association's website. In 2008, the LGMG updated its published plant book/CD, which continues to "sell out." Due to a population boom, the book targets those new to gardening/landscaping in Hood County. Each spring, the LGMG holds a large plant sale featuring native and well-adapted plants that perform well in Hood County. MGs regularly field questions coming into the Extension office. These questions typically relate to the garden column or pressing problems such as oak wilt, insect damage, drought, etc. Particular attention is paid to these citizens' expressed concerns as programs are developed each year. The speaker's bureau responds to immediate needs (182 volunteer hours). In 2008, 28 presentations were given and 713 participants received timely, up-to-date educational information. Also, nine monthly community education programs were offered comprising 142 volunteer hours; 160 attended.

9. Describe how individual talents and resources of Master Gardeners are used.

Members are encouraged to share both their horticulture and professional talents such as landscaping, writing, website design, teaching and engineering. LGMG utilizes member talents in designing, fundraising, construction, website maintenance, producing slide shows/articles, speaking, teaching workshops, counseling interns, instructing students/seniors and gardening.

10. List partnerships and how utilized.

- Firewise specialists distribute brochures furnished by the Texas Forest Service.
- The Hood County News publishes the LGMG Garden Patch horticulture column weekly.
- Hood County Commissioners set aside land for the demonstration garden.
- Local citizens and companies funded the demonstration garden along with members.
- Texas A&M and local colleges provide speakers/training to members and the public.
- LGMG developed and conducted a speaker's bureau workshop with the Dallas MGs.
- LGMG participated in the Paint Texas with Wildflowers program.
- LGMG are working jointly with Somervell MGs to organize a proposed State MG meeting.
- LGMG published articles in *Hood & Somervell Today Magazine & Business Commerce Journal*.
- Members participated in 4H Pecan and Vegetable shows.
- Members worked as garden docents in the Granbury Historic Tour of Homes.
- Individual members helped area non-profits to plan and install gardens.

11. Describe how programs and projects are evaluated.

Standard evaluation forms from the Extension are adapted for use with each program. Attendees are asked to complete the forms. Officers/chairs and the Extension agent review the results and suggest/implement any needed improvements. Members are surveyed annually for feedback on programs. The Education chair is responsible for collecting and sharing data.

12. List any awards or recognitions received from local and/or state organizations.

In 2007, the LGMG received three awards at the Texas State MG Awards including first place for its weekly newspaper column. Member Doug Richards received the prestigious Sharie Lanza Ambassador award.

13. List on-going programs and projects.

Monthly Community Education series, demonstration garden, weekly garden column, annual seminar, Chamber of Commerce, Courthouse and Annex landscapes, monthly speakers, Children's Gardening workshop, speakers bureau, rainwater harvesting/drip irrigation training, scholarship program, train the trainer and mentor programs, plant sale, phone work in Extension office, plant book, Habitat for Humanity handbook and specialized programs as requested.

14. List any programs or projects that are new this award year.

In 2008, LGMG began monthly plant evaluations in the EarthKind Rose Trials. An Emeritus program was launched. Members worked as garden docents during the Historic Tour of Homes. A Senior Education committee organized to offer programs benefiting senior citizens.

15. Describe any special training programs developed in 2008.

LGMG launched new classes in plant propagation and rainwater/drip irrigation. In 2008, the first and second stages of the new demonstration garden were completed, allowing hands-on training to take place in the garden.

16. How many new members and interns integrated into programs and projects in 2008?

Interns are trained and accepted every two years. No training took place in 2008. Nine 2007 interns became project chairs and officers in 2008.

17. Describe the best educational program or project of 2008 (external).

The new LGMG Demonstration garden was fully planted and ready for use. A new multi-purpose building was added to the garden for use as a greenhouse and educational site. EarthKind Rose trials officially began. Group and individual tours were given routinely. Training took place on site for rainwater harvesting/drip irrigation, building a water feature, children's workshop, etc. Demonstrations included square foot gardening, composting and water conservation. Sixteen raised beds and eleven freeform beds were maintained including butterfly and hummingbird gardens, native grasses, ornamentals, perennials and vegetables. The newest gardens included Texas SuperStars and Texas natives. An open-air activity center provided a secondary site where literature and information signs were available. Expansion plans were developed calling for a second rainwater collection tank and fruit/nut trees to be added as well as new signage/literature. A total of 999 volunteer hours were spent in the demonstration garden in 2008.

18. Describe the best program or project for Master Gardeners (internal).

LGMG broadened their "Train the Trainer" program where specialists teach skills to members in advanced workshops such as plant propagation, oak wilt, EarthKind gardening and rainwater harvesting. This 2-3 hour hands-on training typically takes place prior to a community-wide educational program, which allows the newly trained MGs to help teach members of the public.