

**Texas Master Gardener Association**  
**ASSOCIATION AWARD**  
Association Membership: Medium  
(Small, Medium, or Large)

County: Hood  
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Association Name: Hood County Master Gardener Association, Inc.

Brief description of Association entry: (150 words or Less)

Our Association is fortunate to have members who are dedicated, hard working, and extremely talented. This year's entry reflects our dedication to public education. Our demonstration garden offers the public an opportunity to view proper plant selection and care while also learning about Texas Superstars™. We hosted a public garden tour complete with informative handouts, offered horticulture lectures and demonstrations, published a weekly garden column in the local newspaper and launched an educational website. In everything we do, our members further their own education while offering gardening knowledge to the community. We engage highly qualified speakers as part of our regular meetings and encourage members to attend state and local seminars. Our medium size group has accrued more than 600 hours this year in continuing education.

Barbara Cuzner and Kathy Murray  
Name of Person Submitting the nomination

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of County Master Gardener Coordinator

Please answer the following questions as they relate to this entry. **Do not exceed the five (5) pages of the questionnaire and one (1) page of narrative in relationship to your entry!**

**I. Organization and Leadership (100 points)**

1. What is the leadership structure of the Association or Corporation?  
Annual elections are held to fill the positions of President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer. The elected President appoints a Corresponding Secretary and Project Chairman. Individuals are appointed to chair all projects. Officers perform the duties of their positions as set forth in HCMGA and TMG Bylaws.
2. How does the leadership set and communicate goals?  
Leaders establish goals at quarterly executive sessions, which include the officers, the Extension agent and the Project Chairman. At these sessions, ideas for new projects are discussed and ongoing projects are evaluated and analyzed. Any proposed projects or changes to existing projects are first prioritized and then prepared for communication to members at the next association meeting.
3. How do the leaders solicit input/ideas from the membership?  
Our leaders solicit ideas in many ways including one-on-one discussion, written survey, e-mail, website forms or telephone. Often, the President activates the telephone committee and/or puts a notice on our website bulletin board to alert all members that their input is needed. They are asked to give input at the next general meeting. The Projects Chairman also asks for ideas, such as ways to improve activities, when giving monthly project updates.
4. How do the officers inspire members to support and participate in the programs or projects?  
Our officers inspire by example. They have always been go-getters, participating in most projects and relaying actual details of the various projects enthusiastically. This year we established a mentor program for our interns. Mentors helped to integrate interns into our membership, programs and activities.
5. What percentage of the membership participates in the programs or projects?  
100% of our membership participates in one way or another.

6. What percentage of the programs or projects is focused internally on increasing the knowledge base of the membership?  
About 25% of our programs are focused on membership education. All our projects are focused on community education. Our Vice-President is charged with engaging high quality speakers to address members on subjects of great interest, which ensures attendance at monthly Association meetings. These meetings are also open to the public.
7. What percentage of the activities programs or projects is focused externally for the education of the public?  
75% of our programs provide both membership and community education. 100% of our projects are educational and highly visible to the general public. Some of these projects are directed toward select groups, such as the Life Skills class.
8. Describe how the Association or Corporation addresses the needs of the county residents.  
The *Garden Patch* feature in the Hood County News gives timely gardening advice to subscribing residents. Each article concludes with the Extension Office phone number and the directive to call a Master Gardener for answers to gardening questions. We also have a website where members of the public may ask questions that will be answered by a Master Gardener. Questions posed to the Extension staff are relayed to a MG member for response. Many of our programs and projects are developed to meet the needs expressed by residents via phone, e-mail, website, etc.
9. Explain the procedure for addressing seasonal gardening problems and questions.  
The *Garden Patch* newspaper article and our website are our most prominent ways of addressing seasonal gardening issues. Calls to the Extension Office are referred to Master Gardeners. Questions posed on our website regarding issues and articles found there are tracked for future reference by our Web Master.
10. Explain the procedure for addressing unexpected gardening problems or questions.  
Our Extension Agent receives phone calls. We have given him the names of members who have horticulture specialties. He uses Master Gardeners to research, if necessary, and call anyone with an unusual or unexpected problem.
11. Describe partnerships with other organizations. (City, county, non-profit, or profit)  
Our partnerships are specific to individual projects. Examples: Many sponsors and donors contributed to our Granbury Garden Tour. The HCMGA assists with landscaping at the historic Hood County Courthouse. The Commissioners Court calls us to “spruce things up” for special occasions such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival and the Harvest Moon Festival. The Hood County Newspaper publishes press releases regarding upcoming seminars and programs. First United Methodist Church has provided a forum for several gardening lectures. Members wrote a garden booklet for Habitat for Humanity residents. The Granbury Care Center provided two areas for the JMG-Life Skills students to share their newly acquired skills. Space does not allow the full story of our commitment to the community or its support of our endeavors.
12. Describe annual activities, programs or projects to educate the public. (Seminars, clinics, workshops, demonstrations or lectures.)  
We participate in annual public education activities including the Tarleton University Fall Garden Market (4<sup>th</sup> year) to answer questions and provide handouts on fire ant control, xeriscape gardens, etc. Farm Safety Day is a hands-on activity directed to youth (4<sup>th</sup> year). We serve as instructors and advisors at the 4-H Cooking School and Fair (8 years). It was our 8<sup>th</sup> year to assist with the Hood County Horticultural Pecan Show and Bake-off.

## II. Planning (100 points)

1. Is there a multi-year plan of objectives or goals? (How many years?)  
There is no formal plan -our goal is always to find more ways to educate our members and the public. To this end, as detailed earlier, our leaders discuss goals and objectives during Executive Committee and bring issues to the members for discussion and vote. Specific goals are set for individual projects based on various needs, target audiences and funding.
2. Is there an annual or monthly planning session for the programs or projects to achieve the objectives or goals?  
Quarterly Executive meetings are held. Individual project committees meet as needed to plan and evaluate the overall educational effectiveness of projects.
3. Who attends these sessions?  
The Executive Committee, Extension Agent and Project Chairman attend the Executive meetings. All individual committee members meet in their respective sessions.
4. How does the planning process consider the needs of the county communities?  
We review programs/projects/activities that have been well or poorly received and attended in the past; the types of phone calls received by the Extension Office; what additional instruction members have requested and plan accordingly.

5. Is the utilization of new methods, techniques or technology included in the planning process? (Give an example)  
Yes. This year we utilized computer graphic and page layout programs, website programs and digital cameras due to the launch of our website and the promotion of our garden tour. In our Demonstration Garden, we tested new methods and plants, such as new varieties of vegetables and flowers and various composting and mulching methods.
6. How are the unique talents of members considered during planning?  
Each member declares his/her horticultural specialties and skills/talents, which may be utilized by the Association. They also identify what type of group they feel most comfortable working with (Youth, Senior Citizens, etc.) Leaders use this data to consider new project opportunities or to design a new project to fit some member's unique talents.
7. How are the resources of current Master Gardeners and interns included in the planning?  
Our membership is so small and congenial that it is second nature to ask the most qualified individuals to assist in planning and implementation of projects. Also, we appointed mentors to assist interns this year. This new program met with great success. Mentors helped to guide interns and directed their talents toward projects that were a "best fit."
8. How are outside partnerships considered during planning?  
Partnerships are specific to programs/projects. Partners who have been supportive in the past, either for funds, supplies or other assistance, are considered in planning. New partners are solicited to help us meet specific goals.
9. Is there a procedure to track and document the progress of programs or projects?  
The Projects Chairman, at each monthly membership business meeting, reports the status of all projects and activities. Individual project chairmen may report further. The report is open for discussion. Progress may also be measured by phone calls to the Extension Office or feedback via e-mail or website.
10. Is there a review process to critique or assess programs or projects for achievement and improvement of objectives or goals?  
The entire membership is given an opportunity to assess programs at monthly business meetings. The quarterly Executive sessions provide a more extensive analysis of ongoing activities.

### III. Community Awareness (100 points)

1. Describe how the needs of the communities are determined.  
We are made aware of community problems and issues via direct phone calls to the Extension Office, e-mails and web site inquiries. Some issues are ongoing in a rural lakeside community such as ours -pollution of our water from pesticides and fertilizer run-off for example. We are also made aware of hot button topics such as oak wilt, drought (irrigation techniques, Water-wise and Firewise landscaping, rainwater harvesting) and water salinity (salt-tolerant plants). We consider these concerns and our ability to affect positive change. We develop programs/projects accordingly.
2. How are the short-term and long-term needs identified?  
Needs are identified in all ways previously mentioned including questions asked at lectures/seminars, phone calls to the Extension Office in response to our Garden Patch column and visits to our website.
3. Describe how specific portions of the community are targeted. (Children, youth, senior citizens, handicapped.)  
Our JMG-Life Skills class project deals with the learning disabled. This year we landscaped a bird and butterfly friendly flowerbed at a local nursing home. Our membership participated in youth educational programs such as the annual 4-H programs of Cooking School, Livestock Fair, and Farm Safety Day and the State Fair cooperative effort -"Little Hands on the Farm". We participated in the county's Fruit and Vegetable Show, sharing our gardening skills with the public by giving a seminar on Square Foot Gardening and irrigation. We also worked at the Pecan and Fruit tree seminar and the annual Hood County Pecan Show that includes surrounding county residents. We also plant a tree at each new Habitat for Humanity House that is built in Hood County during the year.
4. Explain how the various media are utilized to communicate Master Gardener activities, programs or projects to the public.  
Our local newspaper regularly publishes our *Garden Patch* column. They also print our press releases, photographs and program announcements. Our Extension agent promotes Master Gardening activities during his participation in regular broadcast radio and television programs that deal with aspects of agriculture and horticulture. Lake Granbury Chamber of Commerce helps us by posting major activities on their marquee. The Convention and Visitors Bureau includes our activities in handouts. Local clubs have utilized our Speakers Bureau and local businesses have displayed our event flyers. Our newly established website is a major tool that we use to make our events more visible to the community. Our Extension Office also sends mass e-mails to other county agents to publicize programs such as our garden tour. Area print and broadcast media received press releases and photographs regarding our garden tour. E-mail is utilized extensively to distribute meeting and program notices.

5. Describe the methods utilized to access community satisfaction with the programs or projects of the Association or Corporation.  
Speakers distribute evaluation sheets at their seminars. We also consider verbal feedback. Attendance at seminars and speaking engagements is used as criteria. Honorariums and repeat invitations are good indicators of the success of our programs and projects. We also track/evaluate responses to our garden column and website.
6. Explain how community responses are utilized.  
Consumer responses help us to determine the needs of the community and thus develop programs/projects. At specific programs, if we receive extensive questions, we will offer more education on that subject.
7. Are new activities, programs or projects developed through feedback from the communities? (Give an example)  
Yes. For example, we expanded the Demonstration Garden to include two new garden beds, a butterfly garden, benches and split rail fences. We began revising the Habitat for Humanity booklet to include more plants for Hood County. We also created an educational website to make public access to horticulture information easier. We opened our Garden Tour to the public after numerous requests.

#### **IV. Work System (100 points)**

1. Describe the organization of the membership for accomplishment of the programs or projects.  
All projects have chairmen who recruit and guide volunteers. The project may have a standing committee that only involves those members, or it may from time to time call upon the entire membership for participation. A chairperson may activate the phone committee or post a notice on the website bulletin board to notify members of a workday.
2. How are the leaders or chairmen of the activities, programs or projects selected?  
The President and Projects Chairman select individuals based on the individuals' knowledge or enthusiasm for specific activities. If no one has the expertise needed, the program/project will be treated as learning opportunity for all members.
3. Describe any special training programs developed to assist in the activities, programs or projects.  
The Junior Master Gardener and Firewise Landscaping specialists attended training and utilize special handbooks. Local and statewide seminars are attended to develop expertise in various fields (i.e. composting, herb, Orchid propagation, etc.). Computer training is available for those interested. The Extension Office holds training on the computer, power point and projection equipment on an as needed basis.
4. How are new members and interns integrated into existing activities, programs or projects?  
A member mentor is matched with an intern to answer all questions, encourage involvement in projects and help them to complete their volunteer payback. Interns are encouraged to join committees and attend project workdays.
5. How are volunteer hour kept?  
Our timekeeper uses Excel pivot tables. This allows one log to be kept and it can be sorted in numerous ways to answer month-end requirements. Each person is responsible for reporting his or her own hours monthly to the timekeeper. Hours may now be reported via the Website in the members only section.

#### **V. Critique and Review (100 points)**

1. Describe the critique or review process to determine the progress of programs or projects.  
The entire membership is given the opportunity to critique programs/projects each month at business meetings. The Executive Committee, chairpersons and Extension Agent meet quarterly to analyze all ongoing activities. They modify, add to or end programs or projects at this time.
2. What is the role of the membership in the critique or review process of programs or projects for Master Gardeners?  
Projects chairman reports progress monthly to the membership. This report is then open for discussion. Questions can be directed to an individual activity chairmen or the Projects Chairman at this time.
3. What is the role of the local residents in the critique or review process of programs or projects for the public?  
Residents attend the programs, show interest in projects, ask questions and offer feedback either in person or by survey, telephone, e-mail or website.

#### **VI. Awards. (50 points)**

1. Describe any awards program you have.  
Master Gardener "diplomas" and recertification certificates are presented at a fall banquet sponsored by the Extension Program Council. Interns completing their volunteer hours are given recognition and a Master Gardener patch at our monthly meeting. Photos or news articles depicting our members' activities are posted on our website. We also give honorary membership to individuals who give of their time and effort to encourage and support our group.

2. List the criteria you use to select awardees and any special items you present to the recipients.  
Volunteer hours are our basic criteria for the certificates and patches. News recognition is based on program/project leadership and participation.
3. List any external awards you have and any awards your association has received during the year  
Habitat for Humanity bilingual booklet "Education through Sharing"-1<sup>st</sup> place Publications, Texas County Agriculture Agents Association Communication Awards Program

**VII. Programs or Projects. (450 points)**

1. List Continuing Programs or Projects:  
Demonstration garden, JMG Life Skills, Courthouse & Granbury Care Center landscape, Habitat for Humanity Handbook, Backyard Banter newsletter, Garden Patch articles, 4H Farm Safety (5 years), 4H Cooking School (9 years), Hood County Pecan Show (9 years), Tarleton State University Fall Plant Sale/Seminars (4 years), Speakers Bureau.
2. List New Programs and Projects:  
Garden Tour, Intern Mentor Program, Scholarship, Website, revision of bilingual *Education through Sharing* handbook to become Plants for Hood County Book, Spring Fruit and Vegetable Show and Seminar and Chamber of Commerce landscape
3. List Community Partners:  
Hood County News, Chamber of Commerce, City of Granbury, Granbury ISD, GranburyCare Center, local clubs, Tarleton State University, Extension Program Council, Extension Horticulture Committee, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Cherokee Rose Nursing Home, County Commissioners, Arrow Feed & Ranch, Accent Rock & Landscape Material, Architectural Landscape & Design, The Cutting Edge, Wal-Mart, Stuart Nursery, Turfgrass America, Martin's Business Supply, Texas Bank, Community Bank, Liberty Bank
4. List Source(s) of Funding:  
Member dues, Garden Tour, Hood County News, honorariums/gifts, Tarleton fall plant fair.
5. What was the annual budget for the Award year?  
\$3,500.00
6. What were the costs for the Award year?  
\$3,453.00
7. How many Master Gardeners participated in the programs or projects of the Association or Corporation.  
100% of our 55 members participated in various aspects of the Association activities.
8. What was the total number of hours volunteered by the Master Gardeners for the Award Year?  
9,062.5
9. Describe your best community activity, program, or project.  
Due to popular public demand, a Garden Tour was organized and offered to the public. Homes were selected, sponsors were obtained, fliers, tickets and publicity materials were written, printed and distributed. Members were trained as tour guides and they also assisted with proof reading, publicity and garden preparation. The tour netted more than \$4,000 and was attended by more than 800 people.
10. Describe your best internal activity, program, or project.  
We expanded our communications capabilities by developing a website for both members and the public. It is educational and informative. It has proven to be an excellent tool for administrative record keeping, publicity and distribution of horticulture information. It was developed and is administered 100% by members.

**Optional – One (1) page of narrative**

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