

**Texas Master Gardener Association
PROGRAM OR PROJECT AWARD**

Association Membership: Medium
(Small, Medium, or Large)

County: Hood
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City: Granbury, Texas Zip Code: 76048
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Program or Project Title: Granbury Garden Tour

Brief description of Program or Project entry: (150 words or less)

The Hood County Master Gardeners' **2003 Granbury Garden Tour** was the first public garden tour in Granbury. The educational tour featured six private gardens, owned by Master Gardeners, and the Demonstration Garden located at the extension grounds. Master Gardeners conducted tours through each garden and were available to answer questions. At least 25 plants in each garden were labeled and informational handouts including the history of each garden were available. During the first tour day the Extension Service sponsored a free seminar and gardening demonstrations at the Courthouse Gazebo where tickets were available. Tour proceeds were used for a scholarship fund and to benefit our community service projects. Homes on the tour ranged from a 46-acre ranch to a tree-filled suburban backyard. Gardens featured roses, annuals and perennials, native Texas plants, xeriscapes, ornamental grasses, ponds, wildlife habitats, a vineyard and vegetable, herb and cactus gardens.

Phyllis Webster and Jane McConal
Name of person submitting the nomination

Signature of County Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Please answer the following questions as they relate to the entry. **Do not exceed four (4) pages of questionnaire and one (1) page of narrative in relationship to your entry!**

I. Organization and Leadership (100 points)

1. Describe the Association or Corporation organization (individual or committee) for internal and external outreach Programs or Projects.
HCMGA appoints a projects chairperson each year to oversee our many projects. This person joins the Executive Committee in appointing chairpersons for each project. Each project is managed independently by the chairperson(s) with the guidance of the projects chairman, the Executive Committee and the extension agent. The leadership committee for the garden tour included: two co-chairmen, publicity chairman, printed material designers, sponsor solicitor and a chairperson to recruit personnel/equipment for each garden. All 55 members participated in some way.
2. Describe how the individual, committee or group determines the Programs or Projects for the calendar year.
All programs and projects are brought before the Executive Committee and membership for feedback and/or vote. Mary Lynn Martin suggested the garden tour as a fundraising project to the president and to the general membership during the October business meeting. Following positive response from members, Mary Lynn recruited the co-chairman and together they met with County Agent Marty Valenkamp for an initial planning session. Based on the success of Tarrant County's garden tour, and because our organization needed funds, HCMGA members were motivated to commit their time and knowledge to this fundraiser that would require assistance and support from all members.
3. What is the involvement of the Association or Corporation leaders?
All leaders play key roles in HCMGA projects. In this case, Bill Flusche, 2002 president, and Karen Bitnar, 2003 president, were kept abreast of activities related to the garden tour through telephone and e-mail correspondence. Phyllis Webster, who played a vital role as publicity chairman of the garden tour, was also chapter treasurer at the time. Full reports were given at business meetings.

4. What is the involvement of the membership?
Participation in projects varies according to need. The garden tour was one of the biggest endeavors ever undertaken by HCMGA. All members were involved with the garden tour.
5. What is the involvement of the Extension Office professional staff?
Agent Marty Valenkamp kept all state extension agents abreast of the tour. He also included tour information in his weekly radio broadcast and newspaper column. Secretary Annette Jackson coordinated ticket sales through the extension office. Annette filled mail requests for tickets and documented all sales and sites of sales requests. Approximately 10,000 copies of the informational handouts, brochures and tickets were made in the office.
6. What is the involvement of the county residents?
Many merchants on the Granbury historical square and several merchants on the main artery through Granbury displayed garden tour posters. The Convention and Visitor Bureau (C&VB) and the Chamber of Commerce donated extensive advertising to the project and sold tickets from their offices. Local merchants donated funds and services to the project. A large percentage of attendees were from Hood County.
7. What percentage of Programs or Projects is focused internally to increase the knowledge base of the Master Gardener members?
100 % of programs and/or projects are communicated to members during monthly business meetings and through the monthly newsletter. Participation is encouraged in all programs.
8. What percentage of the Programs or Projects is focused on providing educational information for local residents?
100 % - The focus of all HCMGA programs/projects is public education. Even the garden tour and JMG activities, which are geared toward entertaining participants, focus primarily on education.
9. Explain the process for selecting subjects, materials, sites, designs, modes or visual aids for Programs or Projects.
The process varies for each project. For the garden tour, the subject gardens were decided by popular vote of the general membership during a business meeting after a previous members-only tour. The committee determined other aspects of the garden tour.

II. Planning. (150 points)

1. What are the objectives or goals of the Programs or Projects?
The goals are education, fundraising, entertainment and awareness of the Master Gardener program. And, to establish a consumer base who will return to other HCMGA events.
2. How do you track and document the progress of objectives or goals to determine if they are being met?
We measured our success by attendance and monies raised as well as by the overwhelming positive feedback we received from sponsors and visitors. We documented the number of attendees, residences and comments as well as funds vs. expenses.
3. Is there a multi-year plan? (How many years?)
We plan to present a garden tour every other year.
4. Is there an annual, semi-annual or monthly planning session?
Planning sessions are held for all projects as needed. To date, we have had a semi-annual planning session for the next garden tour.
5. Identify the key participants involved in the planning process?
County agent, association president, chairman and co-chairman of the tour and publicity chairman.
6. How and from whom is final approval obtained to proceed with a Program or Project?
The Executive committee, general membership and the county agent share in the approval process through discussions and critiques.
7. Describe how additional talents are sought and utilized.
We solicit and utilize the talents of most of our members. In addition, our request to the C&VB and the Chamber of Commerce resulted in a cooperative relationship that has benefited all groups.

8. Describe any partnerships with organizations outside of the Master Gardener Association or Corporation for Programs or Projects.

We solicited sponsors to defray our costs. The sponsors benefited from tour publicity and advertising. We planned our tour to encourage visitors to spend a day or plan an overnight trip to Granbury in conjunction with the garden tour. The local newspaper The Hood County News gave the tour extensive publicity. The C&VB included the garden tour in advertising in Texas Highways, Texas Monthly and several regional newspapers. The Extension Agency provided educational speakers at the gazebo on the square where tickets were sold to attract visitors. The Chamber of Commerce and the C&VB sold tickets from their offices. The Chamber featured the tour on its marquee located on the main artery entering Granbury.

III. Work System (150 points)

1. How are the Association/Corporation members utilized in Programs or Projects?
All members are encouraged to participate. Members with specific talents or interests are especially utilized.
2. How are new members or interns encouraged to participate in the Programs or Projects?
They are informed and encouraged to participate by our mentors and meeting/newsletter announcements.
3. Explain how new methods, techniques and technologies are incorporated into the Programs or Projects. (Give an example.)
HCMGA is now utilizing the Internet for promotion of all our programs. The garden tour was posted on TXMGA and HCMGA web sites. E-mail communication with newspaper and magazine editors facilitated publicity.
4. Is special training encouraged to utilize new methods, techniques or technologies? (Give an example.)
One-on-one training on electronic equipment or use of our web site is available by request. The Internet was utilized to research biological names of plants listed on tour handouts.
5. Has your Association or Corporation developed any specialized training programs? (Give an example.)
Members are trained for individual projects on an as needed basis. For the garden tour, members were assigned to specific gardens and trained in advance so they could answer questions regarding plants, their culture and specifics about the gardens.
6. Is there an award program to recognize the work of the Programs or Projects personnel?
Nomination in the TXMG state competition and the TX Agents Conference.

IV. Critique and Review (100 points)

1. Is there a standardized procedure for review or critique? (Annual or monthly review, survey or documentation of user opinions)
Reviews are tailored to each project. We base our success on feedback, amount of monies raised and attendance. All of our projects and programs are critiqued at monthly meetings.
2. How does the committee determine if the Program or Project is providing educational material?
All programs are designed with education as a priority. For the garden tour, we provided educational handouts to all attendees and trained at least four MGs per garden to answer horticulture questions.
3. Explain how Programs or Projects are critiqued or accessed to determine improvements in subjects, materials, sites, designs, modes or visual aids.
All aspects of the garden tour were critiqued during a tour committee meeting after the tour. Visitor feedback was shared. These comments were documented and are available to the membership. The county agent and HCMGA president attended the meeting.
4. What role does the membership provide for accessing the effectiveness of information intended for Master Gardener continuing education? (Internal education)
Their feedback is solicited at all meetings, during programs or events and on our web site.

5. What role do the community residents provide in accessing the effectiveness of information intended for the education of the general public? (External education)
Comments from the public are the primary means of accessing the effectiveness of our work. The publicity chairman and co-chairman met with the C&VB director and marketing manager after the tour to critique the event.
6. Describe how the committee determines if the Program or Project is reaching the intended audience.
Attendance exceeded our expectations indicating that our advance publicity reached the intended audience. We also gathered word-of-mouth observations by talking with visitors or in some cases, by sign-in sheets at the gardens. Master Gardeners working the tour made an effort to learn where visitors came from, how they learned of the tour and their specific gardening interests. Most visitors were very informative.

V. Program or Project Entry (500 points)

1. What are the key objectives of this Program or Project?
Education, Entertainment, Fundraising, Increased Awareness
2. Describe the target audience for this Program or Project?
Adults and young adults who are interested in protecting the environment while beautifying their surroundings.
3. When was it first started?
2003
4. If a Program, how many times was it presented in this Award year?
Once
5. If a Project, how many locations were established?
Seven - six private residences and one public demonstration garden. Also, speakers made presentations at the gazebo at the county courthouse.
6. Describe outside partners and their role in the production of this project.
Sponsors underwrote the cost of the event in exchange for publicity. They also provided supplies, etc. Local and regional publications gave the tour extensive publicity by using our photographs and articles. The C&VB and Chamber of Commerce sold tickets and helped advertise the event. Local merchants displayed our posters. A local business printed our posters. The extension office printed our flyers, tickets and brochures.
7. What is the annual budget for this Program or Project?
\$3,000.
8. What were the costs for this Award year for this Program or Project?
The costs were \$971.08, which was covered by sponsor donations.
9. How was this Program or Project funded?
Funds were budgeted from HCMGA but donations from local businesses covered all expenses.
10. How many Master Gardeners were involved in the Program or Project?
One Hundred percent or all 55 of members were involved in the garden tour.
11. How many volunteer hours were contributed in the Program or Project?
3394.25 hours
12. Has this Program or Project won any awards outside of your organization? (Include past TMGA awards.)
No, this is the first nomination for this project.

Optional – One (1) page of narrative.

Narrative

PROGRAM OR PROJECT AWARD

The Granbury Garden Tour was more successful than anyone expected it could be. We credit its success to the dedication and tenacity of the tour committee, the County Agent, Granbury Convention and Visitor Bureau (C&VB), Chamber of Commerce, local merchants and citizens and because of the hard work by HCMGA members.

Our sponsor solicitor was professional and well organized when she approached local merchants to ask for their support. Her initial visit included a contract stating levels of sponsorship, benefits of each level and a brochure describing the tour. Although we budgeted \$3000 from the Association treasury, sponsor donations covered all expenses. We raised \$4000 to establish scholarships for horticulture students at Tarrant County College Northwest Campus, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University or Tarleton University. Students must be residents of Hood, Parker, Johnson, Somervell or Erath counties, the counties where our sponsors are located.

C&VB included the garden tour in ads in Texas Highways, Texas Monthly and several regional newspapers. They also included photographs of our gardens on their web site. Because of our early contacts with the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* the tour was listed in a popular "Where to Go" column. The local newspaper and cable TV channel gave the tour extensive coverage.

Local merchants displayed tour posters in their businesses. HCMGA members created the logo and all artwork for tickets, brochures, posters and directional signs. The Hood County Agent sent garden tour notices to all other county agents and also a reminder as the date drew near. He included the tour in his weekly newspaper column and radio broadcast. Our tour brochure included a ticket request form to be mailed to the extension office. County Extension secretary Annette Jackson filled ticket requests and documented sites of requests.

We donated two tickets as door prizes at a Lake Granbury Newcomers Club meeting. We distributed brochures to club members as they left the building.

Turfgrass America distributed our brochures at its booth at a local home and garden show. Tarrant County Master Gardeners generously donated space in their exhibit at the Neil Sperry Garden Show to display our tour brochures. And, they graciously responded to our requests for garden tour advice.

Tickets were on sale at the C&VB, Chamber of Commerce and courthouse gazebo during the tour. County extension agent Marty Vahlenkamp arranged for professionals to speak at the gazebo during the first tour day. An A&M professor talked about fire ant control, a Texas Forest Bureau representative spoke on oak wilt and Vahlenkamp talked about turf grass.

Manpower was our biggest obstacle during the tour. With seven locations to staff, it was difficult to supply enough helpers at each location. We had to solicit help from spouses, neighbors and friends at several sites. We were fortunate though to have interns who were eager to fulfill volunteer requirements by working the tour. Many interns worked in the demonstration garden prior to the tour and assisted with leading the tour at several homes. These interns met with their assigned garden owner for a pre-tour where handouts were provided that included at least 25 plants identified and a history of the garden. These handouts were given to tour visitors also.

All HCMGA members were invited to a pre-tour two days before the big weekend. This gave each homeowner an opportunity to see other gardens on the tour. The positive response from tour visitors was outstanding. Many people thanked us for having the tour and sharing our gardens and knowledge. The extension office is still receiving requests for another Granbury Garden Tour.