

Texas Master Gardener Association

PROJECT AWARD

Association Membership: Medium

Date: Jan 15, 2005

(Small, Medium, or Large)

County: Hood

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Project Title: Hood County Library Landscape

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

At the request of The Friends of the Library (FL), a non-profit volunteer support group for the Hood County Library, the Hood County Master Gardeners (HCMG) agreed to provide technical planning to update the library landscape which had deteriorated in the seven years since it's installation in conjunction with construction of the new library wing. The project would be totally funded by the FL and was initially thought to be a multi year project, consistent with cash flow, addressing each side of the building one at a time. The project co-chairmen and the president of the FL chose, in the planning phase, to design and implement all three primary sides if enough volunteer labor and materials could be obtained to keep the project within the approved 2004 budget. The challenge was there. It was late March and the approaching Texas summer was no time to be rebuilding a landscape.

W.G. Jerry Lowe

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 two (2) pages of questionnaire.**

I. Organization and Leadership (150 Points)

1. Describe the Association or Corporation organizational structure for the Project Committee.

HCMG 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 Executive Committee and the Extension Agent

2. Describe how the individual, committee or group determines the Projects for the calendar year.

Community needs or requests for projects are brought before the Executive Board and membership for vote.

3. What are the objectives or goals of the Projects?

Projects are selected to: (1) provide educational information to local residents, (2) increase the knowledge base of Master Gardeners, (3) increase awareness of the Master Gardeners' function, (4) provide funds for other non-self supporting projects, and (5) generally benefit the community.

4. How does the committee determine if the Project is providing educational material?

Both internal and external educational opportunities are primary considerations in project selection

5. What is the involvement of the membership?

Participation in projects varies according to needs. Our organization is presently involved in more than 12 projects with varying subjects and degrees of mental and/or physical activity required. Members have the opportunity to choose with which projects they wish to become deeply involved or leave for other members.

- **Describe how additional talents are sought and utilized**

Each project is explained to the membership and interested members are asked to join that committee. A Chairperson or persons are selected on their ability to complete that project and they in turn select members to fulfill specific tasks.

- **How are new members or interns encouraged to participate in the Projects?**

HCMG use the mentor/mentee process. New members are highly valued for their fresh ideas and enthusiasm. The co-chairmen of this project had just completed their internship in November 2003, four months prior to this position.

6. What is the involvement of the Extension Office professional staff?

The County Extension agent reviews all potential projects. He critiques the project plan and verifies the responsibilities of the volunteers as understood with whomever they are partnering.

7. Explain the process for selecting the Projects.

Members of the community make requests of our organization. The request is channeled through the Extension Agent and the Executive Committee who will then present to the membership if the project is felt to be of educational value and doable.

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

No permanent partnerships exist; however, many local organizations and businesses always step forward for special needs. Please refer to response II, 6.

II. Project Entry (150 Points)

1. What are the key objectives of this Project?

The key objectives were to demonstrate appropriate use of ornamental plants and provide specific plant information while enhancing the library visitors' experience.

2. Describe the target audience for this Project?

While all who visit the library enjoy the inviting nature of the landscape, novice home flower gardeners benefit most.

3. Describe how the committee determines if the Project is reaching the intended audience.

Visitors must pass through one of three gardens to enter the library. Library staff has forwarded many comments from visitors since its completion.

4. Is there a standardized procedure for review or critique? (Annual or monthly review, survey or documentation of user opinions)

This was a rapid, short-term project with no formal in process reviews or after projects survey conducted.

5. How many times was it presented in this Award year?

The garden area is an ongoing display seen by all passers-by daily.

6. Describe the role of outside partners in this project.

Materials and labor were provided or discounted by concrete contractors, rock and landscape materials dealers, yard art dealers, plant suppliers and community service workers. Master Gardeners participated, coordinated and supervised.

7. How many Master Gardeners were involved in this Project?

Twenty-seven Master Gardeners participated.

8. How many volunteer hours were contributed in this Project?

HCMG contributed two hundred sixty-eight (268) hours with another seventy-three (73) hours from community support.

9. Has this Project previously been submitted to TMGA? If yes, explain the changes that were made in this submission.

This project has not been previously submitted.

III. Project Entry (700 Points)

The Hood County library has been in operation since 1965 with a major wing added in 1977 which tripled its size. The initial landscape was composed of perimeter plantings of crepe myrtles and mixed shrubs. The subsequent years took their toll as the shrubs became overgrown, liriopie filled in some beds and a few rose bushes took over vehicle parking spaces.

When the Friends of the Library approached our organization for advice on the renovation of the library's landscaping, we were excited with the prospects of developing a pleasing and inviting environment for library users. The HCMG also recognized that the Hood County Library was arguably the most frequently visited location by a very diverse cross section of the county residents. As such, it proved an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate and educate both young and old alike in proper plant selection and placement for both sunny and heavily shaded areas. Over fifty varieties of plants are identified by both plant labels in the gardens and on a self-guided walking tour map available at the library desk. The finished gardens have drawn residents to sit and relax, have lunch or read at the tables and benches that are intrinsic to the gardens. Library staff has forwarded many compliments not just on the visual aspects of the new gardens but the labeling of the plants and the walk through map.

Each of the three sides has a distinctly different theme and character. The south entrance, which is used primarily by the library staff and a few patrons, is the most heavily shaded and the most underutilized. It is the quiet, secluded area, away from the city street and on the opposite side from the main parking lot. Two round picnic tables, for quiet lunches or informal chats under the tree canopy, is the focal point of this area. The planting beds flow from the entrance walk, around the tables, and finally sweeping out, peninsula-like 25 feet from the building and planted with wax myrtles to screen the area from street traffic. The west end provides the entrance to the original building, 25 feet from the street, partially shaded and seldom used. A herb garden now fills this small area. The north side (the main entrance) faces the asphalt parking lot, receives the most sun, provides a generous 23' by 48' area for development. The north side is our four-season garden providing color and coverage all year.

The project has been so well received by the community that the Lake Granbury Area Beautification Council has asked us to coordinate all of their projects in the coming years, beginning with a "makeover" of LaRoe Park in 2005, thus expanding the impact and presence of the HCMG for years to come!

Attached is a photo of the Hood County Library's new informational tri-fold proudly displaying the three gardens and a few photos of the initial condition, in-process work and the finished gardens.