

Texas Master Gardener Association
INDIVIDUAL MASTER GARDENER AWARD

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

Date: Jan 20, 2006

County: Hood
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Name of Nominee: Phyllis Webster

Brief Description of Individual Master Gardener Entry: (150 words or less)

Phyllis, our current Master Gardener of the Year, became a Hood County Master Gardener in 2000 and has been a major contributor to a majority of our projects and has often served as officer or chairperson. She is an excellent leader and fills the role of assistant equally well. Her enthusiasm and support of the Master Gardener program is outstanding. At every opportunity, she uses her professional expertise to educate the public about horticulture and Master Gardeners. The award-winning weekly newspaper column she writes reaches 20,000+ community members, teaching them best practices in Texas gardening. Every document she produces, speech she presents or garden she tends is evidence of her professionalism and perfectionism. Through all her dedicated work, she remains friendly and cooperative and demonstrates a wonderful sense of humor. Her generosity is obvious in the ways she educates the public, accepts requests to work on projects and helps others.

Jane McConal
Signature of person submitting the nomination

Marty Vahlenkamp
Signature of County Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Please answer the following questions as they relate to the nominee. **Do not exceed two (2) pages of questionnaire.**
Note: A photo of the nominee must be submitted with this submission.

I. Organization and Leadership Qualities. (500 Points)

1. List and describe any programs or projects in which the nominee participates, including any leadership roles assumed.

Phyllis has been selected as our 2005 Master Gardener of the Year due to dedication and service in the following areas:

As a Hood County Master Gardener member she:

- Served two years as: Treasurer, Executive Committee member, Budget and phone committee member.
- Chaired Fossil Rim Wildlife Park Greenhouse Project — a renovation of a greenhouse and surrounding park into a walk-through educational exhibit.
- Chaired the Fall Plant Show, an educational exhibit /fundraiser featuring professional horticulture speakers.
- Fielded calls from the Extension office and assisted homeowners on-site with landscaping and plant problems.
- Helped organize and develop the 2003 and 2005 HCMG Garden Tours, chairing publicity for advertising, printing and educational handouts. Her gardens were also featured on both tours.
- Worked with the HCMG Demonstration Garden and with the Mentor Program.
- Served on Award Nomination Committee and the writing and editing of nominations.

In Publicity she:

- Researched and wrote more than 200 published columns of **Garden Patch**, an informative horticultural feature in The Hood County News.
- Was editor, writer, photographer and member of the steering committee for HCMG's **Fall Favorites** and **Spring & Summer Favorites** educational books with CDs featuring native and adapted plants for Hood County.

In Community Service she:

- Served on the HCMG Speakers Bureau, giving speeches on Landscape Design, Wildlife Habitat and as a certified Firewise Landscape Specialist gave Firewise Landscaping presentations.
- Used her certified Backyard Wildlife Habitats and Butterfly Habitats gardens for educational tours and lectures
- Chaired the LaRoe Park Project, a joint HCMG & Lake Granbury Beautification Committee to re-develop a local park that will feature theme gardens and a learning center.
- Instituted a partnership with the Granbury Chamber of Commerce resulting in HCMG Chamber membership with all its promotional benefits in exchange for landscaping tasks at the Chamber site.
- Served on the County Library landscape committee designing gardens, selecting and installing plants and developing an educational handout detailing the Library's new garden plants.
- Served on the County Courthouse Project Committee which provides landscape maintenance.
- Worked with Habitat for Humanity, a partnership where HCMG donates a tree and an educational horticulture guide.

2. Explain how the nominee participates in leadership and/or operation of the Association or Corporation.

Phyllis served two terms as Treasurer while also serving on the Executive Committee and chairing the Budget Committee. She frequently chairs or co-chairs major projects and thus acts as a key leader in this association (see #1).

3. How does the nominee solicit input/ideas from the membership and/or Extension personnel?

Phyllis requests input/ideas from members during monthly meetings, committee gatherings and personal discussions with other Master Gardeners. She creates and distributes questionnaires to members requesting feedback and information for her weekly newspaper articles and projects she is working on. She also consults with Extension personnel and draws from their experiences and knowledge.

4. Describe the leadership style, philosophy, and social abilities related to working individual and in groups with fellow Master Gardeners and Extension personnel?

Phyllis is an extremely thorough researcher and is friendly, energetic and considerate of others. These traits are obvious in her leadership style, philosophy and social abilities. She studies requirements for a project and becomes well versed on the subject. She presents her findings to members in a straight forward, easy to understand manner. She asks for help from others in accomplishing project goals and is receptive to their opinions.

5. Describe any activities in which the nominee participates which helps promote the County Master Gardener program and/or Texas Cooperative Extension.

The project Phyllis heads that most promotes MGs/Extension is the **Garden Patch** column. It is published weekly in the Hood County News and is the centerpiece of the paper's horticultural section. It is read by more than 20,000 subscribers, as well as by visitors to the HC News and HCMG's web site. Another project chaired by her, Fossil Rim, resulted in the creation of a unique exhibit on Texas native plants that is visited by thousands annually. She chaired publicity efforts for both HCMG's Garden Tours. Her publicity generated exposure for the MG program statewide, including articles in major newspapers and magazines, regional radio and local cable television. As a Firewise Landscape Specialist, she educates the public on fire safety and familiarizes them with the partnership between MGs and the Texas Forest Service. She has formed valuable community alliances including a relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and the Beautification Council. Her research, editing, photography and writing skills were employed to help produce two educational publications with CDs, **Fall Favorites** and **Spring & Summer Favorites**, which promote MGs for their horticultural expertise. Phyllis promotes MGs when she addresses the public and fields questions as a Speakers Bureau member. She represented MGs as a member of the Granbury Nature Center Board of Directors.

6. Describe any activities in which the nominee participates which helps secure or maintain organizational support and partnership for the County Master Gardener program and/or Texas Cooperative Extension (note: support includes financial, cooperative efforts, in-kind service).

Phyllis writes a weekly gardening column, for which the HCMGs organization receives payment. She initiated a Chamber of Commerce partnership where MGs perform annual landscape maintenance in exchange for membership and benefits, including mention of MG projects in printed and online newsletters. Phyllis secured participation of the Granbury Art Association for the 2005 Garden Tour. She obtained a local artist to supply artwork for the tour poster and arranged for a graphic artist to design tour brochures and posters. She helped promote sponsors for the garden tour. She chaired or participated in many projects that were associated with local partners including the Granbury Nature Center, Fossil Rim Park, LaRoe Park and the Hood County Library.

II. Individual Qualities (500 Points)

1. Describe why the nominee should be considered for the State Master Gardener of the Year award.

Her generosity, loyalty and dedication are superior. She is always aware of HCMG goals and continually strives to approach projects with those goals and public education in mind. Phyllis accepts participation in projects while at the same time donating many hours to community projects and maintaining her own public relations firm.

2. List any awards or special recognition the nominee has received, including through other organizations.

- First and second place TMGA state awards in multimedia, publication and project categories for **Garden Patch**, **Fall Favorites** and **Fossil Rim**
- A Certified Firewise Landscape Specialist
- Twice named HCMG Master Gardener of the Month in 2005
- Received several professional writing awards
- Selected as our 2005 Master Gardener of the Year

3. Describe any activities in which the nominee contributed to the education or knowledge base of Master Gardeners at the county, area or state levels.

Wrote and edited **Garden Patch**, **Fall Favorites** and **Spring & Summer Favorites**. Developed Firewise Landscaping, landscape design and wildlife habitat presentations. Wrote articles on Firewise Landscaping. Wrote releases/handouts for Nature Center, Library and Garden Tours. Worked on seminars, Fall Plant Show, Speakers Bureau and Fossil Rim Project.

4. Describe any activities in which the nominee contributed to the education of the residents of the county.

Authoring the weekly **Garden Patch** newspaper column, her group presentations on Firewise Landscaping along with other horticultural topics and her handling of informational request phone calls with the Extension office are her effort to educate and help residents of the community.

5. Describe any expertise the nominee contributed to the Master Gardener Association, Extension, other organizations, or county residents.

Certified Firewise Landscape Specialist, professional writer, editor, photographer and public relations specialist.

6. Hours Contributed for this award year:

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