

**Texas Master Gardener Association
2006 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AWARD**

Association Membership/Size: Medium (Small, Medium, or Large)
Number of Members: 53



County: Hood County

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Educational Program Title: *EarthKind™ Gardening and More*

Mary Lynn Martin

Signature of person submitting the nomination

Marty Vahlenkamp

Signature of County Extension Agent or County Program Coordinator

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

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (50 pts)

In 150 words or less please describe the publication.

The *EarthKind™ Gardening and More* seminar addressed current environmental landscape issues, such as drought and extreme temperatures. The day's schedule began with two keynote speakers whose topics were:

- EarthKind™ Gardening, which outlined the fundamentals for making wise plant choices based on environmental conditions, offered solutions to tough gardening problems and explained the environmental benefits of adopting EarthKind™ Gardening methods, and
- Ornamental Grasses, which illustrated ways to use and maintain grasses in successful landscapes.

After the keynote sessions, the following four breakout sessions addressed specific areas of EarthKind™ Gardening:

- Vegetable Gardening in Small Spaces, which focused on reducing water, fertilizer and pesticide use and making use of yard wastes,
- EarthKind™ Roses, which focused on growing these tough, environmentally responsible roses,
- North Central Texas Trees, which outlined the benefits of growing native and well-adapted trees, and
- Eight demonstrations, which featured numerous aspects of EarthKind™ Gardening.

II. QUESTIONNAIRE (200 Points)

Please answer the following questions as they relate to the entry for the award year.

Planning (50 points)

1. What is the clientele need for the educational program, and how was it determined?

Due to the hot, dry weather of the last two years, the Extension agent's office received a large volume of calls related to environmental plant problems. To best answer these questions, Master Gardeners (MGs) needed to have current information. To meet the needs of MGs and the community, MGs worked with the Extension agent to develop an educational seminar focusing on EarthKind™ Gardening.

2. Who is the target audience for the educational program?

The target audience was MGs and homeowners in Hood and surrounding counties.

3. What is/are the objective(s) of the educational program?

The objectives of the educational program were to teach:

- EarthKind™ Gardening techniques,
- The benefits gained by practicing EarthKind™ Gardening, and
- Ways to enhance landscapes by using environmentally friendly plants.

4. How does the educational program support the mission of Texas Cooperative Extension?

The mission of Texas Cooperative Extension is to distribute horticultural information to individuals and groups in the community and to develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture. The *EarthKind™ Gardening and More* seminar addressed the community's need to learn how to develop successful landscapes when faced with environmental challenges. Participants received a wealth of information that they could share with friends, neighbors, fellow MGs and landscape professionals. Wise plant selection and careful attention to improving environmental conditions through soil preparation, proper after-planting care, and efficient irrigation practices were addressed. Demonstrations that utilized display boards, hands-on activities and handouts reinforced the ideas presented by the speakers and provided additional educational information on EarthKind™ Gardening practices. MGs were on hand to answer questions.

Development of the Educational Program (50 points)

5. How many Master Gardeners were involved in developing the educational program?

Thirty-six Master Gardeners helped to develop the educational program.

6. How many Master Gardener volunteer hours were contributed in developing the educational program?

There were 333.5 volunteer hours contributed to develop the *EarthKind™ Gardening and More* seminar.

7. Describe the roles Master Gardeners served in developing the educational program (i.e., development, presentation, registration, promotion. No names of Master Gardeners should be mentioned).

- After MGs voted to hold an educational seminar, The Vice President of Programs formed 19 committees to direct seminar development and implementation.
- The facilities committee selected an easily accessible seminar site, which provided adequate facilities.
- The speakers committee consulted with the Extension agent regarding speaker selection. Care was taken to select speakers who would address issues relating to environmentally stressed landscapes. The committee confirmed speakers and topics and developed a seminar schedule.

Additional roles filled by committee members were:

- Registration: developed forms, procedures and a brochure to publicize the event.
- Publicity: sent press releases, articles and pamphlets to mass media, MG web sites, area businesses, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce and civic/garden clubs. Committee members attended MG meetings in four surrounding counties.
- Door prizes: solicited items and collected them.
- Food: made arrangements for catered lunches and refreshments.
- Photography: took photos of all aspects of the seminar.
- Logistics: developed a plan for set-up and breakdown of rooms, equipment.
- Seminar packets: prepared folders containing seminar schedule, speaker information and evaluation sheets.
- Speaker introduction: assigned MGs to welcome, introduce and assist speakers.
- Welcome bags: collected donated items and assembled bags.

8. How was Texas Cooperative Extension personnel involved in developing the educational program?
The Extension agent suggested speakers, helped with room arrangements, visited with attendees and assisted speakers. The Extension office secretary helped with early registration, answered questions and copied materials.
9. How was the use of accurate, research based information assured/insured in the content of the educational program?
(i.e. TCE personnel, outside sources, etc.)
Each speaker had a background that included horticultural/agricultural degrees or Master Gardener certification. All speakers had the approval of the Extension agent.
10. Were any other organizations involved in the sponsorship or development of the educational program? If yes, describe their involvement. No
11. If funding was needed for the educational program, how was it acquired?
Funds from a MG plant sale initially funded the seminar. However, registration fees covered all incurred expenses.
12. In addition to the above comments, describe any other involvement the Master Gardener organization had in developing the educational program?
MGs developed demonstrations illustrating aspects of EarthKind™ Gardening — composting, Firewise landscaping, entomology, plant propagation, square foot gardening and WaterWise landscaping. The demonstrations constituted the seminar's fourth breakout session.

Implementation (50 points)

13. Describe the format of the educational program?
The format for the *EarthKind™ Gardening and More* seminar was as follows:
- Registration
 - Speaker, EarthKind™ Gardening
 - Speaker, Ornamental Grasses
 - Lunch
 - Breakout Sessions — Attendees were divided into four groups. Each group had a host MG who guided them to each of the four sessions. The host introduced the speakers in the breakout sessions. One of the four sessions consisted of the following demonstrations:
 - Heirloom Bulbs-Southern Bulb Company,
 - Composting,
 - Firewise Landscaping,
 - Good Bugs-Bad Bugs,
 - Oak Wilt,
 - Vegetative Plant Propagation,
 - Square Foot Gardening with living plants in a life-size demonstration, and
 - WaterWise Landscaping.
14. How many people attended the educational program? 111 people attended the seminar.
15. How many times was the educational program given? The seminar lasted one day.
16. Were handouts provided to those participating in the educational program? If so, what handouts were distributed and where were the handouts obtained?
During registration, each person received a folder containing the schedule for the day, information about the speakers and an evaluation sheet. Each speaker brought handouts, which were distributed before each lecture. At all demonstration sites, handouts were available on tables.
17. How was the educational program promoted?
The seminar was publicized in the local newspaper, on local television and radio, in the Chamber of Commerce electronic newsletter and on Texas MG websites. MGs took pamphlets to businesses, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, organizations, churches and MG meetings in four surrounding counties.

Evaluation (50 points)

18. How were the educational program and its impact evaluated?

The Extension agent prepared a two-page evaluation, which was placed in each participant’s seminar registration packet. During the last rotation of breakout sessions, the MGs monitoring the sessions asked that evaluations be filled out and left in designated areas.

19. To what degree did the educational program meet the intended objective(s)?

100% (61 of 61)) of the participants surveyed indicated that the program increased their understanding of the benefits of practicing EarthKind™ Gardening.

20. Describe any plans to revise, expand, or reprint the educational program? How would this be funded?

MGs will review the seminar evaluations to determine any changes for a future program. Plans being discussed include adding more speakers, demonstrations and vendors related to the chosen topics. Proceeds from a spring plant sale will fund the next educational seminar.

21. Has this educational program won any previous TMGA awards? If yes, explain the changes that were made to this educational program.

Yes, a previous seminar won an award. Changes were:

- Topic: This seminar dealt with a different topic.
- Speakers: The previous seminar featured only 3 speakers, rather than this seminar’s 2 featured speakers and 4 breakout sessions with speakers. This year’s seminar had 3 additional speakers and 8 demonstrations.

III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AWARD (250 Points)

Judges will assign these points based on how the entry itself compares to the other entries received in this category. Points will be based on the following considerations.

		Points Awarded	Possible Points
	Accuracy of information		50
	Timeliness and usefulness to the intended audience		50
	Achievement of the entry’s intended objectives		50
	Quality of execution: well planned, promoted and attended.		50
	Evaluation process		50
	TOTAL		250

EarthKind™ Gardening and More



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