

**Texas Master Gardener Association  
2007 MASS MEDIA AWARD**



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

Number of Members: 45

County: Hood

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Project Title: Garden Patch Newspaper Column

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Name(s) of person(s) submitting the nomination e-mail

Marty Vahlenkamp  
Name of County Extension Agent or County Program Coordinator

**THIS SUBMISSION SHALL NOT EXCEED TWO (2) PAGES TOTAL.**

**I. DESCRIPTION OF THE MASS MEDIA (10 pts) Points \_\_\_\_\_**  
**In 150 words or less please describe the mass media.**

*Garden Patch* is a weekly educational column written by a Lake Granbury Master Gardener for the Hood County News, a newspaper with a circulation of 30,500 plus an online audience. The column answers questions and provides information regarding best horticultural, environmental and landscaping practices specific to Hood County. Columns appear on Saturdays (51 published in 2007) and are 800-1,000 words in length with an accompanying photo. The LGMG website address and phone number are included so that the public may seek further information. Content is determined by public interest and MG/Extension goals and objectives. In 2007, content often focused on pertinent environmental/Extension issues, such as a series on rainwater harvesting and stormwater management. A major publicity tool, the column references MG/Extension activities, which are featured in stories published on the same Horticulture page.

**Please answer the questions as they relate to the 2007 entry year.  
VALUE 10 POINTS EACH**

**1. Who was/is the target audience for the mass media entry? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

The audience includes: 1) residents of Hood and surrounding counties that have basic to advanced gardening skills, 2) citizens living in an environmentally sensitive area who need information on best horticultural/environmental practices, and 3) people interested in gardening/landscaping primarily for recreation or property enhancement.

**2. What is/are the objective(s) of the entry? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

1) The column's primary objective is education. Informative and entertaining, *Garden Patch* engages readers by giving them useful tips and persuades them to utilize the best horticulture/environmental principles. 2) The secondary objective is to further the goals of the Extension/MG program and to publicize programs/activities. 3) *Garden Patch* is also designed to educate in a manner and format that is easily obtained and easily understood.

**3. How many Master Gardeners were involved and how many volunteer hours were reported in 2007 with this entry? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

One MG researches, writes and edits the articles. MGs (5-10) with specific expertise are regularly consulted and they review articles. It took 216.75 hours to produce *Garden Patch* in 2007.

**4. How was TCE involved? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

The TCE accepts/records calls from the public in response to the column. The agent publishes a community education plan in conjunction with MGs each year and the columns specifically promote/amplify/educate the public regarding the issues/activities included in each plan.

**5. How was accuracy of information assured? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

Resources include Texas A&M or other accredited university horticultural publications/websites. At least 2-3 sources are consulted per article. Sources are often referenced for follow-up. The Extension agent and fellow MGs review articles.

**6. Were any other organizations involved? Describe. Points \_\_\_\_\_**

The Hood County News publishes the *Garden Patch* column on their Horticulture page.

**7. How and where was entry distributed? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

The column is published in the HC News every Saturday and distributed to subscribers by carrier, mail and online. A "plus" edition is mailed to non-subscribers and the paper is available in stores and on newsstands. Columns are also posted in the County Annex for public viewing.

**8. How many copies were distributed? Points \_\_\_\_\_**

The newspaper/plus has a weekly combined circulation of 30,500 in Hood/surrounding counties.

**9. Explain how the entry met the objective. Points \_\_\_\_\_**

1) Published weekly, *Garden Patch* educates by offering timely tips, in-depth subject matter, sources for continued study and a phone number/website for questions. 2) The column often covers subjects that are the focus of upcoming MG/Extension activities, such as the three-part series on stormwater management and an article on EarthKind™ Roses prior to the group's rainwater harvesting class and the opening of the MG demonstration garden, which features a rainwater harvesting system and rose trial garden. The column helps boost attendance at events. 3) *Garden Patch* is written in simple, easily understood language. Photos grab attention and invite readership. The public has easy access to this widely distributed newspaper and its website.

**Judges comments:**