



# Garden Chatter

*A Quarterly Newsletter for Walker County Master Gardeners!*



**A Quarterly Newsletter**

**December 2007**

**Announcements**

*Fall Plant Sale*  
*Community Events*  
*Steering Committee*  
**Page 2**

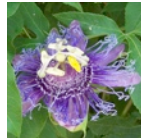


**In The Garden**

*Demo Garden*  
**Page 3**

**Articles**

*WCMGA History*  
*In the News*  
**Page 4**



**Closing Remarks**

*December Article*  
*Calendar*  
*Closing Statement*  
**Page 5**

**Contacts**

*Executive Board*  
*Extension Office*  
**Page 6**



## President's Message

As the year ends I am pleased to say we have fulfilled most of what we set out to do in 2007 and then some. We added several new additions to the Demo Gardens, automatic water systems and have restructured internal operation procedures. Along with all the accomplishments this year we are applying for a \$39,000 grant from H-GAC for an Outdoor Education Facility and Restrooms.

I would like to thank the 34 volunteers who helped with our Fall Plant Sale and Garage Sale. Under the supervision of Rhonda Hanks and Linda Moore we met our budget and we will be able to finish a couple more projects, one being a split rail fence around the perimeter of the gardens and a composting shed at the back of the greenhouse. Before our Fall Sale we had two very well received seminars, one on Landscaping with Shrubs, by Rhonda Hanks and Jean McLaren and the other on Fruit Trees

and Berries, by Jim Kamas, Gillespie County Extension Agent. Along with these outreach seminars, several other Master Gardeners have presented programs in the community. Jean Marsh, Billie Lee and Dian Herrod presented "Colonial Herbs" for the Colonial Dames of the Seventeenth Century. Marion Czaja and I did a presentation for the Audubon Society on hummingbirds. Jean McLaren and Rhonda Hanks presented a demonstration on pocket gardening to the Tri-County Diggers Garden Club. Billie Lee and I gave a herb presentation to the Leon County Master Gardener Association after which the group attended an herb class by Jean Marsh. Jean Marsh also did a presentation for the Walker County 4H Food Club on "Things to do with Herbs." The latest presentation was to the Retired Teachers Group entitled "Pesto and Pasta" given by Jean Marsh, Sandy Tykol, Billie Lee and Jean McLaren. We also have had several great informative programs during our monthly meetings. In October EMT Jason Thompson gave a safety program and

in November Bobby Oates spoke on worm composting.

Surprise! We have a web site with a new look, current photos, a monthly calendar and more! Thanks to Bernie Polega, our talented web site chairman and his committee, Dan Tippen and Bob Robinson, our MG information is available any time you log on. Way to go Bernie! Check out the site!  
[walkercountymastergardeners.org](http://walkercountymastergardeners.org)

As the year has passed I am truly grateful for the help you have given me as your president. This has been an exciting and challenging year and we are fortunate to have success minded members that have worked hard over the years to help form an organization that has built respect within the community. Our volunteers are extremely important to the success of the Master Gardener Program and I thank you all for your continued support and dedication to the association.

See you in the Gardens.....Sandy



## MG Fall Plant Sale Volunteers!

### Fall Plant Sale



The Fall plant sale was very successful and I want to thank everyone who helped. Walker County Master Gardeners are a great group of volunteers and it shows. The plant sale would not happen without all of the wonderful people who work so hard. I don't believe that we can ever say THANK YOU enough. Our goal was \$8,000 and we met that and then some. The garage sale generated around \$650 for the hospitality committee. So enjoy the upcoming holidays and then we can start gearing up for the Spring Sale! Thank you!

*Rhonda*

### Community Events



WCMGA needs a motto like the Postal Service. You know, the thing about delivering the mail no matter what the weather?! It drizzled and rained from time to time, but did not dampen the spirit and enthusiasm of our Master Gardeners.

Tina was at our designated space at 6:30 a.m on Saturday and was joined by Paul Culp, Rhonda Hanks, and Jean McLaren. MG volunteers showed up all day to help spread the word about LEAF-PRO and all the good works we do through WCMGA. Thank you for making a difference in Walker County.

### Steering Committee



The Steering Committee, consisting of Lois Friday, Pat Harte, Jessie Grant, Jim Miller, Dian Herrod, Bernie Polega, Marion Czaja and Billie Lee are in the process of planning the Master Gardener Training Class of 2008. Every effort is being made to insure that Interns receive expert training in a wide range of horticultural topics. This 16-week program, which begins on January 17, 2008, will feature educational classes presented by specialists in their respective fields and tours that will be beneficial as well as interesting. Registration has begun and will be limited to 30 persons



### *Demonstration Garden*

This fall saw our gardens in full bloom with butterflies galore. The passion vines, milkweed and a few other host plants are covered with caterpillars. Gulf Fritillaries, Sulfurs, Swallowtails, Monarchs and many small varieties of butterflies abound in the gardens. Fish were put into our water feature and disappeared after several days. We all thought a predator got to them. Several weeks later they reappeared, they had been hiding. If you want to see them there is dog food in the greenhouse, toss 4-5 pieces into the water and walk away, come back in five minutes and there they are.

We all survived the extended Plant

Sale! During the sale I had many people comment on the beauty of the gardens. Your hard work and care with plantings have made our proposed showpiece a reality. Thank you all!



The last projects on the capital projects list are compost shed, split rail fence, cemetery, and a sump pump for the rain garden. The success of the Fall Plant Sale has allowed us to continue. The composting shed is under

construction, it will be followed by the fence around the gardens. If time allows we will get the headstones made and complete the cemetery after the first of the year. The sump pump for the rain garden has been moved to a grant request.

We have a shade house to take down and the larger one put up. This is not a large job and will be done when we have enough people on a workday. The class beds are scheduled to be cleaned the first of December and will be moved to a new location to allow for an outdoor learning center and water harvesting tank. Again thank you to all the volunteers who have worked on the many projects.

*George Tykol*

## WCMGA History

The initial training program of the Walker County Master Gardener Association was held in the spring of 2001 with 14 interns. Since the charter class of 2001 through the 2007 class, 165 interns have participated in the Master Gardener course of training in Walker county. Currently there are 123 Certified Master Gardeners.

Interns participating in the Master Gardener program in Walker county are required to participate in a minimum of 50 training hours in order to complete the course work as well as returning 50 volunteer service hours to the program to receive certification as a Walker County Master Gardener. WCMGA requires each certified Master Gardener to participate in 6 hours of education training and return a minimum of 12 hours of volunteer work each year in order to maintain their certification.

Since the inception of this dynamic volunteer development program in Walker County, members have created Demonstration Gardens on the grounds of Walker County's Texas Cooperative Extension Office. What was originally a blackland prairie pasture has been developed by



WCMGA members into an extensive Outdoor Learning Center, with demonstration bog, herb, shade, butterfly, bulb and rose gardens. The earliest project was a water harvesting collection system/demonstration

which is now showcased on Page 82 of the Texas Manual on Rainwater harvesting ([http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/publications/reports/RainwaterHarvestingManual3rd edition.pdf](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/publications/reports/RainwaterHarvestingManual3rd%20edition.pdf)).

Since 2002, the WCMGA has received two solid waste grants from H-GAC (Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments) in cooperation with TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) which have enabled the group to develop an Outdoor Learning Center. The grants have funded a Composting demonstration area, a Greenhouse and the LEAF-PRO Learning Center. Sponsored by the City of Huntsville and Walker County Commissioners Court, the support received from officials at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville ISD and other community organizations has been overwhelming. The WCMGA's (Landscape Environmental Awareness Facility, promoting Protection of our environment, Reduction of solid waste and Outreach education) program has enabled the group to develop a composting demonstration area, a greenhouse and demonstration gardens which include a bog garden, Earth Kind rose test garden, an herb garden, bulb garden and vegetable area. The butterfly garden is a favorite, particularly among children. LEAF-PRO supports Texas Cooperative Extension's statewide environmental educational Earth Kind initiative.

*This article has been condensed. Original submitted to The Item by Sue Harris*



## In the News!

Our very own Sally Nelson has just been named as the Chief Executive Officer of Huntsville Memorial Hospital. As most of you know, Sally has spent most of the past year working with Wayne Rhoden, past TMG President, on securing the 501©3 nonprofit status for the WCMGA. As a CPA, she was certainly more than qualified to handle this task for us.

Sally retired from Texas Children's Hospital in 2004 where she served as Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Information Officer. A *magna cum laude* graduate of Louisiana State University (1975) with a B.S. in Accounting, she received her Certified Public Accountant license in 1979. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Greater Houston Chapter of the American Red Cross and worked diligently with assisting evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Among other awards and achievements, she was named as one of 40 finalists for the 2001 CFO Excellence Awards, won the Houston Women's CIO (Chief Information Officer) Award in 2002, was named-Healthcare nominee for the Texas Hall of Fame by Governor Rick Perry and was the "Women on the Move" 2003 Award recipient among Texas Executive Women.

Most of us know Sally as an eager volunteer and she can be seen at many Thursday workdays and our plant sales. Her duties as CEO began on November 26. We wish Sally and her family the best and are happy for our community that MH will be under the able guidance of her leadership.



Walker County Master Gardener Association  
2007 Executive Board

**Sandy Tykol** — President  
**Jean McLaren** — President Elect  
**Mark Short** — Vice President  
**Rhonda Hanks** — Treasurer  
**Suzanne Sneed** — Assistant Treasurer  
**Carol Hayes** — Secretary  
**Sandra Boatright** — Assistant Secretary  
**Bill Dawson** — Past President

**P**roviding Guidance  
**E**ncouraging Creativity  
**T**eaching Methods  
**A**lways Available  
**L**earning New Techniques  
**S**erving our Community  
  
*Walker County  
Master Gardeners*

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