

History Highlights

2023 - 2000

Henderson County Master Gardeners Association (HCMGA)



Objectives:

Support and assist Texas AgriLife Extension Service by providing horticulture information through ongoing or ad hoc projects, news articles, presentations, clinics, telephone contacts, or other appropriate means to enhance community awareness and education of the horticultural sciences and good gardening practices.

Assist members in maintaining certification as Texas Master Gardeners and increasing knowledge of horticulture through advance training, continuing education, and other activities that enable members to better aid and assist the public in understanding recommended gardening practices.

Assist in recruiting potential Master Gardener candidates and assist Master Gardener Interns in fulfilling their volunteer commitment for certification

2023

- HCMGA 2023 Mission: To facilitate connection between members, as well as with future Master Gardeners and the community, through engagement and education.
- Plant Sale: HCMGA continued the online plant sale. At the Saturday pick up an in-person sale was held. The plant sale was one of the best as far as revenue.
- Harvest Garden: The Harvest Garden had several community events during the year. The Harvest Garden was featured in the Virtual Tours at the Annual Texas State Conference. The butterfly Garden at the Harvest Garden was certified by the North American Butterfly Association in May. A presentation on the Harvest Garden was presented at the Leadership Advisory Board in Athens by Susan Skommesa and John Maloch.
- Website: Updates included a searchable Plant Library, a Speaker Network request form.
- Library Series: Held 3 Library Series at the Library in Athens
- Summer Series: Held 3 Summer Series at various venues in Henderson County.
- Fall Fundraiser: Held our first Fall fundraiser at the Harvest Garden. Had online and in person sale of Pansies, 2 Speakers, Bounce Houses, Food Trucks & Origami demonstration.
- Vicky Dominique who was certified as a Master Gardener in 2022 passed away in April.
- Master Gardener Class: Most classes were held online with a few classes in person. This year's class has 18 members.
- AG Agent Spencer Perkins took a position in another county.
- Spencer Sims was named the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's Agriculture and Natural Resources agent for Henderson County and the Supervising Agent for HCMGA effective November.
- Master Gardener of the Year - John Maloch
- President- Susan Skommesa

2022

- HCMGA 2022 Goals: Increase Youth Education in Henderson County
Leverage technology to increase community and member participation
Train and engage members to further educate our community
- Plant Sale: HCMGA continued the online plant sale and drive-thru pick-up for our Plant Sale
In addition to the online plant sale, 2 Saturday mornings in person shopping were held.
Greenhouse Team hosted a one-day Greenhouse Management class taught by Dr. Steve Chaney.
- Harvest Garden: Received a new shade structure for the education area
After a long wait, the Harvest Garden had their grand open house on June 2nd.
The Harvest Garden had several community events during the year
- Rick Hirsch memorial stone was moved from former Dream Garden to HCMGA Harvest Garden on June 10th.
- Website: Updates included a searchable Plant Library, a Speaker Network request form.
- Summer Series: Held 3 Summer Series at various venues in Henderson County.
- Master Gardener Class: Classes were held online and a few classes in person.
- Intern class held a demonstration at the Harvest Garden on October 15th on Key Hole Gardens.
- Larry Beier who was certified as a Master Gardener in 2019 passed away in January.
- Master Gardener of the Year - John Maloch
- Intern of the Year - Ronald (Ron) Jackson
- President- Sara Drummond resigned as HCMGA President due to personal reasons in February 2022. Delbert (Dub) Hirst stepped in the President position from March 2022 to December 2022.

2021

- Activities started returning as restrictions from COVID-19 were lifted.
- Plant Sale: HCMGA adapted to the times with online shopping & drive-thru pick-up.
- Library Series returned in June
- Harvest Garden: Our first community education class on Rain Harvesting was held in September
- Intern class held a demonstration at the Harvest Garden in October to homeschoolers on herbs and butterflies
- DREAM Garden: President, Yvonne Sparks, announced that the board of directors decided that HCMGA will no longer support the DREAM garden as of October. The mission of the garden (Demonstrate, Research, Educate, Apply and Maintain) was met and exceeded, but it has been determined that it no longer meets that mission. The tools, sign, Rick Hirsch Memorial stone, and bench were relocated.
- Master Gardener Class: Most classes were held online with a few classes in person.
- Fall Conference had to be canceled due to speaker emergency gall bladder surgery
- Nina Ellis, who was certified in 2004 in two counties, was Master Gardener of the Year in 2016, was conferred Emerita Status Master in 2016 passed away in July
- Master Gardener of the Year- Cindy Beck
- Intern(s) of the Year- Michelle Crocker & Debra Pascoe
- President- Yvonne Sparks

2020

- COVID-19 pandemic caused HCMGA to cease face-to-face operations (educational events to the public as well as internal projects) in an effort to protect our members and the public. HCMGA continued to provide horticultural information through Facebook, Inside Dirt, the website, and weekly newspaper articles.
- A Release and Waiver of Liability was developed for any volunteers that wish to assist our Master Gardeners
- Master Gardener classes were held online instead of in-person due to COVID-19
- Board Meetings were held virtually until in-person meetings resumed in September
- Regular Meetings were suspended due to COVID-19 until October
- Patsy Miller who was certified as a Master Gardener in 2012 passed away in July
- Plant Sale was canceled. Plants were taken to Holder Hill Farm to be sold with a portion of the proceeds benefiting HCMGA
- Intern class created a video on flower arrangements for teaching purposes and post it online
- Master Gardener of the Year- Claudia Durham
- Intern(s) of the Year- Anne Wood & William (Ben) Nolley
- President- David Bickerstaff until September then Claudia Durham. David moved from Henderson County so Claudia kindly stepped into the President position.

2019

- "Tomato Town" was held as our annual conference with several expert speakers at Athens Country Club.
- Installed a new wooden fence around the DREAM Garden at the East Texas Arboretum
- Consulted with an ADA professional to review the accessibility for the DREAM Garden
- Developed a partnership agreement between HCMGA and TVCC for the Greenhouse
- Texas Master Gardener Association creates a new logo and revises policies on its use for all regional and county associations
- Intern class installs flowerbeds at Black Beauty Ranch
- Master Gardener of the Year- Cynthia Holifield
- Intern of the Year- Cindy Oliver
- President- David Bickerstaff

2018

- The "Spring Conference" was moved on the calendar and became the "Fall Conference". The fundraising event was held at the Athens Country Club. The speaker was Neil Sperry, a name synonymous with Texas gardening since 1970. His topic was "Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening: An Evening with Neil Sperry"
- Texas Master Gardener Association celebrates their 40th anniversary
- HCMGA added capabilities for the online purchase of tickets and registration to various events.

2018 Continued

- The role of HCMGA in the Children's Garden program transitioned to a more "consultant" type position. It changed from HCMGA volunteers doing the planning, leading, physical labor, and teaching to HCMGA volunteers providing information and encouragement to teachers wanting help with gardening projects.
- The intern class created The Monthly Gardening Guide - over 80 spiral-bound pages filled with pictures and gardening information geared specifically for our area. It has been very successful and is now in its second printing.
- HCMGA moved to obtain a permit from the State for selling plants at the annual Plant Sale. The Texas Nursery license will enable HCMGA to grow, sell plants, and buy wholesale.
- HCMGA explored requirements for hosting an Advanced MG Training workshop in 2019
- Improvements to the Greenhouse and its operations continued. By the end of the year, old shade cloth, weeds, and overgrown plants had been removed and new shelving, tables, and grow lights were in place. New procedures were established to benefit the health of the plants. The Greenhouse and the Plant Sale became more formally linked together.
- A partnering agreement was established between HCMGA and Henderson County Regional Fairpark for the Harvest Garden and a groundbreaking ceremony was held.
- Wayne Stafford, a member of HCMGA's first MG class, passed away in December. Wayne was also the only member from the original master gardener class that had maintained continuous certification. Plans are in the works to nominate him to Emeritus status.
- There was 50+ active members, 9 interns, 9 associates, and 14 students.
- Master Gardener of the Year- Yvonne Sparks
- Intern of the Year- Barbara Thompson
- President- Yvonne Sparks

2017

- There was a fire in the Greenhouse at TVCC in January. The greenhouse was closed for use while it was being repaired.
- The HCMGA monthly meetings were moved from the East Texas Arboretum to the Hart-Morris Conservation Center at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center
- Spencer Perkins was named the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's Agriculture and Natural Resources agent for Henderson County and the Supervising Agent for HCMGA effective October 1st
- Amy Stewart, nationally recognized author and speaker, was the speaker at the fall conference- "Wicked Plants: The Weed that Killed Lincoln's Mother & Other Botanical Atrocities" at Hart-Morris Conservation Center
- Master Gardener of the Year- Jeanne Brown
- Intern of the Year- Claudia Durham
- President- Yvonne Sparks

2016

- The Learn at the Library Series was started
- Nina Ellis, who was certified in 2004 and in two counties, was conferred Emerita Status
- Rick Hirsch passed away in April
- Dr. David Creech was the speaker at the annual conference- "Native Plants"
- HCMGA begins recording volunteer hours electronically on Volunteer Management System (VMS)
- Master Gardener(s) of the Year- Lydia Holley & Bill Hancock
- Intern of the Year- David Seymour
- President- Lydia Holley

2015

- Restoration work on the Greenhouse on the campus of TVCC began in the fall
- Richard "Skip" Richter was the speaker at the annual conference - Smarter Gardening the Easy Way
- HCMGA By-laws and Policies and Procedures revised and approved
- TMGA begins to require criminal background checks on all master gardener members
- Master Gardener of the Year-Judy Haldeman
- Intern(s) of the Year- Ted Haldeman & Matt Lockaby
- President- Judy Haldeman

2014

- Dr. Steve George was the speaker at the annual conference- "From Roses to Vegetables to Shade Trees: Creating a Truly Earthkind™ Landscape"
- HCMGA annual Plant Sale held on Courthouse grounds
- Master Gardener(s) of the Year- Marie Hancock & Bill Hancock
- Intern(s) of the Year- Yvonne Sparks & Lydia Holly
- President- Judy Haldeman

2013

- Dr. William C. "Bill" Welch - Horticulture Professor Texas A & M and author was the speaker at the annual conference at the Cain Center.
- Annual Plant Sale held at Farmer's Market
- Master Gardener of the Year- Cherie Tanneberger
- Intern of the Year- Betty Markee
- President- Margaret Rands

2012

- Steven L. Chamblee was the speaker at the annual conference
- Master Gardener of the Year- Margaret Dansby
- Intern of the Year- Cherie Tanneberger
- President- Robyn Stack

2011

- Greg Grant, a nationally known horticulturist, naturalist, and garden writer- Heirloom Plants of the South - was the speaker at our annual conference at the First United Methodist Church in Athens, TX
- We experienced a record drought in Texas which brought new challenges
- Children's Garden began at South Athens Elementary. HCMGA volunteers worked in the garden each week and also taught classes to school children regarding vegetables and flowers.
- HCMGA received first state awards
- Master Gardener of the Year- Nina Ellis
- Volunteer(s) of the Year- Marie Hancock & Bill Hancock
- President- Robyn Stack

2010

- Steve Huddleston, Senior Horticulturist at Fort Worth Botanical Gardens and author of *Easy Gardens for North Central Texas*, was the speaker at our annual conference at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Conference Center
- Master Gardener of the Year- Margaret Dansby
- Intern of the Year- Jean Brewton
- President-Jane Fox

2009

- The Summer Series program was started.
- Elvin McDonald, Editor-at-large of *Better Homes & Gardens*, was the speaker at our annual conference at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Conference Center
- HCMGA went "green" and began sending out the *Inside Dirt* newsletter electronically rather than by USPS.
- The DREAM garden vision was changed from a trial garden to a Texas Cottage Garden and an irrigation system was installed
- President- Jane Fox

2008

- The Fall Intern Workshop was started. Chris Weisinger, the owner of Southern Bulb Company, was the speaker at our annual conference at the Cain Center.
- President- Michael Sambogna

2007

- Lucinda Hutson - author of two books, *The Herb Garden Cookbook* and *Tequila! Cooking with The Spirit of Mexico*, noted lecturer, and known for her unique home and gardens was the speaker at our annual conference at the Cain Center
- President- Sharon Barrett

2006

- A partnership agreement was executed between HCMGA and the East Texas Arboretum regarding the demonstration garden.
- The demonstration garden began with a three-year trial of EarthKind™ roses and was officially named the DREAM Garden (Demonstrate, Research, Educate, Apply and Maintain). The D.R.E.A.M. Garden is a joint project of Henderson County Master Gardeners, Henderson County Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University, and the East Texas Arboretum & Botanical Society
- Neil Sperry - Widely known gardening columnist, author of *Neil Sperry's Complete Guide to Texas Gardening*, and radio talk show host was the speaker at our annual conference held at the Cain Center- "Fun Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening". The conference included a plant sale and silent auction.
- Master Gardener of the Year- Wayne Stafford
- President- Sharon Barrett

2005

- Dr. Steve George was the speaker at our annual conference "How Everyone Can Be Highly Successful with Easy-Care EarthKind Roses". The conference included local vendors and a plant silent auction and was held at Lakeview Lodge.
- Adopted a portion of Highway 59 as part of the Don't Mess with Texas program
- 34 active members and 11 interns
- President- Jennifer Mason

2004

- Greg Grant - well-known lecturer, the co-author of *The Southern Heirloom Gardens*, was the speaker at our annual conference- "The old fashion cottage garden"
- Plans for a demonstration garden were established at the East Texas Arboretum to conduct plant trials, demo various gardening methods and offer additional educational information to our community
- HCMGA members attended Junior Master Gardener training at Trinity Valley Community College (TVCC). Those volunteers worked with gifted and talented children during the month of June in a TVCC program called Little Sprouts.
- President- Terri Hudson

2003

- Dr. Brent Pemberton - "Outstanding Ornamental Plants from the Overton Experiment Station" was the speaker at our annual conference
- President- Gwen McGlaun

2002

- Keith Hansen, Smith Co Horticulturist, webmaster Smith Co, TX, "East Texas Gardening," and weekly garden column - Tyler Morning Telegraph was the speaker at our annual conference.
- First Spring Conference; \$1000 raised
- President- Willie Moore

2001

- Inside Dirt, the newsletter, was first written and provided to the members and the public.
- The first project for HCMGA was the Spring Conference. The guest speaker was Dr. David Creech, professor at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches. Rick Hirsch, gave the program when Dr. Creech, was unable to attend the event.
- President-Willie Moore

2000

- Rick Hirsch was the Henderson County Extension Agent and helped start the HCMGA program
- The first HCMGA class was held in the fall with 9 students
- HCMGA had a vision of finding a home site for a demonstration garden