**2017 Award Year**

**Texas Master Gardener Association, Inc.**

**Texas Search for Excellence Award Entry Form**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS 10PM JANUARY 20TH, 2018**

***Category*** *– A SEPARATE ENTRY FORM MUST BE COMPLETED FOR EACH CATEGORY. ONLY ONE ENTRY PER CATEGORY.*

**A:** \_\_\_ **Youth** \_X\_ **Projec**t \_\_\_ **Educational Program** \_\_\_ **Written Education** \_\_\_ **Research**

**B: Name of Master Gardener group and/or county submitting this entry**:

SJC Master Gardeners

**C: County(ies) involved in the entry**: San Jacinto Co.

**D: Master Gardener Submitting this entry contact**:

Name: Sandra Smith

Email: rosavista@eastex.net

Phone: (832) 758-2897

**E: Master Gardener Association President contact**:

Name: Steve Barr

Email: stevebarrtexas@gmail.com

Phone: (713) 643-4432

**F: Master Gardener Coordinator/Extension staff with oversight of the project**:

Name: Brandon Gregson

Title: San Jacinto Co. Extension Agent

Email: brandon.gregson@ag.tamu.edu

Phone: (936) 628-6407

**G: Name of the Project/Program**: Earth Kind Demonstration Gardens

**H: Start Date of the Project/Program**: February 2017

**1. Who is/was the target audience for this project/program and how were they identified**?

* The citizens of San Jacinto Co. and visitors from surrounding counties (bicyclists, bikers, joggers, runners, trekkers, visitors participating in activities on the courthouse square) is our target audience. We believed these visitors would enjoy and learn from Earth Kind practices at our demonstration garden and the Texas A&M Master Gardener Program.
* The Gardens of the SCJ Master Gardeners are located at the Coldspring Community Center (corner of Butler and Cedar), which is across the street from the County Courthouse. The CCC has served many organizations for 60+ years, including the Coldspring Garden Club formed in 1939.

**2. What are/were the goals of this project/program? (Maximum of five goals**):

* Demonstrate sound, reliable time-tested horticultural practices as taught by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
* Encourage reduction of yard wastes entering landfills by utilizing “homemade” mulch and compost.
* Encourage water conservation by use of drip irrigation.
* Demonstrate that visitors can successfully grow their own vegetables, herbs and roses with very little care in a relatively small space, by properly amending the native soil and choosing varieties of plants that are appropriate for our area.
* Increase citizen awareness of SJC Master Gardener’s programs and services.

**3. Describe the planning, implementation of the work, and results. (150 words or less**)

Originally, the Butterfly Garden was the dream of Connie Heiman (1st class of SJCMG 2010). Construction began in 2014, a year after Connie passed away. In 2017, the SJCMG Garden Committee decided to expand the Butterfly Garden to include a small vegetable garden, a rose garden (which many think are difficult to grow) and an herb garden, in order to share a few of the many garden varieties from which a homeowner can choose. During monthly work days, crushed granite pathways were added, raised cinder block vegetable beds were constructed, and two new beds were created. Host plants were added to attract more butterflies.

**4. What are the impacts and significant learning? (Maximum of five outcomes- quantitative measures of outcomes and impacts are preferred to anecdotal evidence**)

* Area residents have expanded their knowledge of plants, which can be successfully grown in their backyards.
* Visitors have experienced the miracle of butterfly metamorphosis.
* The swarms of butterflies, bees and birds indicate the lack of insecticides.
* Educational tours and workshops are planned for 2018.
* The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Master Gardeners now have a strong presence in the seat of San Jacinto Co.

**5. How was this project/program funded? (If applicable, list a maximum of three funding source**)

* SJCMG Fund Raisers: Cookbook, Mother’s Day Tea, Spring & Fall Plant Sales.
* Cinder Blocks for Raised Beds donated by Shawn & Victoria Schoellmann.
* Discounts were obtained from Home Depot and Lowe’s.

**6. List any partnerships associated with the project/program and their support role**:

* Coldspring Community Center provides the garden plot.

**7. Total number of Master Gardeners participating in this project/program**:

12 Master Gardeners participated in the project during 2017, reporting approximately 1,500 volunteer hours at year’s end.