

# THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

Volume 7, Issue 1

January 2006

Concho Valley Master Gardeners



## President's Message

By Lynne Alexander

### *Happy New Year!*

At this writing, the January temperature has just set a record of 86 degrees! Several weeks ago we had weather with below-freezing temperatures for a couple of days. ...**ONLY IN TEXAS!**

We all wonder what this has done to our landscape plants. We can see obvious damage to some, but don't be anxious to cut back or **DIG UP AND THROW AWAY** at this time. Wait – you may be surprised what will come back if you just give it time. When the soil warms and the plants start to grow, check the trunks or stems for life by scratching slightly to find “green”. Start at the top and work down. Cut back to the green. You may have a very short shrub

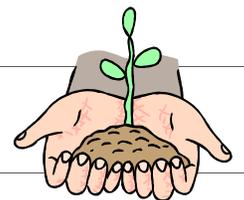
for awhile, but if the root system is still intact, it will recover and come back quite quickly. If the bark on the stems is splitting, the plant is probably damaged beyond repair and will have to be replaced. The cold temperatures caused some of our “semi-deciduous” plants (ie, abelias) to lose their foliage completely. They should recover. Oleanders probably will have some frozen tips and will have to be cut back to green. The 1983 freeze in South Texas caused the live oaks to drop all leaves in January, and they seem to be shedding somewhat here during this windy weather. They should leaf out again in March on schedule. Very young, newly planted trees may have been damaged. The bark on the trunk will probably split. Some plants may

seem to have survived and be growing well in the spring, only to have problems and suddenly die in the heat stress of the summer. We will just have to “wait and see”.

Remember, **IF** we have more cold (and, surely we will!), your plants will tolerate severe conditions much better if they are wet and the plant tissue has been able to take up the moisture. So – water before a hard freeze, and irrigate your lawns and shrubs every couple of weeks during this very dry weather.

**BE PATIENT!** Spring is right around the corner! Happy gardening!

*Lynne*



## Notes from John Begnaud

We finally presented certificates to members of the class of '04. If you have completed your hours and have never received a certificate of completion, please let us know. We had a good crowd at the January meeting with a lot of projects still on the books and some new ones being considered. Thanks for staying in touch.

The new Extension Center is nearing completion. Plans for a rainwater capture meeting scheduled for June 22 and 23<sup>rd</sup> will involve actually designing and implementing a system for the

building. A great opportunity for hands-on learning.

The new class which is taking shape will have as its main project, to develop a plan and plant a demonstration water conserving (and snake unfriendly) landscape for the new building. The class will make if we have around 20 new recruits. As always MG's who have taken the class are always welcome free forever. (as long as I am agent here)

One of the most important products of the last meeting was the clarifica-

tion of taking on projects. Please do not be discouraged from suggesting projects. Our goal is to help others through horticulture, while we continue to learn and share our knowledge.

Thanks to all of the officers and members who have put up with my distraction of tending to the construction of our building and other job responsibilities.

*John*

## FLU SEASON HEALTH TIPS

By Sheri Delgado

According to Center of Disease Control, 5-20% of U.S. population get the flu, more than 200,000 are hospitalized & more than 36,000 die from flu-related complications each year. It is wise to protect ourselves & our families during flu season.

Symptoms include headache, fatigue, fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, nausea & diarrhea. Sinus allergies have similar symptoms, but the cause is very different. Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus. It can be

mild to severe. It is spread from person to person by aerosol-like droplets from a cough or sneeze carried in the air where it comes in contact with a person or object nearby.

Touching infected objects, nose or saliva secretions from an infected person then touching our own or someone else's nose or mouth aids in spreading the virus. Infection can occur even before symptoms appear.

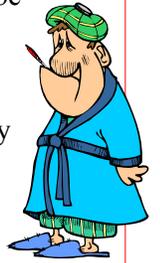


Not everyone develops serious complications, but the elderly, the very young, & people with chronic illnesses have increased risk. Examples are severe dehydration, bacterial infections, & worsening of chronic conditions. Preventing the flu from spreading is very important. Vaccination together with healthy habits can help decrease or limit the severity. Vaccination for one type of virus does not necessarily protect against other types of flu viruses. Discuss with your doctor what is best.



Good hand washing with soap & water can limit the spread & exposure to the flu. If soap & water is not readily available, using an alcohol based hand rub is also appropriate. Avoid touching eyes, nose, & mouth before washing hands. If possible, avoid people who are sick or stay home if you are sick. Cover mouth & nose with tissue when coughing & sneezing & dispose of tissue properly. Be sure to drink plenty of

fluids. Limit caffeinated beverages, alcohol & tobacco. Make time to rest! Eat healthy. Daily dose of vitamin C, or eating fruits high in vitamin C is helpful in maintaining healthy immune system. Treat symptoms while flu runs its course. If taking prescribed medications, check with doctor or pharmacist before taking over-the-counter cold medications in order to avoid harmful drug interactions. Replace toothbrush as it can harbor flu virus & cause re-infection. Clean surfaces such as phone, doorknobs with disinfectant. Seek medical attention if flu symptoms persist more than a week or drainage is yellow or green. Those high at risk should be watched carefully as complications can develop quickly. Practice healthy habits on daily basis. They do not provide immunity, but can limit exposure & severity of illness. Take care & pray for rain!!



## Spotlight on Gardeners: Pat Karmany

By Doreen Grimes

When you enter the home of Pat Karmany, you are immediately struck by the international flavor that it projects. Her adventuresome spirit is projected by furniture and wall

hangings that have been collected in the many places all over the world where she has resided.

Pat was born in North Carolina at Duke University where her father was connected to the medical school there. She first came to San Angelo with her family when her father, a physician, was stationed at Goodfellow Air Force Base from 1954 to 1960. She attended San Angelo schools.



Just before her senior year in high school the family was transferred to Montgomery, Alabama where she graduated. She lived for a time in a villa 8 miles outside Rome.

Pat accompanied the family to Vietnam where her father was based. She worked for the Defense Contract Audit Agency there for a year. She eventually returned to San Angelo where her mother and family had retired. She was working for the Concho Valley Council of Governments when the DCAA called her and asked her to return to Vietnam. She spent three more years in Saigon. When she completed this assignment, she and a friend bought a camper in Germany and toured 13 countries for 6 months. Then it was back to Texas. She

has been living in her house on Millbrook for 33 years. Right now her family consists of two

cats and a faithful dog. She worked for a time at GAFB in the Transportation Department as supervisor of personal property. She has a 37-year-old son who is living in Colorado but is about to move to Dallas.

It is evident that Pat is an avid and skilled gardener when you view her garden. It features drought-hardy plants and provides an oasis in this desert-like area. She has always had an interest in gardening and she says that the Master Gardener class pro-



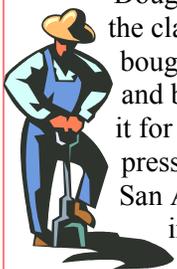
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## Spotlight on Gardeners: Douglas John

by Mary Creel



Doug and Betty John's home on the banks of the Concho River near Miles is a welcome retreat from the disagreeable windy climate of West Texas in winter. But it hasn't always been that way.



Doug (Master Gardener of the class of 2005) and Betty bought their place in 1972 and built a small house on it for an escape from the pressures of their jobs in San Angelo. Doug taught in the Education department at Angelo State and Betty taught in the public schools. In 1992 they added on to their house and moved to the country for good.

The Johns were both raised in Collin County, northeast of Dallas. Doug's father was a farmer and Doug cannot remember when he wasn't a part of gardening or farming. Growing up he always thought he would be a high school ag

teacher. That was not to be but his interest in growing things remained. He says that everything he knew until he took the Master Gardening course was gained by trial and error. And what he knows is considerable.

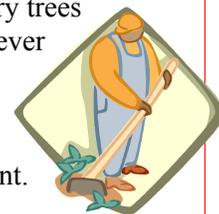
When they moved to San Angelo in 1967, they got the climate shock, but like so many others they wouldn't think of moving back east.

When they first bought their place in the country, Doug planted about 200 pecan trees and watered them with a drip system. About three years ago those 30 year old trees began to die; now over half are dead. Why? "Who knows?" says Doug. "It is mysteries like that which make horticulture interesting."

He loves planting new things that may do better on his property. He is particularly pleased with of some cedar elms he planted along the river. Time will tell how well they will adapt.

But he knows the vagaries of growing things in West Texas. "We love the wildlife -- we have turkeys, badgers, foxes, raccoons, rabbits, beaver, ringtails, and of course the deer. Deer are a big problem." One of Doug's latest projects is trying to figure out what deer WON'T eat.

The Johns have 3 sons, Andrew, Eric, and Brock, of whom they are justifiably proud. But they speak most fondly of their five grandchildren who love to come to their place on the Concho. And little wonder -- it is a true refuge. When you walk up to their house landscaped with native plants, attractive even in winter, you do not expect what is around the corner. You can stand on their patio, look through a literal forest of soapberry trees down to the river and never believe you are in the West Texas desert. And you realize it didn't happen by accident.



(Continued from page 2)  
Pat Karmany—Cont.

vided information which she had been lacking. She has learned a lot just from trial and error. Pat has been one of the people who has worked so diligently on the library garden. She enjoys digging in the dirt and the camaraderie in working with the other Master Gardeners.

Pat is a collector of things she has picked up all over the world. Perhaps the most fascinating one is her collection of ladybugs – in every shape, form, and fashion you can imagine. I especially liked the one in the shape of a Texas longhorn steer!

Thank you, Pat, for all your hard work and for your valuable contribution to the Concho Valley Master Gardeners.

## Words of Thanks

Special thanks to Lisa and Lee Campbell for bagging and delivering ten bags of horse compost for the West Branch Library garden.



Thanks to all those members who have sold the 2006 CVMG calendars.

There are still a number of copies available and what a good time and lasting gift to share the knowledge of plants and tips through the "To Do" lists printed each month of the year.



Dear Master Gardeners -

We want to extend a special thanks to all of you for your generous gift to us during the Christmas season. It is the thoughtful and charitable gestures like this that make our job so rewarding. We appreciate you thinking of us during this time and we both appreciate the gift.

Our job for the Extension office is often time consuming but always fascinating and at the same time exhilarating. Seeing the hard work and volunteers hours that each of you dedicate to completing, makes us proud to be a "small" part of your organization. Thanks again for your gift—it is truly appreciated.

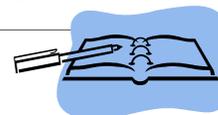
*Janice & Kathy*

Admin. Assist.—Tom Green Ext office

**2006 Concho Valley Master Gardeners  
Current Class Schedule\***  
Commissioner's Courtroom-Judge Edd B. Keyes Bldg

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
Feb. 7 6-9 p.m.	Orientation/Plant Growth & Dev.	John Begnaud
Feb14 6-9 p.m.	Soils, Water & Plant Nutrition	TBA
Feb. 21. 6-9 p.m.	Environmental Horticulture	John Begnaud
Feb. 28 6-9 p.m.	Fruits & Nuts	John Begnaud
March 7 6-9p.m.	West Texas Landscape Plant Materials	Debbie Frost
March 14 6-9p.m.	Entomology & Plant Pathology	Dr. Chris Sansone John Begnaud
March 21 6-9p.m.	Turfgrass Species and Maintenance	Monte Simms
March 25 (Sat.) ?	Master Gardeners Tour-Odessa	Permian Basin MG's
March 28 6-9p.m.	Landscape Design	Melissa Clifton
April 4 6-9 p.m.	Vegetable and Herbs	TBA
April 11 6-9 p.m.	Wrap-up/Test/Volunteer Opportunities	John B & MG's
TBA (Sat.)	Native Plants/Propagation Tour	Bobby Peiser

\* Times and order of presentations could change due to scheduling difficulties. We will seek to provide reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities for this meeting. We request that you contact our office as soon as possible to advise us of the auxiliary aid or service that you will require.



## Minutes of CVMG Meeting- January 10, 2006

Meeting was held at the Edd B. Keyes Building in the Extension Office due to length of Commissioner's Court. John Begnaud and Lynne Alexander presided over the meeting. Minutes were read and approved.

Treasurer's report given by Mary Chatfield deposited \$940.00 from calendars; ending balance is \$3,424.81.

Calendars-possibly setting up location such as Hastings or Wal-mart to sell.

Home & Garden Show is 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in April. More info to

come.

Wall Garden-Dormant-tank is dry. 4-H will do winter clean up. Received \$5000.00 from Grant, but must match \$2,900 to receive. Donations are needed.

Sunken garden- Digging cannas to be given away in March. Call Carl White if you want to help.

Fun Land beds have been taken care of by Sam Rodriquez. Anyone wanting to dig miscanthus grass there is a sign up sheet in office.

Library Garden-Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> yellow cannas were to be dug. March 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 o'clock will meet to organize garden.

New Class - Feb.7<sup>th</sup>-March 28<sup>th</sup> from

6:00-9:00. Possibly two Saturday classes. Will need 2 hostesses for each night, sign up in office.

Jail - clean up Feb.25<sup>th</sup>, and possibly prepare for hardscape.

Courthouse-need holes dug for planting of a Monterey Oak and a Burr Oak. Larry volunteered to dig holes.

Keep San Angelo Beautiful-Billie McDaniel was not present.

Fiesta Del Las Flores-John was to attend a planning meeting. May coordinate annual plant sale at this time.

(Continued on page 5)

# HORTUS color agrie

by Bobby Peiser

I would like to begin the new year with a heartfelt and appreciative "Thank You" to one and all for the thoughtful donation of a palm tree for the 4 H Building in memory of my wife. I am truly humbled and honored!

In a column sometime last year, I briefly discussed agaves, yuccas and related plants and with your indulgence, I would like to add to that piece. The genus agave is composed of ap-



*Bobby's personal collection of agave in his yard.*

*(Continued from page 4)  
Minutes- 1-10-06*

New Business: New set of by-laws need to be made and distributed to previous class.

Elections are coming in May - Need nominating committee. If interested in an office, contact Lynne.

Janet brought up acknowledgment of hours completed each year. Will be discussed further at future meeting.

Habitat House Committee-motion passed to be involved in some capacity with putting beds in new homes.

Fort Concho-needs volunteers for wreath making the Saturday after Thanksgiving, wanted to know if we were interested.

New Projects - Can be presented at a regular meeting or if it is between meeting months, a project can be presented to John or the President; if approved, have to get a project coordinator and can proceed from there without waiting until the next meeting. Motion made by Debbie Vinson and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Pat Karmany.

Secretary,

*Robie Long*

proximately 250 species and can be found growing from the arid areas of the western United States, south through Mexico and into Central America. It is interesting to note that no agaves are native to any place except the Americas' and as a result, early European horticulturists did most of their studies of agaves on the collected specimens growing throughout Europe. This practice resulted in a great deal of misleading and incorrect conclusions as the plants grown in pots in a controlled environment can create characteristics that are only remotely similar to plants growing in their native sites.

Agaves are members of the Agavaceae family and they are joined by Yucca, Manfreda, Hesperaloe and a few more genera, that are so foreign to our locale, they shall not be mentioned. In 1985, the genera Beaucarnea (Ponytail Palm), Dasylyrion and Nolina were removed to the family Nolinaceae. Thank goodness, they can't blame this on George W!

Agave is from a Greek word meaning "noble" but I haven't a clue as to what the other names mean. Well, that's not true because I do know that "yucca" comes from the Indian word "yuca" for Manihot esculenta and Manfreda means "Western Aloe".

Most people mistakenly refer to all agaves as "Century plant" due to the length of time it takes to bloom and produce fruit. The name, Century plant is probably most correct when it is used to refer to Agave americana. This is the large blue-gray agave that is most commonly seen in this area and depending on growing conditions, it will take anywhere between 10 to 35 years to bloom, then it will die. Most but not all agaves are monocarpic; that is they bloom only once and then die. However when everything functions as planned, it will have produced a number of offsets or pups. And so the species lives on!

Archaeological records show that



*Agave Mescal*

Agave has been used for its fibers since 7000 B.C. and is still cultivated for this use today. These fibers were used for everything from ropes, sandals and sleeping mats to a host of other items. Additionally it is a food source and, who could forget tequila. Actually tequila can only be made from Agave tequilana grown from selected clones in and around Tequila in the state of Jalisco in Mexico. If a distilled drink is made from any other species of agave or in any other locale other than Jalisco, it is pulque or mescal and not tequila. You might say that it is Mexican moonshine.

Since our use of agave and yucca in our area is generally limited to landscape use it should not disturb you that A. tequilana is frost tender and will not survive



*Picture of agave in Bobby's own front yard as accent.*

our winters

The preferred agaves (and yuccas) for use in your landscape will be the topic of the next newsletter. In the meantime, if you are interested in learning more about these fascinating plants, I suggest you get a copy of the book: Agaves Yuccas and Related Plants by Mary and Gary Irish.

## Volunteer Opportunities

 New MG Class - Classes will begin Feb. 7. Volunteers are needed to assist and provide refreshments with the new class. Send prospect students to fill out application ASAP. Schedule of class, elsewhere in newsletter. Sign-up in Extension Office.



Yellow Cannas available to anyone from the West Branch Library Garden. Bulbs are currently in a pile behind the building between Garden and compost pile. Please go by to pick up any that you may want.

 Next CVMG meeting will be Tuesday, March 14th.

 Home and Garden Show set for April 1 & 2. Watch newsletter and check at meetings for more details.



**Garden Trivia:** He who plants a garden plants happiness. --Chinese Proverb

 Jail Landscape— Work day on Feb. 25th and possible prepare for hardscape.

 Tentative date for Master Gardener Tour in Odessa - March 25th. Watch mail or contact office for more details.



 Please keep the Extension office informed of ANY changes of your mailing address or of your e-mail address. If you change, the office would appreciate notification so that we can keep an up-to-date list for emergency notification mailings.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. We will seek to provide reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. We request that you contact our office to advise us of the auxiliary aid or service that you will require.

CONCHO VALLEY  
MASTER GARDENERS

*Doreen Grimes, Editor*



113 W. Beauregard  
San Angelo, TX 76903

Phone: 325-659-6528  
Fax: 325-659-6467  
Email: tom-green-tx@tamu.edu