

# GardenTalk

The Official Monthly Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Davidson County and UT Extension

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## Executive Committee

### **PRESIDENT**

Robert Mather  
[rmather321@aol.com](mailto:rmather321@aol.com)

### **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT**

Karen Shaw  
[krnshaw@aol.com](mailto:krnshaw@aol.com)

### **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT**

Catherine Atwell  
(615) 297-0600

### **RECORDING SECRETARY**

Laura Boatwright  
[laluboaie@gmail.com](mailto:laluboaie@gmail.com)

### **CORRESPONDING SECRETARY AND NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Jason Goodrich  
[jason.goodrich@gmail.com](mailto:jason.goodrich@gmail.com)

### **TREASURER**

Marilee Jacobs  
[mljacobs25@hotmail.com](mailto:mljacobs25@hotmail.com)

### **MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON**

Caroll Marrero  
[bmarrero@comcas.net](mailto:bmarrero@comcas.net)

## Volunteer Team

### **EXTENSION OFFICE LIAISON**

Judy Burnette  
[judyrburnette@gmail.com](mailto:judyrburnette@gmail.com)

### **HISTORIANS**

Joy Kosarsky  
[sambeem@aol.com](mailto:sambeem@aol.com)

Gwen McKinney  
[gwenmil2@att.net](mailto:gwenmil2@att.net)

### **MASTER GARDENER CLASS LIAISON**

Barbara Allen  
(615) 309-6130

### **PARLIAMENTARIAN**

Vacant



### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE LIAISON**

Lois Francis, (615) 361-1926  
[francis4966@bellsouth.net](mailto:francis4966@bellsouth.net)

### **WEBMASTERS**

Laura Kraft  
[lkraft1212@gmail.com](mailto:lkraft1212@gmail.com)

## Event and Project Chairpersons

### **DEMONSTRATION GARDEN AT ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER**

Mary Boyd  
[m\\_boyd@live.com](mailto:m_boyd@live.com)

Tyann Chappell  
[tyann.chappell@comcast.net](mailto:tyann.chappell@comcast.net)

Shirley Lee  
[mamajanlee@gmail.com](mailto:mamajanlee@gmail.com)

### **EDUCATION**

David Cook  
[dcook5@utk.edu](mailto:dcook5@utk.edu)

### **GARDEN TOURS**

Sylvia Wahl  
[wahlhs@bellsouth.net](mailto:wahlhs@bellsouth.net)

### **GRASSMERE HISTORIC FARM AT THE NASHVILLE ZOO**

Cathie Long  
[cathielong@comcast.net](mailto:cathielong@comcast.net)

### **HARDING GARDEN AT BELLE MEADE**

Muff Cline  
[muffcline@yahoo.com](mailto:muffcline@yahoo.com)

Catherine Atwell  
(615) 297-0600

### **HISTORIC NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY**

Catherine Atwell  
(615) 297-0600  
Robert Mather  
[rmather321@aol.com](mailto:rmather321@aol.com)

### **JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS**

Doris Weakley  
[dorisgweakley@comcast.net](mailto:dorisgweakley@comcast.net)

### **KITCHEN GARDENS AT THE HERMITAGE**

Laura Kraft  
[lkraft1212@gmail.com](mailto:lkraft1212@gmail.com)  
Mary Langford  
[langfordlaw@hotmail.com](mailto:langfordlaw@hotmail.com)

### **MENTORING PROGRAM**

Caroll Marrero  
[bmarrero@comcast.net](mailto:bmarrero@comcast.net)

### **MERCHANDISE**

Barbara Adams  
[babstn@bellsouth.net](mailto:babstn@bellsouth.net)  
Ethel-Lonniell Williams  
[elmwilliams@yahoo.com](mailto:elmwilliams@yahoo.com)

### **MUSIC & MOLASSES FESTIVAL**

Vacant

### **NASHVILLE LAWN & GARDEN SHOW**

Cindy Martin  
[cfmnbw@gmail.com](mailto:cfmnbw@gmail.com)

### **TENNESSEE STATE FAIR**

Catherine Atwell  
(615) 297-0600  
Barbara Ann Drake  
[bsdake@comcast.net](mailto:bsdake@comcast.net)

### **URBAN GARDENING FESTIVAL**

Nancy Wilcenski  
[nancy.wilcenski@comcast.net](mailto:nancy.wilcenski@comcast.net)

## UT Extension Davidson County

1417 Murfreesboro Pike, 2nd Floor  
P. O. Box 196300  
Nashville, TN 37219  
Tel: (615) 862-5995  
Fax: (615) 862-5998  
<http://davidson.tennessee.edu>

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## Master Gardeners of Davidson County

P. O. Box 41055, Nashville, TN 37204-1055

[www.mgofdc.org](http://www.mgofdc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/mgofdc](https://www.facebook.com/mgofdc)  
[www.twitter.com/mgofdc](https://www.twitter.com/mgofdc)

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# Mather's Musings

## News, wit and wisdom from Master Gardener Bob Mather, Class of 2000.

Summer has arrived and the days are getting shorter. It is so nice to work in my garden early before the heat gets too intense. While preparing a talk on heirloom plants, I have been reading on the origin of tomatoes! It is believed they were discovered in Central America and made their way to Europe via the Spanish during the 1500's. Another theory is that they came from the Caribbean to Florida, up to Georgia and the Carolinas. However they got to our gardens, we certainly enjoy the many varieties.

The annual bus trip to Jackson, Tennessee and "Summer Celebration" is July 9th. At this writing, there were a few seats left if you would like to ride the bus. This year's topics are quite interesting: Sustainable Landscapes, Landscapes for Year-Round Interest, and Carol Reese will tell us about Sex in the Garden! Don't forget that there will be no July meeting on the 9th. We will be back at the Ed Jones Auditorium in August.

I did not want to have to cancel the June meeting but with such a short time to find an alternative location, I had to make that decision. Vandals decided to have their own party and set off the sprinkler system, causing extensive damage to the auditorium. The walls and floors

were extensively damaged and it took several days to repair the damage.

It is time to start thinking about the Tennessee State Fair in September. Barbara Drake and Catherine Atwell are chairing this year's Master Gardeners display. They will post upcoming planning sessions and I hope you will be one of the participants. We need your ideas and support. Once again we will be offering talks during the Fair. Master Gardeners from surrounding counties have been invited to join us. Now is also the time to plan on what you might want to enter into the Fair competition, a craft, a baked item or a sampling of products from your garden. Many Master Gardeners have won prizes in the past!

With the warm days of July limiting our outdoor gardening time, you could start planning your fall garden. The selection of fall crop seed will soon be picked over by other gardeners. Consider some Heirloom varieties. Area farmer's markets often have selections not found in our groceries.

It is fun to try new vegetables. Ask the vendors the preparation of those selections that are new to you.

Take that early morning walk in your garden and enjoy! 🌻

## New Volunteer Opportunity

*referred by David Cook, UT Extension Agent, Class of 2000*

I am currently heading up a kitchen garden project at the Tennessee Prison for Women. We have eight raised beds and have 8-10 women each Wednesday evening who help tend the garden where we have planted herbs and veggies.

It is a truly wonderful program and the women are loving it and are excited to have fresh food to eat and the opportunity to learn garden skills so they can grow their own food when they leave.

My husband has taken a job in Washington State so I will not be able to stay with the project as I will be splitting my time between our farm here in Middle Tennessee and Washington (at least for now).

Dr. Kate Watkins at Lipscomb University had this idea to start a garden because the women said in a survey they would love to learn how to eat healthy and grow their own food. It has been a huge hit and is bringing joy,

fresh food, and empowerment to these women, many who have never seen a garden before.

So, I am reaching out to you, the Master Gardeners of Davidson County, for help. We have four wonderful volunteers who come each week and help but they don't have any garden experience. Is there any chance this could be a volunteer project for your Master Gardeners since the Women's Prison is in Davidson County?

It would be grand if we could find 2 or 3 volunteers who have experience in kitchen gardening (mostly veggies, small fruits and herbs) and love teaching and mentoring. I'm wasn't sure who to send this to but feel confident that you could forward this on if necessary.

Kate and I really appreciate your help and look forward to hearing from you. Feel free to contact me at [hysophill@aol.com](mailto:hysophill@aol.com).

Thank you so much, Cindy Shapton 🌻

# Inside this issue: **Report on UT Extension Central Region Meeting**

by Robert Mather, President, Class of 2000

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Cover: Master Gardener Rich Shiavi (2009) working hard among the his-  
Photo: Andrea Pruijssers/MGDC.



The Central Region meeting of the University of Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Alliance was held Saturday, June 13th at the James E. Ward Agricultural Center in Lebanon. Representatives attending included those from Davidson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Warren, Williamson, and Wilson Counties along with Central Region advisor Bob Ary, two of our three Central Region representatives, and our Tennessee Master Gardener Coordinator, Natalie Bumgarner. Each of the three regions of the state meet twice a year to catch up on state happenings as well as share with our own regions about various activities.

Natalie opened the meeting and reported that 2,480 of nearly 3,000 Master Gardeners contributed 178,841 volunteer hours with an in-kind value of \$3,600,069 to Tennessee during 2014. This number is important when UT and the state consider budgets for the next year.

Winter School for 2016 will be held in Knoxville, March 17th-19th. The first day will be a pre-day conference on Junior Master Gardener programs; the second day's session will be educational; and Saturday will feature horticulture and garden tours.

We also talked about the new UT Extension website and plans for a new database and reporting tools for hours, project reports and contacts. UT Extension has begun to revise the Master Gardener handbook, including having parts online as PDFs.

For the Central Region area, we talked about having educational opportunities for our Central Region Master Gardeners. Several expressed interest in having speakers for the region on a variety of subjects, i.e. landscaping. It looks like there will be many great improvements to Tennessee Master Gardener program in the near future and I am happy that Davidson County will continue to be represented. 🌱

## **Mentoring Program**

by Carol Marrero, Membership Chairperson, Class of 2009

With the flurry of activities during May and June, many hours have been earned. (Well earned and appreciated, I might add!) Please remember to enter them into the system.

If you have not signed up for taking the bus trip to Jackson, please contact Bob Mather at [rmather321@aol.com](mailto:rmather321@aol.com) to book your reservation! Great fun being with fellow members and many learning opportunities upon arrival—this is a wonderful opportunity. Because the Jackson trip is on Thursday, July 9th, there will be no monthly meeting. In addition to our MGDC projects, there are several other opportunities in Davidson County to attend to learn and earn educational credits:

1. Nashville's Farmers Market: David Cook, Bob Mather and Catherine Atwell "hold court" at the MGDC booth every 2nd Wednesday from 9am to 2pm. Stop by any time. They have great attendance and enjoy their time teaching.
2. The Tennessee Agricultural Museum at Ellington NEEDS VOLUNTEERS! (as per David Cook, who also serves on its board.) In addition to needing volunteers, they have a "Summer Saturday" program you may attend from 9am to 2pm. Free attendance. Learn more at their website, [www.tnagmuseum.org](http://www.tnagmuseum.org).
3. The Cumberland River Compact always has learning opportunities. For more information, visit their website at [www.cumberlandrivercompact.org](http://www.cumberlandrivercompact.org).
4. Cheekwood also offers many opportunities for earning hours. Learn more at [www.cheekwood.org](http://www.cheekwood.org). 🌱

# July 2015

For a complete calendar of events, visit our website at [www.mgofdc.org](http://www.mgofdc.org).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	2 Garden Tour: 5:30-8:30pm at Shirley Cody's	3	4 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
5	6 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	7	8 Meet Me at the Market, 10am-2pm Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	9 No July Meeting	10	11 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
12	13 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	14 Tennessee State Fair Planning Meeting at UT Extension, 1pm	15 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	16	17	18 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage Garden Tour: 8am-12pm at Nancy Evans'
19	20 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	21	22 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	23	24	25 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
26	27 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	28	29 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	30	31	



# The Hermitage Kitchen Gardens

by *Laura Kraft, Co-Chairperson, Class of 2010*

We are excited to see our spring plants are sprouting: Tomato, basil, okra, corn, eggplant, ground cherries, white and sweet potatoes, peanuts and beans. This is grand because the last two summers, our four-legged visitors enjoyed the greenery more than we did! Our diligent spraying of an organic deer deterrent seems to be doing the trick this year. The night security guards continue to report up to 30 deer roaming throughout the Hermitage.



Sonya Ewing (2015) and Mary Langford (2009) teaming up to plant Tennessee Valencia red peanuts. Photo: Laura Kraft/MGDC

Congratulations to Clif Gunter (2015) for completing his intern hours!

Saturdays starting at 8am: Join in the fun or just come visit - share your knowledge of heirloom gardening or learn more about it. Contact Laura Kraft at [lkraft1212@gmail.com](mailto:lkraft1212@gmail.com) or Mary Langford at [langfordlaw@hotmail.com](mailto:langfordlaw@hotmail.com) for details. 🌱

## Growing Roots at Farm in the City

by *Robert Mather, President, Class of 2000*

It's hard to believe it's been five years when I attended an organizational meeting at the new J. Henry Hale Apartments just off Charlotte Avenue and Jo Johnston Avenue. The Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) developed some land next to the apartments that the city owned, constructed some raised beds, and leased them to area residents.



Catherine Atwell and I also attended a Saturday session at the gardens and taught some of the kids about planting seeds and growing their own food. It was amazing to watch

the kids learn about vegetable they only know came from the local grocery store. They were so excited.



Speed forward to Saturday June 6, 2015, when Catherine

and I returned to represent the Master Gardeners of Davidson County once again at their first GROWING ROOTS celebration. We were there at the special request of Master Gardener Gloria Ballard (2003), who was among the first involved with Farm in the City.

We also met up with Master Gardener Ludy Wallace (2012) and immediately shown his four raised beds and the great looking vegetables he is growing this year. He has already harvested his cabbage and lettuce, and is now looking forward to his tomatoes turning that nice bright red and ready to eat.

Others involved were Hank Delvin, Jr. of Delvin Farms speaking on natural gardening methods and growing without pesticides as well as a demonstration on how to build a raised bed for gardening. Catherine and I presented container gardening for vegetable and flowers. We got to visit with several of the community and answering their many garden questions. The kids were excited to get their very own marigold to take home and watch grow this summer. 🌱

## Report on Junior Master Gardener Camp

by *Doris Weakley, Program Chairperson, Class of 1999*

This year's Junior Master Gardeners Camp had a great turnout of 2015 interns and seasoned volunteers, and it would not happen if Master Gardeners didn't give freely of their time to help make camp a success year after year. So much prep work is done so far in advance of camp dates that helps to make camp a success—thank you Master Gardener volunteers for all you do! 🌱

## A Note of Thanks

by *Margaret Devine, Class of 2007*

After a lengthy illness my husband, Paul, passed on May 21st. The Weeding Women from Harding Garden at Belle Meade came to my yard and garden on June 3rd. They groomed roses, pulled and dug weeds and had lunch. We had social time and work time. You know what that means to a gardener! Much thanks to all. 🌱





## Historic Grassmere Gardens

*by Cathie Long, Chairperson, Class of 1999*

In June, the perennial bed is covered with the orange daylilies and the remaining blooms of the elderberry. Once this is complete, we can continue to add summer annuals for color enhancement to carry into the fall. Also involved is the pruning of the bones of the bed, the forsythia, lilac, crepe myrtle and flowering quince. After weeding the open spaces, pine straw can be added to give it the finishing touches. Weeding and sprucing up in the medicinal herb bed bring rewards as the teasel and ginger are found.

We are looking forward to July in the anticipation of much bean picking as the bush and pole beans come into production. We have the opportunity of comparing the taste and yield of the various beans such as Dragon's Tongue and Bountiful. To accompany the beans are the colorful heirloom tomatoes. Chores include picking, weighing and recording the harvest and taking the produce to the animal commissary. Also, those who work will get the perks.

To help in the communication with visitors, we will enhance the gardens with signage to share the interesting names when the Master Gardeners are not working on site. It is also time to start planning for Harvest Days. Bring your creativity and educational ideas to share with our volunteers as we join with the Nashville Zoo to work on interactivity ideas for kids. Always gardening, always educational, always fun, come and join in. 🌱

## Harding Garden at Belle Meade

*by Mariwyn Evans, Class of 2011*

The beans are twining, so the Weedin' Women of Belle Meade are constructing trellises. Bamboo teepees are covered with Cherokee Trail of Tears beans. Now if we could just get the green beans to grow. We've replanted Kentucky Wonder beans, supposedly a prolific variety THREE TIMES. Cross your fingers for us.

Abundant rain and sun have created wildly prolific catmint, chamomile, and oregano in the beds. Alas, we had to cut them back to make more room for the cucumbers and zucchini. Fortunately, the discarded chamomile found a home at the historic Traveler's Rest herb garden where it will delight the dozens of school groups that visit the historic Overton property each year.

While we wait for veggies, we are enjoying the hollyhocks, the St. John's Wort, and the last of the poppies. Come work with us on Wednesdays at 8am (weather permitting) and share in the beauty. 🌱



**Gwen McKinney (2010)**  
wrestles a verdant catmint  
into submission. Photo:  
Mariwyn Evans/MGDC



Master Gardeners of Davidson County

P.O. Box 41055

Nashville, TN 37204-1055

[www.mgofdc.org](http://www.mgofdc.org)

## Tennessee State Fair

*by Barbara Ann Drake, Co-Chairperson, Class of 2012*

With the heat of the summer it is hard to think of the State Fair in September. But we all know it will be here before you know it.

We had the first planning meeting last month—if you missed it, you will have another opportunity this month to participate and give input on what you would like to see in our Master Gardener booth this year.

Our next planning meeting will be July 14, 1pm at David Cook's office, 1417 Murfreesboro Pk., Nashville.

We are planning a container flower garden contest this year. But the unique part about these containers: They have to be all natural.

For example, an old wood stump, an open rock, hollowed-out gourds, or even a big open sea shell. Think natural for your container. Lots of other things can be used, so be creative!

See you at the next meeting! 🌱

## Recipe of the Month

*from the kitchen of Robert Mather*

### Garden Tomato Tart

#### Ingredients:

- 1 store bought flatbread
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 4 ripe tomatoes, sliced 1/4-inch thick
- 1/2 tsp sugar
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/2 c pesto

#### Instructions:

Brush the flatbread with olive oil. Add tomato slices in overlapping circles. Drizzle with additional olive oil and sprinkle with sugar.

Season with pepper and bake at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes, until the tomatoes are caramelized. Serve immediately with pesto alongside in a small bowl for dolloping. 🌱