

GardenTalk

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

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Mather's Musings

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

A big "THANK YOU" to Shelia Whitlock for once again securing our bus and taking care of the details for SUMMER CELEBRATION in Jackson! We visited Green Valley Farms Nursery before departing for home. They welcomed us with wine, cheese and snacks as we shopped! They are super people. I think everyone had a great time.



This was the first Summer Celebration for some of our members. Taking the bus is a good way to get to know members you might not have gotten to visit at other events. If you asked what was one of the highlights, it might be Carol Reese's talk on Sex In The Garden. Carol always has a lot of humor in her talks, but a good deal of helpful information. The 'Kitchen Divas' are always entertaining and had a few new jokes to go along with their talk about summer squash. As always, you get a hand out with several good recipes that your family will savor all season.



August is quite hot, but Fall is right upon us. The Tennessee State Fair will run September 11th-20th, 2015. Setup will start on Tuesday, September 8th-10th, with our September potluck meeting September 10th at 6:30pm in front of our booth in the Agricultural Building. More details will follow.

Barbara Drake and Catherine Atwell, our co-chairs for this year's fair, have held two meetings so far with another scheduled for August 11th at 1pm at the UT Extension

office at 1417 Murfreesboro Pike. Mark your calendar as you are a vital part of the planning process. Some great ideas have already been discussed but your ideals are also needed. We will once again have speakers during the Fair, so please say "yes" when asked to participate. The Fair is a great time to add volunteer hours so be thinking about when you might be able to work in our booth at the fair.

Music and Molasses is also around the corner. We are in need of a chair or co-chairs for this event. This is a fun (and easy) event so don't be afraid to volunteer as everyone helps bring this event together every year. The theme of the event is involving the children. Yet another great way to get to know your fellow Master Gardeners and have fun at the same time!



Project chairs: It's time to update your respective project boards! We will be using the boards at upcoming events and I will try to have them at our August meeting so you can have them to update. A reminder also, update your photos at our website and always keep Laura Kraft and Jason Goodrich updated on upcoming calendar events. You can add your future events several months in advance on the web site as you can check dates throughout the year.

I am happy to report great progress on our Memory Board at the Demo Garden. Several volunteers have put some hours in restoring the board and ordering the plaques of members we have lost in the past few years. We will plan a special ceremony at the Demo Garden this fall!

August is hot but there is still work to be done in your gardens. I think I spend most of my time dead-heading some of my plants, and making sure the containers on the deck are kept watered. Enjoy your gardens! 🌻

Inside this issue: **August Monthly Meeting Presentation**

by Karen Shaw, 1st Vice President, Class of 2014

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Cover: The gorgeous colors of the West Tennessee AgResearch & Education Center in Jackson. Photo: Robert Mather/MGDC.

Jeff Poppen, also known as the Barefoot Farmer, is the owner and operator of one of the oldest and largest organic farms in Tennessee. For the past 15 years, Poppen has appeared on the *Volunteer Gardener* program on NPT for over 20 years, has written a gardening column for the *Macon County Chronicle*, and is the author of two books: *The Best of the Barefoot Farmer Vol. 1 & Vol. 2*. Poppen runs a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program with the food he grows using about 8 acres of his farmland and about 40 head of cattle.



This CSA delivers fresh produce to about 150 patrons in the Nashville area, but that does not account for all of the food grown at the Barefoot Farmer's farm. Poppen is always sure to have extra for neighbors, friends, and the surrounding community. While he has only been making and utilizing biodynamic preparations in his farming and gardening for a little over 25 years, he is very proud to have spent the last 40 years providing his own food for himself from what he is able to grow.

Poppen currently runs an apprenticeship program on his farm, and when he is away from the farm he spends his time doing consulting for other farms, lecturing for schools and organized events, and starting new farms using organic and biodynamic methods.

Come to our monthly meeting on August 13th at 6:30pm with all your questions for Jeff Poppen. He has a wealth of knowledge and is eager to help you gain a better understanding of organic and biodynamic methods of gardening. 🌱

Mentoring Program

by Caroll Marrero, Membership Chairperson, Class of 2009

August is simply filled with educational opportunities! (Remember, if you have already earned 8 hours, you may count education hours as "volunteer". In addition to our own projects here are a few additional opportunities:

- August 7th-8th: Tomato Arts Festival, Five Points in East Nashville
- August 8th: Bird Walk, Shelby Bottoms Park
- August 12th: Meet Me at the Market, Nashville Farmers' Market
- August 15th: Urban Wildlife at Shelby Bottoms Nature Center
- August 25th: 7th Annual Fall Gardeners' Festival, Plateau AgResearch & Education Center, 320 Experiment Station Rd, Crossville, TN. Registration begins at 8am CDT and presentations from 9am-3pm.

These are all free admission activities and you can earn one hour of continuing education for every hour attended. 🌱



Above: **Jami Anderson** (2011) and **Russell Kirchner** (2011) welcomed the arrival of their daughter **Harper Kannon Kirchner**, born May 23, 2015 at 7lb. 8oz. and 19.25 inches long. Congratulations! Photo: Cindy Sarlo.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunity at Cheekwood

Cheekwood has requested volunteer assistance at their greenhouse to fill peat pots beginning August 10th and through the 21st. Shifts will be from 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm, Monday thru Friday. For more information, contact Cheekwood volunteer coordinator Barbara Petersen at volunteers@cheekwood.org or (615) 353-6966. 🌱

August 2015

For a complete calendar of events,
visit our website at www.mgofdc.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
2	3 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	4	5 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	6	7	8 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
9	10 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	11 State Fair Planning Meeting, 1pm	12 Meet Me at the Market, 10am-2pm Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	13 August Monthly Meeting, 6:30pm Ellington Ag Cen- ter	14	15 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
16	17 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	18	19 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	20	21	22 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
23	24 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm	25	26 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere 9am-12pm at Belle Meade	27	28	29 Workdays: 8am-12pm at Grassmere and The Hermitage
30	31 Workday: Grassmere, 8am-12pm					

The Hermitage Kitchen Gardens

by Laura Kraft, Co-Chairperson, Class of 2010

The summer sun has kept our volunteers company as we're watering and weeding! The late rains have helped the plants, and the organic deer repellent has been working. We gathered spinach seeds and harvested vegetables and herbs. We've have started our fall seeds in the greenhouse and looking forward to a fruitful fall. The herb garden and café gardens are coming along nicely.

Saturdays starting at 8am: Join in the fun or just come visit - share your knowledge of heirloom gardening or learn more about it. Contact either Laura Kraft at lkraft1212@gmail.com or Mary Langford at langfordlaw@hotmail.com for details. We look forward to gardening with you! 🌱

Harding Garden at Belle Meade

by Mariwyn Evans, Class of 2011

The heat (OMG) may take some pleasure out of gardening in midsummer, but the beauty and bounty of the garden *almost* makes up for the temperatures. Beans, glorious Cherokee Trail of Tears beans, seem to grow overnight and are already topping the teepees we built to hold them. Only Catherine Atwell is tall enough to get the tender pods on top. Okra, peppers, tomatoes, and the last of the cukes round out the weekly harvest. The squash and eggplant got a slow start, but with lots of flowers, the Weedin' Women should have all they need for rustic ratatouille in no time.

Even better news is that the hollyhocks and buckwheat planted in the beds seem to have kept the bugs occupied. So not only are we getting a bumper crop, but the plants look good for all the summer visitors to the Plantation. Plus, a late planting of wax beans and limas should ensure we'll have veggies to share with our fall school groups.

Beat the heat, at least a little, and join us at 8am on Wednesdays, rain permitting. 🌱

Recipe of the Month: Squash & Potato Soup

from the kitchens of Green Fork Academy

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion chopped
- 2 carrots chopped
- 2 ribs celery chopped
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 3 medium potatoes
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 1/2 c squash cubed
- 1 c vegetable stock
- 3 c water
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 tsp black pepper (to taste)

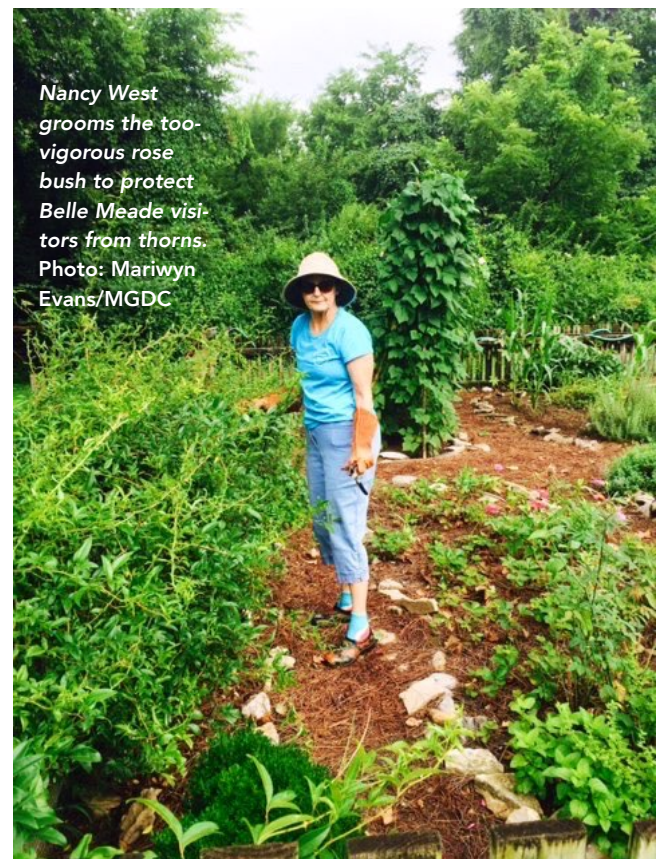
Instructions:

Saute onions, carrots, and celery with garlic in the oil. Add squash, potatoes, vegetable stock, water, and bay leaf. Stir in pepper. Bring to boil 20-30 minutes until everything is nice and soft. Puree soup and season to taste. (To give texture, consider adding more chopped potatoes or some cabbage).

Make approximately 6 servings.



Belle Meade's bounty. Photo: Mariwyn Evans/MGDC



Nancy West grooms the too-vigorous rose bush to protect Belle Meade visitors from thorns. Photo: Mariwyn Evans/MGDC

Historic Grassmere Gardens

by Cathie Long, Chairperson, Class of 1999

The fruits of our labor are coming in a big way. The Bountiful beans truly are producing a bountiful crop. All the heirloom tomatoes provide a very colorful harvest of purples, green, yellow, red; and then there is the red fig and small yellow Blondkopfchen. The name is bigger than the tasty salad tomato. On hand to taste the low hanging fruit is our friend, the turtle.



Eastern Box Turtle among the gardens at Grassmere.
Photo: Cathie Long/MGDC

With the abundance of rain, all the plants are filling up the garden spaces. If you miss a weed it will be knee high when you return. It's been an unusual weather year from the beginning. Who knows what August weather will bring? The zinnias are attracting the butterflies and gold finches everyday and the naked ladies are blooming already.

One thing will be different in September: Zoo management has decided to **not** host Harvest Days this year. In order to expand this celebration and honor the Historic Farm, it has been decided to plan for a year and create an event that will also serve as a fundraiser to support the farm and Croft Home exhibit. It will have more music and fun festival activities for the children. We can all wait in anticipation for this bigger and better showcasing of the farm.

On a personal note, I have made a life changing decision. I will be relocating to Alabama to live closer to my family: daughters, grandchildren and brother. Therefore, I will resign as Chair of the Grassmere project and will support whomever the board asks to lead this master gardener project. The fond memories and special friendships will forever be held in my heart. 🐢

Ballon Flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*)

by Robert Mather, President, Class of 2000

This plant has been around for over 50 years, yet it's still not found in many gardens. The Balloon flower is also known as the Chinese bellflower. This is one of the most reliable and easy to grow additions to your garden. A long-lived perenni-



Balloon flowers en masse. Photo: Robert Mather/MGDC

al that rarely needs dividing and they are deer resistant, they start their flowering in mid-June, peaking in mid-to late summer, after many other perennials have already come and gone.

Native to China, its dominant flower color is a dazzling blue, with white and pink forms available. Balloon flower tolerates extreme cold and scorching summer heat, thriving in full sun but adapts well to partial shade. The flower buds are follow balloons, which gradually inflate and color up. Finally the buds burst open into star-shaped flowers 2- to 3-inches across. If growing from seeds, it may take two years before you see flowers. You may want to buy container-grown plants. Light deadheading helps to extend the bloom time. In the fall you will want to cut off the dead stems.

A footnote about Indian Pink earlier appearing in the June 2015 issue:

It was after touring the gardens in Paris, Tennessee of noted gardener and columnist Jimmy Williams that I fell in love with Indian Pink. Jimmy was the guest speaker at the June meeting of the Perennial Plant Society and talked about this being one of his favorite plants as well. He said to cut the plant back about 1/3 after blooming. NOW is the time to do just that — deadhead! 🐢





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