

Garden Talk



The Official Quarterly Newsletter of
the Master Gardeners of Davidson
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Submissions Readers are encouraged to submit articles and photographs for future issues to newsletter@mgofdc.org that will be featured as space allows.

The deadline for submissions, including items for the forthcoming calendar, is the **15th** of the month before the release date.

Dues

Payment of annual dues of \$20 may be made to the above address, at a monthly meeting, or [securely online with a debit/credit card](#).

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Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. Tennessee Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Cover Photo: Signs of spring in the flower terrace at the Historic Garden at Grassmere. By Andrea Pruijssers, Class of 2013.

Chicken Scratch

by Alisa Huntsman , President (Class of 2008)

Greetings Master Gardeners,

It is hard to believe but the Urban Gardening Festival is just a few weeks away! When Nancy Wilcenski, class of 2014, held her first planning meeting in January, we were several months behind in the planning.

The late start would make it a challenge to find participants and if we could get 50 to commit to taking a booth, we would be lucky! Finding sponsors, lining up speakers, renting tables and chairs, securing tents, publicity, food trucks and so on; so many things to consider and all off to a late start. Honestly, we were a little concerned.

The festival is fast approaching and believe it or not, we are finally able to breathe a small sigh of relief! Thanks to the hard work of a small team of members, there is a full speakers schedule, tables and chairs, tents, sponsors (more than a dozen!), food trucks (4), live entertainment, more than 70 booths with artisans, exhibitors and suppliers and so much more!

This year, the festival is larger than it has ever been and we are so excited to share it with the membership as well as the general public. The publicity team continues to work on spreading the word and we are expecting at least 1,800 attendees.

If you think that it is too late to volunteer, think again! We need volunteers in the garden to help prep it the week leading up the festival. Starting on Friday, May 18, we will be in set up mode and there will be a need for volunteers.

During the festival, we will need some folks to arrive starting at 6:30 a.m. for load in, all day for staffing needs and finally, a crew for break down and clean up. Remember, you can help by donating plants or crafts for the sale and you can also donate a container garden for the contest and enter into the gift card drawing.

Stay tuned for the e-blasts, we will be sending them out to let you know what is needed. And give a big round of applause to Nancy and her planning committee; this is going to be a fantastic festival thanks to you! 🌻

Allan Armitage Headlines PPS May Event

Dr. Allan M. Armitage, world-renowned author, speaker, and plantsman, will be the featured speaker at the May 15 meeting of the Perennial Plant Society of Middle Tennessee. The presentation begins at 7 p.m. at the Cheekwood Estate and Gardens in Nashville.

Armitage has written 16 books; some will be for sale before and after this presentation. He will begin signing at 6:30 p.m.

His presentation is titled "Who Put Those Naked Ladies in My Garden" and will draw on ideas from his 2017 book, *Of Naked Ladies and Forget-Me-Nots*.

He has also made an impressive amount of his plant knowledge available to everyone through his app, *Armitage's Great Garden Plants* which he will also demonstrate. The program is free to members of the Perennial Plant Society and \$10 to others. Parking at Cheekwood is free if you mention PPS. Hope to see you there. 🌻

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Submissions to our newsletter by members are always welcome! While there is plenty to share about our projects and programs, we always enjoy sharing stories about Master Gardeners, their experiences, and their gardens.

If you would like to submit an item to the newsletter, please email newsletter@mgofdc.org.

URBAN GARDENING *Festival*



A FREE COMMUNITY EVENT FOR ALL HOSTED BY THE MASTER GARDENERS OF DAVIDSON COUNTY

SATURDAY, MAY 19, 2018 | 9AM - 4PM, RAIN OR SHINE
AT THE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN
AT ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER

SUPPLIERS • ARTISANS • EXHIBITORS • PLANT DIAGNOSTICS • HOW-TO DEMONSTRATIONS
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES • FOOD TRUCKS • LIVE MUSIC

- Talk to experts from over 50 exhibitors including experts in chickens, beekeeping, and composting and shop local artisans handmade products, like pottery, woven baskets, planters & pots, and more. Tasty eats, beverages, and ice cream will be available for purchase from local food trucks.
- Gardening questions of any nature will be answered at the "Ask a Master Gardener" booth. Master Gardeners of Davidson County, who are trained by UT Extension Agents, will present how-to demonstrations on container gardening, growing herbs, flower gardening, and more.
- See some of the latest trends in backyard gardening and hear presentations from an impressive lineup of speakers from across the state. Seven free interactive presentations, given by UT Extension Agents, Master Gardeners and local experts, will be offered in the Program Tent. Topics range from soil fertility to small scale greenhouses, to attracting backyard birds and pollinators, to controlling moles and voles.
- The Chef Tent is the place to learn how to make an energy drink from local honey, how to make herb-infused butters and pesto with ingredients right from the garden, or watch a cooking demo from a local pro using locally grown produce.
- Find an assortment of handmade crafts for sale including mini-gardens in unique containers, cork wreathes and serving trays, and so much more.
- For junior gardeners, there's plenty to do at the Children's Tent including make-and-take marigolds, face painting, and decorating garden rocks.

DEMONSTRATION GARDEN ADDRESS: 5201 MARCHANT DRIVE, NASHVILLE, TN

PRESENTING SPONSOR: SAINT THOMAS HEALTH

Exhibition Sponsor: Lighthouse Wealth Group

Supporting Sponsors: Leaf Filter, Nashville Foodscapes, The Wood Thrush Shop, Perfect Smile Orthodontics, Kaelyn's Cafe, By Jen Jen, Future Gardening

The Urban Gardening Festival is just around the corner. There are several ways you can help:

1. Donate plants for the Master Gardener plant sale. People love to buy plants grown by Master Gardeners. Be sure to pot in new soil and labeled. All plants need to be outside the Greenhouse before noon on Friday, May 18.
2. Donate a craft for the Master Gardener craft sale.
3. Sign up to spend a few hours working at the event. We need both interns and master gardeners! You can call or email Nancy with the time you are available.
4. Help get the Demonstration Gardens ready by coming on work days as well as next month's meeting at the garden.
5. Donate a planted container to be displayed at the entrance and sold. This entitles you to enter the drawing for a \$25 gift card to Gardens of Baylon.

Thank you for your help! 🌱

Garden Talk

Calendar of Events

May 1-27

Cheekwood Estate & Garden: Australian artist Amanda Parer uses her larger-than-life inflatable bunnies to draw attention to the natural world, its fragility and our role within it.

May 6

The Williamson County Master Gardener's Association and Franklin Farmers Market are hosting the 2018 Garden Festival on May 6 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Factory at Franklin. Admission for the Festival is free.

May 12

Maury County Master Gardeners plant sale: from 8 a.m. to noon at 1018 Maury County Park Drive in Columbia, Tennessee.

May 15

Dr. Allan M. Armitage is the featured speaker at the Perennial Plant Society of Middle Tennessee. The presentation begins at 7 p.m. at the Cheekwood Estate and Gardens in Nashville.

May 19

Urban Gardening Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine, in the Demonstration Garden at Ellington Agricultural Center.

June 16

Annual Daylily Show and Sale: from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the James Ward Agricultural Center.

Monthly Meetings

The May meeting will be a work day at the Demo Garden beginning at 9 a.m.

Bring your food and chairs for the lunch and evening meal. There will be a short business meeting after the evening meal. In case of rain, we will meet at the church at the normal time of 6:30 p.m.

The speaker for the June 14 meeting will be Jay Williams of Crown Bees, the native bee experts. <https://crownbees.com/>

For the July meeting we will be taking a bus trip to Jackson to the Summer Celebration Lawn & Garden Show at the UT West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center.



Jane McLaughlin recently gave the scarecrows at the Historic Garden at Grassmere a fresh new look. Photo by Andrea Pruijssers

Historic Grassmere Garden

by Rich Shiavi, Class of 2009

The garden at Grassmere contains several terraces and includes one for medicinal plants, mostly herbs. For over five millennia plants have been the “medicine shop”, the source of chemicals for treating many ailments and wounds. The effective chemical is contained in various parts of the plant, such as the leaves, flowers, stems and roots.

The modality for extracting the effective chemical was/is to make a hot tea with the appropriate part of the plant. If you are old enough to have seen an apothecary shop, you'll remember the shelves holding jars which contained the dried leaves, etc. from various plants. In approximately ¼ of the medicines that we use today the effective chemical is derived from plants.

At the present time there are approximately 35 perennial plants in the medicinal garden and they are just beginning to arise from their winter's rest. So a few of those will be presented and described using photographs from last spring.

In 2017 we updated the brochure describing all of the plants in the Grassmere Garden – WEB.Grassmere Guide.pdf. Please contact one of us for an electronic copy. Many pictures and information about the garden can be found on the MGDC website. 📷

Artemisia Absinthium - Wormwood

There are about 10 varieties of artemisia but the absinthium has the most general use. It grows wild in temperate regions of Europe and eastern US and sends out rhizomes for spreading. A tea is made from the leaves which is very bitter and so is consumed in small doses for digestive ailments and anemia. It has also been used for eliminating worms. There is a growth inhibiting toxin on the leaves which gets washed onto the ground from rain.



Comfrey – Symphytum Officinale, Knitbone

Comfrey is an indigenous European plant and grows in the temperate region. It thrives in moist soil and is difficult to eradicate. It is a tall plant with reddish blossoms. Its leaves contain several vitamins and minerals and has been claimed to be a miracle worker for a thousand years. Infused oil made from its leaves has been used to treat stomach ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, and some respiratory conditions. Its mucilaginous secretions promote the healing of broken bones, bruises, and fracture



Costmary/Bible Leaf – Chrysanthemum Balsamita, Tanacetum Balsamita

Costmary is a perennial of medium height with insignificant yellow flowers. Its large balsamic leaves are very fragrant and used to make a tea for treating colds, catarrh, upset stomachs and cramps. Catarrh is an inflammation of a mucous membrane; especially: one chronically affecting the human nose and air passages. Lay crushed fresh leaves to ease the pain of bee stings. Since colonial days the leaves were used to mark pages in the bible. Sleepy churchgoers sniffed and chewed the leaves to stay awake during long, boring sermons.



Fennel – Foeniculum Vulgare, Umbelliferae

Fennel is grown in the temperate regions and is one of the oldest cultivated plants. Roman gladiators mingled it with their daily food to keep healthy. All parts of fennel are edible; the bulbous rootstalk is finocchio (Now it is an annual.). The ancient Greek and Roman ladies ate it to prevent obesity. Fennel is tall with an umbel of small yellow flowers. An infusion from the seeds is an aid to digestion and eases constipation. Chew the seeds to allay hunger and ease indigestion. Last year there were surprise visitors. We noticed that the leaves were stripped and upon close inspection we saw the culprit – the caterpillars of the black swallowtail butterfly.



Saint John's Wort – Hypericum Perforatum

Saint John's Wort is a fragrant hardy shrub of medium height and grows wild throughout most of the world. Its leaves are pale green and oblong with tiny perforations called oil glands. Lemon-scented yellow flowers appear in summer. An oil infusion made from the flowers has been used as a pain-reducing sedative tea for anemia, rheumatism, headaches, and nervous conditions. The oil in the flowers contains hypericin which is thought to have strong antidepressant and antiviral properties.

City Cemetery

by Robert Mather (2000) and Catherine Attwell (2004)

It has not been easy finding good weather days to do any projects! We did have our annual Boxwood Trimming demo at the end of February. This was a good "earn and learn" for our interns and members.

We did get a chance twice to clean out or beds so we could prepare for spring. I have not had an opportunity to visit the Cemetery in a couple of weeks but hope the Dogwoods are still in bloom as would be the purple iris and our lilac bush.

Our Living History Tour committee has met and began plans for the anticipated fall event. There may be a couple of surprises this year! Memorial Day means the annual Cemetery Run with the Nashville Striders!

Watch the calendar for upcoming workdays. ☺

The Hermitage Gardens

by Mary Langford, Class of 2009

Things are getting started at The Hermitage. The magnificent rosemary and sage bushes took a hit with the cold weather, but they seem to have some life left in them. We are looking forward to them regaining their former glory. The horseradish and rhubarb are coming back strong.

The onions and garlic that overwintered well and are healthy and strong. We will plant our spring/summer crops in late April when there is no frost in the forecast.

As usual, we have too many chamomile plants coming up as "volunteers". They will be potted and offered for sale at Urban Garden Festival.

We meet as a group on Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. Please join us, starting April 21, 2018. We look forwards to seeing you. ☺



Anne Underhill (left) and Leah Hawkins turn a weed-filled garden into a home for summer vegetables at Belle Meade.

Harding Garden at Belle Meade

by Mariwyn Evans, Class of 2011

Spring is finally here. And with spring comes WEEDS! What was once a vegetable garden looked a lot like a weed farm when the Belle Meade regulars started work in late March.

But we don't call ourselves the Weedin' Women for nothing. After two work sessions, all the beds were clear and composted, dead foliage trimmed, and beds ready for spring planting. In addition to our usual crops of beans, okra, and tomatoes, we plan to experiment with a sorghum plant and maybe even cotton. Although neither is strictly a vegetable, we think they represent the types of crops early Tennessee settlers grew. Plus all our school kids will love them.

Up at the new cutting garden, hardy perennials and self-seeding annuals are starting to peep up, despite the cold. 'Becky' daisies, lilies, and coneflowers are all well on their way to bloom time. Soon, we will be adding some dahlias, gladiolas, and other varieties made for cutting.

We will be working on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. until things heat up. Come see us and give us your thoughts on either garden. ☺

Junior Camp 2018

by Pam Swoner (Class of 2009)

As part of the Junior Camp fund-raiser the focus of our educational topic will be recycle/reuse. Natural Home Brands has partnered with Jr Camp so we are able to offer reusable Veggie Bags for sale. For \$6 you can purchase 5 reusable, washable bags. They are a great way to stop using so much plastic. I love mine!

Jr Camp begins Monday, June 11th and runs through Friday the 15th. The hours are 9 a.m.–3 p.m. each day and the ages are 9 through 12. We are accepting 15 campers this year and already have half of the spots taken so if you know of someone that is planning to come please have them send in their applications soon.

The theme for camp this year is Inspiring Curiosity. We will explore the property at Ellington and talk about what makes an Ecosystem. We'll learn by hiking to the apiary, playing in the creek and learning how to rate stream health. We also have a real treat this year! The Metro Police Horse Mounted Patrol has invited us to a riding demonstration at the horse barn.

The campers will be learning from doing and if you would like to share your knowledge with them please let me know. You could teach an activity and/or walk with us to ask and answer questions. Who knows. You might become just as inspired as our campers by the end of the week! 🌱



Jr Camp is preparing for the Urban Festival and our camp interns have started tomato, pepper and flower seeds. This has been a new and exciting part of their continuing education. One has decided she is ready for the 2019 adult class!



MG Booth Wins Award at Lawn and Garden Show

Thanks to the more than 600 hours of hard work by dozens of Master Gardeners, the Master Garden booth at March's Lawn and Garden Show was a huge hit. Visitors exclaimed over the clever use of tire planters, an amazing graffiti wall, and a rain barrel fountain. Show judges awarded the booth a Plant Awareness ribbon for its educational labeling of flowers and vegetables. The label's themselves were old tin can lids—all part of the reuse theme.

The booth's theme, "From Brownfield to Green Garden," reflected the show's theme, "Guerilla Gardening." The guiding idea of the MG booth was to demonstrate how unused and even polluted, land could be revived into a healthy environment for food, wildlife, and enjoyment of nature.

Master Gardeners at the booth also helped educate the public on how to make poor soil more productive. They distributed more than 200 soil testing kits and 1,000 "seed bombs" full of wildflower seeds for visitors to plant. Master Gardeners and new class members also manned the entry door at the show.

L&G Co-Chairs Barbara Drake and Mariwyn Evans want once again to thank all the Master Gardeners who shared their time, creativity, and strong backs to making this year's project a success. 🌱



Tennessee Extension Master Gardener State Conference 2018

by Robert Mather, Class of 2000

It has been two weeks since our state MG convention, but I still think about some of the many wonderful experiences since attending.

Something new this year, a Thursday afternoon event for those who had arrived early from out of town and those who live could participate.

Meeting for a 1 p.m. workshop at Carter House, an historical Franklin Civil War site we began with an introduced by Natalie Bumgarner, our state MG coordinator, to Larry Stephenson, of the Southern Fruit Fellowship, who gave an excellent hands-on presentation of Grafting fruit tree.

The next session was a tour of the Carter house and grounds including the Fruit Tree orchard by Justin Stelter.

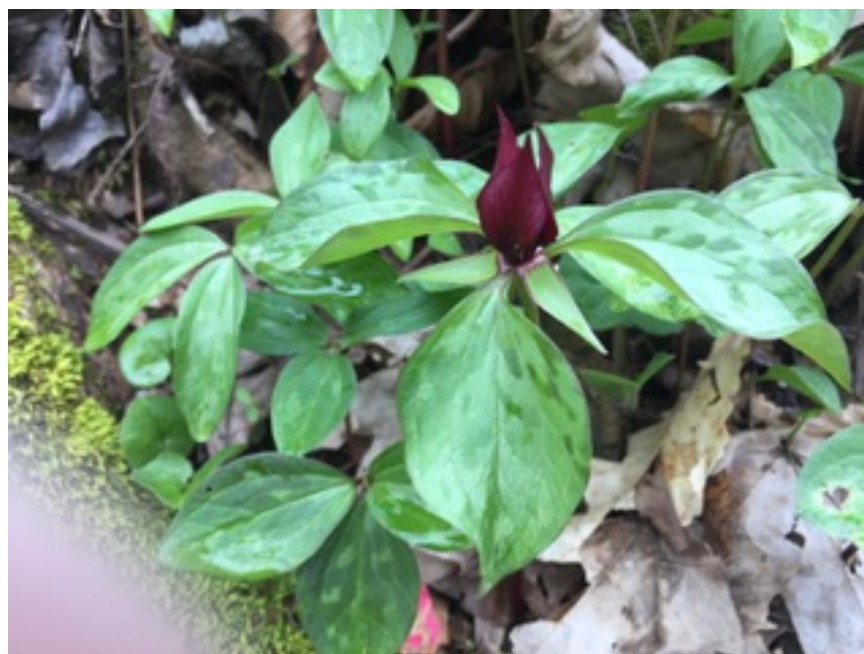
Many of the participants headed toward Montgomery Bell State Park, site of the weekend Conference. I chose to drive the 40 miles each day. Friday's session started with an opening introduction, the Search for Excellence presentations and a wonderful presentation about Lighting Bugs or fireflies as some refer these night lighter!

Our first session workshop began at 10:30. I chose a wildflower and outdoor photography hike of 2.5 miles. It was a little chilly, but the photo tips on shooting pictures was informative and I tried my hand at a few photos. I only knew the names of some of the native wildflowers along the trail, but enjoyed being in the company of several Master Gardeners who knew their wild plants, which were just revealing their spring folage, a few even in bloom. I was glad I took a hike!

Other sessions I enjoyed were "The not so unusual plants for the landscape" presented by Lucan Holman, newly appointed Wilson county extension agent who spoke to us in February, "Using surveys and data to enhance your local TEMG group" presented by our very own Deb Wilcox and David Cook and Natalie Bumgarner.

It was great to have some of the other MGofDC members join me including Catherine Atwell, Alisa Huntsman, Barbara Hoffman, Chuck Vehorn and Jennifer Telford. Each of them have their own favorite takeaways from the wonderful weekend. Another great highlight, having our own Joan Clayton-Davis win the Central Region award for OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER. Joan has done an outstanding job developing and maintaining our Speaker's Bureau.

Thanks for all your hard work from all of us! The next State Conference will be in 2019. 🌱





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Ask a Master Gardener

By Robert Mather (Class of 2000)

Rain was not the only thing going on Saturday April 14! Catherine Atwell and I participated in the 15th Birthday Celebration at Gardens of Babylon by manning an Ask A Master Gardener informational table. Despite the rain, there was a great crowd for Gardeners ready to get started planting their spring crops....but we helped them understand they had just a couple of weeks more to wait for spring to arrive. We had a great time giving gardening information and spreading the word about the upcoming Urban Garden Festival. I was very happy the Gardens of Babylon has invited us to return for more Ask A Master Gardeners sessions.

