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photo from <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forsythia>

## From The President

Dear Master Gardeners

Thank you Mike Milsom, Bob Ellis, Barb Tucker and all the great volunteers we had working at the West Tennessee Lawn and Garden Show. We had many visitors asking questions and signing up to be notified of future Master Gardener classes. It looks like the increased interest in backyard gardening is continuing to grow.

We have many activities coming up, especially our Spring Plant Sale. Our project managers are hard at work and are hoping you have many plants potted up for the sale!

The Garden Starter Station is set up to begin April 6th and the Earth Day Celebration is April 25th. We have a lot going on and plenty of opportunities for volunteer hours!

Our next meeting is April 2nd and will be held at 309 N Parkway at 6:30. Please bring a dish to pass.

Our speaker for April is Jason Reeves, taking us on a "virtual tour" of his garden travels this past year . See you there! Happy Spring!

Mary Nenarella, President

## Events for the Month of April

- 1) April 6<sup>th</sup> Garden Starting Station Grand Opening at Library
- 2) April 6<sup>th</sup> Walk Across TN  
<https://extension.tennessee.edu/watmadison/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3) April 7<sup>th</sup> 5:30-6:30 “My Neighbors Grass is Always Greener” Lawn Maintenance Class for Homeowners at Extension Auditorium
- 4) April 11<sup>th</sup> Tipton Co. Lawn & Garden Expo
- 5) April 11<sup>th</sup> Shamrock N’Walk
- 6) April 18<sup>th</sup> 9am-2pm The Annual Herb Sale (Nashville-TN State Fairgrounds)  
[www.herbsocietynashville.org](http://www.herbsocietynashville.org)
- 7) April 21<sup>st</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage Smoky Mountains  
<http://www.springwildflowerpilgrimage.org/>
- 8) April 25<sup>th</sup> (9am-1pm) Earthday Festival at Farmers Market  
[http://jacksontn.com/tourism/programs\\_events/community\\_calendar/detail/sports/ikaj28dv8lhvtf1ef67m6tuks/](http://jacksontn.com/tourism/programs_events/community_calendar/detail/sports/ikaj28dv8lhvtf1ef67m6tuks/)

Just a gentle reminder: **It’s time to pay your Membership Dues for 2015**

All MCMG members are asked to pay dues. Interns are the exception, they do not pay membership dues until after they graduate.

Membership Dues are **\$10 per person**.

You can pay with cash or by check. If you write a check, please make it payable to: MCMG.

If you want to mail your dues to me - - my address is listed in the new MCMG Directory. If you’re not sure if you’ve already paid or not, a list will be provided at the meeting.

Thank you and I look forward to working with you,

Tammy Overby

## Master Gardener Winter School 2015 Murfreesboro, TN

We had a wonderful time at Winter School! It was a first for us, and gathering with other Master Gardeners just made the wait for warmer weather almost unbearable.

To start the meeting, Chris Cooper (who presented to us in the fall), Extension Agent Shelby County and former Intern TN MG State Coordinator introduced our new Coordinator and Assistant Professor for Residential and Consumer Horticulture, Natalie Bumgarner, Ph.D. It was nice to see a little history of the program and where it is going from here. The program is considering new and exciting things.

Being a Graduate with a degree in Organizational Communication, I loved Greene County's presentation on "Growing Your Organization with Better Understanding of Personality Profiles and Group Dynamics". EVERYONE has something to offer if we all work together as a group. We learned specifically how we are different from others and how to embrace those differences to have a more effective and efficient group. Hopefully we can do this activity with our group of MGs soon.

Now let's get to the plants! If you are on Facebook, Like the page "Soil, Plant Pest Center" It is amazing. Boxwood blight has been found around TN, but plants were from out of state nurseries. It causes circular dark brown spots.

The virus causing Rose Rosette will be researched and hopefully produce some answers in the next 5 years. Also, I'm not excited about Crape Myrtle Bark Scale which will cause white felty looking areas.

We have awesome plants, but we also have awesome groups and projects. Our MG state program gives awards for Search for Excellence. Some of the winners included: Dyer County's Shady Acres Arboretum for Community Service, Rutherford County's demonstration garden, Sequatchie Valley's shiitake mushroom workshop and tomato tasting contest, and my favorite, Bradley County's Juvenile Court/Jr. Master Gardener Program. This was the winner in the Innovative category and uses Texas A&M's curriculum as an alternative choice to public service for 13-17 year old offenders.

Now, lets get planting!  
LesLee Smelser

## Volunteering for table centerpieces at the RIFA Soup Kitchen

I want to share some information with Master Gardeners who have never volunteered for the centerpieces on the tables at Regional Interfaith Association. I hope volunteers will consider adding this to their projects for Master Gardener hours. For those Master Gardeners who have experience with the Soup Kitchen - Thank You - and please continue to volunteer for this project.

RIFA is located at 133 Airways. There are TWELVE (12) tables that need to have something live placed in vases which are provided. This is done every MONDAY, every week of the year since the Soup Kitchen is open 365 days a year. The best time to bring the arrangements is between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Mondays. The last week's centerpieces are usually still on the table and will need to be thrown away. The remaining vases should be rinsed out or volunteers working in the kitchen can be asked to run the vases through the dish washer in the kitchen if things are not too busy. There is a Rubbermaid tub containing extra vases which often gets moved around, but should be able to be located if the Master Gardener asks around. If the vases on the tables have residue that will not clean up and is bad for the fresher flowers the tub with clean vases needs to be located. If you have any problems with anything, please give me a call at 423-1065 or 661-1132. I will be glad to bring dirty vases home for a major scrubbing if needed.

Many times only a single stem has adorned the tables and this is fine. Usually the single stem looks even better if it has leaves or a small branch of greenery is added. Some suggestions learned over the years from some of us who have done this for a while are: Remember that live includes lots of things including interesting branches from shrubs; on Sundays or early Monday mornings the Kroger stores floral departments regularly clear out flowers for bargain prices that have not sold; and many times altar flowers from Sunday morning church services do not have a use after the service is over. Some Master Gardeners may think of other creative ideas for finding flowers for use. If Master Gardeners have ideas for sources for flowers please share these ideas with other volunteers. Do not forget to give yourself hours for any running around you have had to do to find flowers. Things get easier in the summer when we can gather the arrangements from our own yards.

If you volunteer to do these centerpieces, you can be performing two service projects. When you arrive there are usually Soup Kitchen patrons drinking coffee and occasionally having a breakfast. Many of these people are or have been homeless or have had other problems that have left them ignored by society. They express how the public most of the time avoids eye contact or ignores them. By simply looking them in the face and greeting them you are giving them something greater than centerpieces!

Contributed by Kathy House, project coordinator for the RIFA centerpieces

## May Plant Sale Approaching Quickly

Tharon Kirk

At last, the weather has warmed up and hopefully we have seen the last of winter until next year! With the warming of the ground and the air, dormant plants should be peeking through the ground. Time to start dividing some of your beautiful plants and potting them up for the plant sale. Or maybe you need to take some cuttings that will root fairly quickly. Remember that we advertise our plants as plants that we know will survive in this area and have done well for us. Plants that have had time to settle into pots and become comfortable and put on some growth look better and also sell better. So get those plants dug and into pots!

Sometimes in the past I have not carried a plant to the sale because it seemed too small. Last year we had a bargain table and everything on it was sold for \$1. It was a popular table. We have decided to do that again. So just because you don't have a big plant to bring, a small baby plant that will fill out in another year is okay. Just remember folks are looking for something they might not find elsewhere.

Remember to save boxes for us! The boxes are used by customers to carry their plants and to be able to store the plants together in the holding area. We need boxes that are not too deep. Check with your local grocery store and find out when is a good time to come and take boxes. I was lucky this week and was in Kroger when they were redoing a pineapple display. I picked up 8 large, sturdy boxes on the spot. The box tops on computer paper make good boxes too. Keep your eyes open for boxes and save them for us. Ask friends to save boxes for us.

We will have sign-ups out at our April meeting. We will need people to work on Thursday morning (May 7) to help with set-up and then Thursday afternoon and Friday to help receive plants, attach labels, price, and arrange the plants in appropriate areas to best advantage. On the day of the sale, May 9<sup>th</sup>, we will need greeters, teams of adders, persons working in the holding area, and persons to assist shoppers in transporting their plants to their vehicles. **Please do not show up expecting to work on sale day unless you have signed up or been asked to perform a job. Due to our limited space, we want to give as much space as possible to our shoppers.**

The Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association has offered to direct traffic and help with parking for our sale. They are experienced in doing this and will be in uniform so will be more visible. That will free up MGs to assist with loading plants for patrons.

Please help us advertise the Plant Sale. In April, we will have flyers available for you to take and place in your neighborhood, workplace, church, etc. Help us get the word out and be sure people understand the change in location of the plant sale.

Finally, remember to let Mary Kay Havranak (mkretired08@gmail.com) know what plants (and how many) you are bringing if you want her to print your labels for you. The labels will be ready when your plants arrive and will only need to be affixed to the MG label card. In order for Mary Kay to be able to print the labels she must receive the information by Monday, May 4th. Included in this issue is a list of the plants for which we already have labels prepared. If you are bringing some plants not on the list and let her know prior to the deadline, Mary Kay will research and prepare those labels and add the plant to our list.



Nettie Jean and Erie Kate setting up the Fairy Gardens for the 2012 Plant Sale.

## Spring Lawn Care

Even though all gardeners share a love for nature, some have very different priorities when it comes to their outdoor spaces. Many wish to fill every available space with blooming, ornamental, or even edible vegetation, while others enjoy the use and functionality of open spaces around their gardens. For those of you in the first group of folks, this open area is more commonly known as a LAWN! As for the second group, I lovingly refer to these turfgrass manager types as “Grass Gardeners.” They are simply perfecting the art of growing grass in the landscape!

As the temperatures begin to warm, it is time for us to consider some weed control options for basic lawn maintenance. It is not necessary to completely eradicate all weedy plants from the lawn, but controlling the weed population will reduce competition for nutrients and encourage healthy growth of turf grass. The first step that seasoned and beginner “Grass Gardeners” should take is to evaluate the need of a pre-emerge herbicide application. Prevention of smooth crabgrass is the main concern for those who have Bermuda grass lawns in West TN. Timing is critical for adequate control, and by rule of thumb, lawns should be treated with pre-emerge herbicide before the last forsythia blooms fall from the shrub. There are several options for chemical control and most prevent a wide spectrum of broadleaf weeds as well. If you are also struggling with the presence of cool season annual weeds or wild onion, you may consider tank mixing a post-emerge herbicide with your pre-emerge treatment as well. There are many choices and factors to consider. If you need help selecting the proper route, application, or herbicide selection, just give me a shout and I will steer you in the right direction! For those who would like to know more about lawn care maintenance schedules and turfgrass in general, you may want to attend the upcoming workshop “My Neighbors Grass is Always Greener” a lawn maintenance class for homeowners at the Extension Auditorium on Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Madison County Master Gardener Input Requested Planning for the regional West TN Extension Master Gardener workshop is underway! We have set the date to coincide with the Fall Plant Sale and special speaker on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>. Our workshop will be from 9am-Noon, we will have lunch, and then be ready for the afternoon speaker and plant sale! This is going to be a great opportunity to fellowship with other Master Gardeners, share ideas, and learn. We want this training to not only be educational, but fun. Please look through this list of topics that have been suggested and let me know which topic you feel would be most beneficial to your training. If you have other topic suggestions, please communicate those to me as well.

- Grafting (woody/vegetable hands on)
- Herbs- culinary or medicinal (could be partially hands-on)
- CSI (plant pathology) walkabout
- Tree ID, Pressing leaves (hands on), arboretum certification
- How to do format and design a power point presentation, Public speaking tips and ideas
- Fall color in shrubs and perennials, Winter vegetable garden, Winter container combos

**Orbital Nordic track:** My strength and endurance seems to be declining as my 72 year-old asthmatic lungs lose efficiency. Exercise is reported to increase strength and endurance at any age. I now have an elliptical Nordic track upstairs to see whether I can trade some stomach fat for muscle at my age. Carol and I would like to stay on these 2 acres and do what we are doing for a while and that requires reasonable physical condition and stamina.

**Nashville Lawn and Garden Show:** This show remains the premier spring horticultural event within reach of us in Jackson. Carol and I returned with a number of small herb and fern plants and a gardening item or two. The crowds do limit what one can see but teach patience. Heaven knows I need more patience!

**Plant Sale Plants:** The 300 plus plants in our cold frames are beginning to break dormancy. I even see tiny green shoots on some of the ferns. The hardy begonias will not begin growth until just ahead of the sale if they are still alive. The plants in our unheated garage including the recently departed clivias also did well this winter. On the other hand I have lost all of the Thai Giant elephant ears and many of the other plants from the sunroom to a combination of cold winter weather and plant pests. This year I will be taking cuttings earlier (about 6 weeks after a plant begins growth) allowing them to acquire some size before fall and overwintering them in the cold frames. All plants which come inside will be treated for pests before they come in as they should be. My tomatoes and peppers are up but growing very slowly in their pots. More plants for our plant sale will be potted Monday as they are now emerging from their long winter's sleep and ready to be potted.

**Weather:** Has the extremely cold weather now past? It appears so. We are caught up on our rain and then some. I wish we could save some for summer when we will need it. Begin preparing for summer irrigation now and lay in a store of mulch.

**Do Now:** If you have not pruned, finish pruning and cutting back. Prune woody summer flowering plants after the last of the cold weather and ornamental grasses before they begin new growth. A couple of weeks ago would have been perfect. Transplant woody plants immediately. Set new trees shrubs and perennials and plant cool season vegetables. Now is the time when everything needs doing at once. I should have English peas, Swiss chard, turnips and kohlrabi up in a few days. If you have plants which look like they may have been injured or killed by our somewhat harsh winter this year leave them alone until you can see where and if they will grow out.

**Pop-Up Greenhouse:** I bought a 6 by 6 foot pop-up plastic greenhouse six or eight years ago at Summer Celebration for spring use. It is now up and full of plants. It is also too small and coming to the end of its usable life. It is worth replacing but not just yet... Is there a way to get permission for and to site a small permanent greenhouse effectively on this property? Could I afford to heat and cool it? It is worth thinking about if my body responds favorably to the Nordic track.



## **Earth Day Festival**

Jodie Jacobs, with Keep Jackson Beautiful, has invited MCMG to participate in the upcoming Earth Day Festival. It will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Farmer's Market in Downtown Jackson. The day is full of events including a 5K run early that morning, a community wide yard sale, hazardous waste collection, regular vendors of the farmers market, and special booths set up to display any variety of recycled crafts as well as speakers. As you can probably tell, the theme of the day will be to Reuse and Recycle in an effort to improve the world around us. She has asked us to set up a booth from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. I think we could get very creative with this. We could display pictures of how we have repurposed items for practical or decorative use in our own gardens. We could even display some of those on site to help spark the imaginations of others. We need a volunteer to chair this event and organize others to help. Contact me if you are interested!

**-Last Call for MG Volunteers to chair and work this event! If we are going to participate in this City Wide Festival, we need someone to begin organizing IMMEDIATLEY!!!**

## **Jackson Tree Board**

Fellow Master Gardener David Mathis has invited any MG who have an interest aboriculture to join the "Jackson Tree Board." They meet 6-8 times per year at Perkins Resturant at 11:30 a.m. Other special projects are also involved. If interested, please contact Jodi Jacobs at 731-425-8227 or David Mathis at 731-618-0898.



## Tipton County Lawn & Garden EXPO “Hats off to Gardening”

**FREE**  
Admission

Tipton County Master Gardeners  
Present the 8th Annual

**Lawn & Garden EXPO**

*Hats Off to Gardening!*

**Saturday, April 11, 2015 9AM - 4PM**

**Brighton High School Gymnasium**  
8045 Hwy 51 South, Brighton TN

**Speakers, Vendors, Raffles, Soil Testing, Children's Area,  
Plant Sales, "Ask A Master Gardener" table, & much more!**

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

**For more information,  
contact Tom Mashour, Tipton Co.  
Master Gardener at (901) 337-0046**

The Tipton County Master Gardeners have invited us to attend their Lawn & Garden Expo! Wear your 'garden hats' and join us at this year's Lawn & Garden EXPO. Dynamic speakers have been engaged (Carol Reese; Eric Bridges & Wes Hopper; Chris Cooper), many exhibitors, demonstrations, door prizes, children's workshop, soil testing, plant sales, horticultural information, plus much more of interest. For more information go to

[www.tiptoncountymastergardeners.com](http://www.tiptoncountymastergardeners.com) or call 901-476-0231

We are also looking for home gardeners who often have excess produce, who would be willing to pass on that extra produce to people in need. We can use any garden, big or small! In conjunction with the seed library, we are developing a produce donation network called Jackson Harvest Share, which will connect local gardeners to relief organizations around the city. These organizations will use the produce to benefit the community in a variety of ways. As soon as all the details are all worked out, a spreadsheet will be developed that will provide a contact number/place/day/time where the produce can be delivered for each organization. Let us know if you'd be interested in occasionally donating produce through our program, or if you'd be interested in growing an extra row, plant, or pot for the community. We want to spread health and wellness from local produce all around the city, especially to those who don't always have access to it! We'd love to hear from you. Send us an email at [jacksonharvestshare@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonharvestshare@gmail.com). Cari Phillips

ComeUnity Cafe's urban garden manager Cari Phillips in partnership with Master Gardeners, and Library Director Dinah Harris, are starting a local Seed Sharing Library at the Jackson Madison County Public Library this Spring! This concept is catching on all around the country, with the closest one being in Nashville. The way it works is as simple as the concept of checking out a book. A large amount of seeds have been donated and will be organized into categories ranked from easiest to hardest to grow. A station will be set up in the library with available resources for people to check out along with their seeds. We'll have books, pamphlets, and instructional guides to help those who may be starting seeds for the first time. Anyone with a library card can "check out" seeds to use in their home gardens. The seeds obviously do not have to be returned, but we will teach and encourage others to save seeds from their harvest to give back to the library and the community. We will also offer a variety of classes taught by local professionals to help further educate others on the art of growing your own food. The seed library's goals are to encourage the age old traditions of passing down heirloom seeds, to help others grow their way out of hunger through vegetable gardening, and to facilitate community education in organic gardening, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.

If you would like more information, or if you would like to donate seeds or resources, please email us at [jacksonseedlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonseedlibrary@gmail.com).

# Wanted!! Articles for the Newsletter

You can earn volunteer hours by writing about some garden you visited, some technique you tried which worked (or did not), or share your enthusiasm for some special plant, or condensing a gardening article you read.

Keep contributing. Keep reading. Keep sharing.

Please send your contributions to:

Liz Whitsitt    lizv@tds.net

Pam Stanfield    pamstanfield@gmail.com

## April Meeting

THURSDAY  
April 2nd

Jason Reeves  
Last Years Trips

The Extension Office  
309 N. Parkway

Please bring a dish to share



**Check Out  
UT Gardens Jackson  
On Facebook!**

Lots of great info being shared there, and you don't have to wait for a monthly newsletter!

### **The Bridge to Knowledge**

The University of Tennessee Extension

Madison County

309-C North Parkway

Jackson, TN 38305

Phone 731-668-8543    Fax 731-668-8440

Email cscott52@utk.edu (Celeste Scott)

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