

# THE LEAFLET



Fall 2011

A PUBLICATION BY THE ROBERTSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

**December Master Gardener Meeting!**  
**Thursday, December 8th, 7 P.M.**  
**@ the Robertson Co, Extension Office**  
**LET'S PARTY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**  
**See You There!**

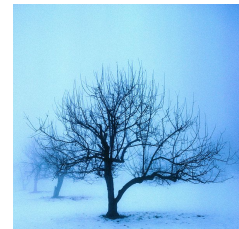
## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>!

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, we did not have a Master Gardeners meeting in November. Our Christmas party/December meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M. Bring a finger food (snacks, deserts, sandwiches, beverages, etc.) and a \$10.00 garden related gift to exchange. We will welcome our new "Class of 2011" gardeners, elect our 2012 officers, and wind up with our traditional "That-was-the-Year-That-Was, 2011 virtual Christmas Card/Slide Show.

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**BY THE WAY.....**

**Have you logged your Master Gardener hours this month? The deadline for entering 2011 hours is NOVEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>!**  
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## 2012 TMG Winter School



Murfreesboro, TN  
February 9-10, 2012

[Register Now!](#) Download the program or print a registration form @

<http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu>

Highlights include: A focus on project management and new project ideas, hands-on training sessions to make teaching gardeners more fun. And HGTV's Erica Glasener! See the program online for more details. Subscribe to the [Taking Root Newsletter](#) for updates and information related to Winter School. Registration is \$75 for the full conference and \$45 per individual track.



**Mark your calendar now!**  
**Nashville Lawn & Garden Show**  
**March 1 - 4, 2012**

*Tennessee State Fairgrounds*

Come enjoy -

**"Gardens:  
Past, Present, Future"**

Thousands of spring flowers & plants

- *Free* lectures & workshops
- Spectacular floral designs
- Shopping in over 250 exhibit booths filled with plants, outdoor decor, gardening tools and much more!
- Amazing live gardens

**Plus new features in 2012**

that are sure to become favorites.

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The new edition of the Tennessee Master Gardener Handbook is available to members for \$50. We have a copy available if you would like to review it prior to ordering. Copies of the old 3-ring binder handbook are also available for \$25. Contact the Extension office if you would like to order a copy.

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### **“Composting Made Easy”**

One of the best things you can do for your garden is to add some of nature’s best fertilizer – compost. Compost is one of the best mulches and soil amendments you can use.

Adding compost to your garden will help improve soil fertility, loosen clay soils and stimulate better root systems in your garden plants.

Waste materials from your yard and kitchen scraps are the best sources of organic matter for your compost pile. Kitchen scraps in particular are typically high in nitrogen, which helps heat up the compost pile and speed up the composting process. The organic matter in compost provides food for soil microorganisms, which is a vital part of keeping soil in a balanced, healthy condition, so few if any amendments need to be added to your soil.

The following are tips to help you get started composting:

1. Set up a compost bin in a discreet place in your yard. A bin will save space, quicken decomposition, and keep the yard looking neat. Many commercial bins are available; however, you can make one from a variety of materials.
2. Too much of any one composting material will slow down the decomposition process. If you have all grass, all leaves, or too much of any other single type of material, it can throw off the balance of the pile.
3. Do not add meat scraps and dog or cat manure to your compost.
4. Heat builds up with a big pile. Try not to get much bigger than one cubic yard (3 ft. by 3 ft. by 3 ft).
5. Keep your compost aerated. If you are using a compost tumbling bin, tumble it when you add new materials. If you are using a pile method, turn it with a garden fork when you add new materials.
6. A compost pile needs moisture to keep the composting process active. Don’t let your pile dry out.
7. Just as too dry is bad, too wet is also something that you should avoid. Make sure your compost pile doesn’t get so wet that it’s soggy and stinks.
8. Compost is ready when it is dark brown, crumbles in your hand, and is fairly earthy smelling. Mix compost into your flower and vegetable beds. Work one to two inches of compost into the top three to five inches of soil.
9. If your compost pile’s performance is less than you expected, check your moisture level and give it a good turn to encourage decomposition. Additionally, although normally not needed, commercial products are available that add beneficial microbes to your pile and can help speed things up.

For more information check the compost section in the Master Gardener Handbook.

**Good books to have on the shelf for winter reading:**

- “At Home in the Garden” by Becke Davis
- “Outstanding Perennials” by Teri Dunn & Walter Reeve
- “100 Heirloom Tomatoes for the American Garden” by Carolyn J. Male
- “Perennials for Dummies” by Marcia Tatroe
- “The Bountiful Container” by McGee & Stuckey
- “A Field Guide to the Wildflowers of North America” by Joan Barker
- “HERBS” by Weldon Owen



Pictured above is our new and revised second draft of the signs to be posted on Robertson County Master Gardener projects. How exciting!

**GOT TIME?????????**

Please enter ALL of your 2011 volunteer hours by NOVEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>. The extension office must report total Master Gardener volunteer hours. Volunteer time is important to the University of Tennessee’s funding of the Master Gardener program.

**NEED HELP????????  
(Reporting your time)**

Master Gardener volunteer hours may be entered online or on paper. If you do

NOT have online access or it does not work for you, no worries! A form may be obtained at the Extension Office.



**“Wintering Herbs Indoors”**

The harvest of herbs has been winding down, and the frenzy of trying to stay ahead of the weeds has abated. It’s easy to kick back, relax and forget about gardening until the new seed catalogs start coming in January. Gardeners who live where winters are frost-free can do this. However that leaves a lot of us unaccounted for and wondering what to save and bring in or not keep. Those who grow rosemary, lavenders, or other plants know these plants will most likely die at temps below 15. Some of us enjoy fresh herbs and even lettuces all winter long! First of all, forget about the annuals such as dill, cilantro, and summer savory. You will have to start some of those herbs and other plants indoors from seed. Several plants are worth bringing in such as those you have lavished with special care and affection. These include unusual cultivars, plants of sentimental value or expensive plants. I have brought in about seven of my herbs and lettuce containers and know I will enjoy them throughout the long, cold winter as a tasty addition to soups and salads. This is easy to do. Stay tuned to December’s edition to find out how you too can have a small indoor garden! It’s so easy!

Deadlines for the December RCMG Leaflet will be the 15<sup>th</sup>. Submit your articles of interest, questions, photos or announce an upcoming event! Email to Catey at [mtnrider55@yahoo.com](mailto:mtnrider55@yahoo.com).

**CONTACT LIST**

- President, Lynn Stenglein, 859-9659, [lcsfts@hughes.net](mailto:lcsfts@hughes.net)
- Vice President, Doug Buck, [historybug52@yahoo.com](mailto:historybug52@yahoo.com)
- Secretary, Michelle Adcock, [shelladcock@yahoo.com](mailto:shelladcock@yahoo.com)
- Treasurer, Judy Bryant, [jbryant2@utk.edu](mailto:jbryant2@utk.edu)

- Robertson Co. Extension Agent, Paul Hart, 384-7936, [pehart@utk.edu](mailto:pehart@utk.edu)
- RCMGA Web Site: [rcmga.org](http://rcmga.org)
- The Leaflet: Catey Henning, [mtnrider55@yahoo.com](mailto:mtnrider55@yahoo.com)
- Project Coordinator: Julee Orr, [julee@mojoridge.com](mailto:julee@mojoridge.com)