

THE LEAFLET



January 2011

A PUBLICATION BY THE ROBERTSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

"I'M DREAMING OF A SPRING GARDEN..."

By Catey Henning



The holidays are not far behind us and believe it or not... it is almost that time of year! I get so excited. My fingers itch for the dirt; the early aroma of freshly tilled soil, the never ending seed catalogues! I get out my gloves and tools and have a look to see what needs replacing. I check out the new products. I wistfully look at pictures of beautifully planned English Gardens, which is a dream of mine! I drool over the endless varieties of seeds and plants. I study and plan. I'm worse than a kid at Christmas with the Sears & Roebuck Wish Book!

But the most important thing I do, is to reach for my gardening journal which I faithfully kept. It is a vital part of my gardening process. I learned this from my grandpa as a young child. He always kept a book. In my journal I have kept some passed down secrets to my gardening success. It is somewhat akin to pro-sports. What worked, what did not work, and what can be done to make it better next season. One of my favorite people, Thomas Jefferson, kept such a journal. I learned a lot from his writings as well.

Many of us grew up with gardening and use time tested methods. Some of us stay on top of the latest research and newest gadgets. And then there are those who simply turn up the soil, plant some seeds and hope for the best!

In my journal I track everything from the daily weather, to where I purchased the seeds or plants. I also keep track of my many failures and my bountiful harvests. I find this information helps me in determining different methods for the coming year.

Think about starting your own gardening journal this year and start early. Remember to import some photos of your efforts including both vegetables and flowers.

Master Gardener Meeting:

January 27, 7:00 pm

Rob. Co. Extension Office

Program:

WILD BIRDS

Presented by:

ROY JENSEN

BEE KEEPING

LECTURE

Jim Garrison,



President of the TN

Beekeepers Assoc. will

lecture at the Nashville

Lawn & Garden Show

on March 4th at 5 pm.

For more info see:

www.beekeepers.org

For entire lecture series see:

www.nashvillelawnandgardenshow.com/lectureseries.html

PLANT A BEE PASTURE

By Fred Hembree (Speaker @ June RCMG Association Meeting)

A bee pasture is a planting of flowering annuals or perennials designed to attract bees over many weeks or months. In planning a bee pasture it is important to choose a collection of plants that will produce an unbroken succession of bloom throughout the season. Avoid installing plants that bloom all at the same time. Perennials make a better bee pasture than annuals. Although annuals provide a quick and relatively abundant bee forage, perennials herbs and shrubs are superior bee forage plants and deserve special attention by bee conservationists. Local beekeepers, county extension agents, and horticulturists are good sources of information about the important bee plants in an area and their historic bloom times.

The list of trees, shrubs, plants, and herbs for this area that Fred recommended will be available at our January meeting or email lcsqts@hughes.net and request a copy.

2011 TMG Winter School The 2011 Tennessee Master Gardener State Conference

Growing a Better Tennessee

Rutherford County is welcoming Master Gardeners back once again for Tennessee Master Gardeners' statewide leadership conference - Winter School. With a mixture of speakers, demonstrations, and workshops, we hope to inspire and energize you as volunteers, educators and leaders.

All Master Gardeners are encouraged to attend.

This leadership conference represents the best opportunity to hear a rich variety of speakers and learn from well-crafted workshops and breakout sessions that speak directly to Master Gardeners. Leaders as well as other Master Gardeners will learn valuable information to support their organizations and for their own personal knowledge and enrichment. We have organized three days of exceptionally powerful training and education. Keynote speakers will be sharing effective management, teaching techniques, inspiring teams, retention strategies, and maximizing potentials. These skills are valuable tools to strengthen and motivate your organization or for your own personal development.

The Teaching Track on Thursday and Friday addresses empowering volunteer educators to develop effective teaching and presentation skills. These skills will impact how effective MG audiences learn and implement. This session will provide each participant an opportunity to create activities in different areas of teaching. Also in the Teaching Track are three (3) train-the-trainer sessions on the new Tennessee Master Gardener Handbook chapters: Basic Horticulture, Soils and Water. These sessions will show you how to incorporate active learning using the TMG Handbook curriculum. Join us for a preview of this curriculum in the Thursday mini-clinic. Attend train-the-trainer courses for more in-depth knowledge to become a county educator in one of these areas.

Winter School 2011 offers excellent training and skills development with interesting and informative speakers, but most attendees are rewarded year after year through their interaction, connection, and fellowship with other Master Gardeners across the state. Don't miss this opportunity to get involved.

For more information on registration for Winter School, including site, accommodations, speakers, free clinics, etc. see

<http://tennesseemastergardener.org>



TIPS OF THE MONTH:

Sand on Driveway: After a storm throw sand rather than salt on the icy driveway. When weather becomes milder, sweep sand aside for loosing up soil near the driveway.

Save those pantyhose: Start now saving old pantyhose to cut into 1 inch strips to tie up your tomatoes. They have enough stretch to keep from cutting into the vine.

Use cardboard again: Cardboard with tape removed can be cut and put around shrubs to keep the grass down.

Second life for old screens: Pull the screening out of old windows and doors that people discard. Lay along paths that would otherwise be too muddy much of the fall and spring to run the wheel barrow over or walk on safely. It lets the water through, but stabilizes the ground enough to walk or barrow over.

Pet Hair: When brushing out your dog's fur, put the hair into a fine mesh bag and hang on a convenient branch for good nesting material for the birds. Dryer lint works great too.

CD Towers: Old CD towers make wonderful containers for storing seeds.

Food Scraps: Keep a blender on the counter and fill it with veggie and fruit scraps. When its full, fill with water or leftover coffee and blend till smooth. Take out to your garden and pour between plants. Compost tea!

Compost tip: Sprinkle some lime to the composting. It will keep down the odor if there is any and is good for the compost.

Coffee for Acid Loving Plants: Put used coffee ground at the base of azaleas and hydrangeas.

PLANT PROPOGATION FIELD TRIP PLANNED

In March we will travel to Lone Oak Farms on Neely's Bend Road in Madison to learn about plant propagation. Lone Oak Farms is a wholesale nursery that specializes in bamboos and unusual plants. Joe Willis, the owner, has taught classes at Metro Adult Education and is a popular vendor and presenter at the Nashville Lawn and Garden Show. We will have a sign-up sheet at the January meeting to register or to confirm your interest in going. We will probably go on Saturday, March 12th or March 19th. You will be notified of the exact date and time soon.

GOOD QUESTION!

We have received some good questions this month from Master Gardener interns. Feel free to email questions to robertsoncountymastergardeners@yahoo.com, call or email your mentor, or ask a Master Gardener.

Q. Are Master Gardener meetings and field trips open to guests (friends and family with an interest in gardening) as well as those who have completed the Master Gardener training program?

A. It depends on meeting content and space. We do want to educate the public about gardening issues and the Master Gardener program by inviting them to presentations, classes, and field trips. However, our meeting emphasis is sometimes on project planning (garden tour, plant sale, etc.) and business issues. Usually, the association secretary will indicate if the meeting is "open" when the reminder is sent out about a week prior to the meeting. At this time we expect the upcoming Plant Propagation field trip to be closed, i.e. limited to Master Gardeners and interns; Mr. Willis has indicated space may be limited and we have a large number who have indicated an interest in attending.

Q. How can I start accumulating volunteer hours to count toward Master Gardener certification?

A. While it is "off-season" for a lot of garden projects, there are several activities that count as volunteer work and continuing education. The Tennessee Master Gardener County Program Handbook, which can be viewed at mastergardener.tennessee.edu, has an extensive list of Master Gardener volunteer service activities. Some applicable for winter include:

- Master Gardener meetings, which include administrative and continuing education time.
- Writing gardening articles for "The Leaflet". Writing news articles (must be approved by county Extension Agent).
- Doing volunteer work at parks, church gardens, or other public areas such as pruning, cleanup, planning.
- Teaching a gardening class including preparation time (should be approved by county Extension Agent).
- Attending gardening classes at University School, Cheek wood, Lawn and Garden Shows, etc.

Our Robertson County Association generally has a presentation on our projects and volunteer service opportunities in February.

DIRTY BOOKS: Our own Paul Hart received a copy of Crockett's Victory Garden written by James Underwood Crockett that he recommends. The chapters are organized by months of the year with the content focused on vegetable gardening but fruits and ornamentals are also included. It was purchased online, used, and was in excellent condition. It is Paul's favorite!

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RCMGA Web Site: rcmga.org