

July 2011

A PUBLICATION BY THE ROBERTSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

July Master Gardener Meeting!
Thursday, July 28, 7 P.M.
@ County Extension Office
Our program will be “Cooking with Herbs”
See You There!



J. Kovach, J. Orr, L. Stenglein, P. Ashford,
L. Hopkins, J. Protsman, P. Putman, J. Bryant

Along with RCMGA members pictured above, approximately 2,000 attended Summer Celebration Lawn and Garden Show at the West Tennessee AGResearch and Education Center in Jackson on July 14th. The gardens looked beautiful; the plants were labeled; the air conditioning was cranked up for the indoor talks.

As well as checking out creative mailbox designs and landscapes, attendees learned about:

Landscaping with native plants—what to plant in full sun, dry shade, woodland gardens; Sassy grasses—test drove (touched, felt, walked around) dozens of switchgrass, Miscanthus, and Muhly Grass specimens;

Ferns—learned about the selections of perennials and shrubs that flourish in the shade;
New Plants and Deserving Oldies—a talk by Don Shadow, the Tennessee nurseryman who is a colleague of Japanese and Korean nurserymen and even visited by Martha Stewart.

Great Trip! Good Gardening Tips! Email Lynn if you would like copies of some of the handouts (ornamental grasses, ferns, etc.).

Lookin' forward aready to Summer Celebration 2012!

Mailbox Landscape (Jackson)



RCMGA & TN M.G. ADVOCATES MEET

The Tennessee Master Gardener Advocacy (TMG) Board is a state Extension committee whose purposes include providing local mentorship to county groups; facilitating communications among county associations and with the TN Extension

M.G. staff; and setting goals, objectives, and actions plans for the TN Master Garden Program.

Meg Georgiades and Cynthia Winfield, two of our Middle Tennessee Advocates from Sumner County and Wilson County respectively, attended the RCMGA June meeting, discussed the Advocates' role; and fielded numerous questions; and noted concerns that members have about the Tennessee Master Gardener web site, communication among associations and volunteer-time entry. Meg and Cynthia updated the group on the "Retention, Recruitment, Recognition Project", an initiative that addresses challenges common to many M.G. associations.

The TMG Board sponsors the TMG Alliance, whose purpose is to enhance communications between the counties in each region. The Middle TN. Region Alliance met July 7th with representatives from Wilson, Rutherford, Sumner, Cheatham, and Robertson counties attending. Advocates reported that the web site redesign is scheduled to be implemented in late summer/early fall; the new Tennessee Maser Gardener Handbook is at the printers and should be available in early September; and Winter School (February 2012) theme will be "Impact of Master Gardening".

Information about the TMG Advocacy Board and Alliance can be found on the web at mastergardener.tennessee.edu; select TMG Advocacy Board under Master Gardeners Resources.

"Those Sneaky Weeds!"

Just when you think all is right in the wonderful world of gardening and you can lean back on your laurels and rest, you spy a pesky weed in your beautifully planned and tilled garden!

Most likely, when you ventured to a plant sale or local nursery it was not your intention to come home with a flat full of weeds. But that may be what you did if weed seeds are present in the soil holding the plants you purchased.

One study conducted in Alaska by the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, the director of science policy for the Weed Science Society of America, Lee Van Wychen stated, "The research showed significant numbers of non-native weed species were hitchhiking across America in the same containers as ornamental flowers and shrubs."

Scientists have discovered that the seeds produced by many weed species can live for a long, long time in the soil and then sprout when the conditions are right. Since a single weed can produce hundreds or even thousands of seeds, it is crucial that you remove any weeds from your garden before they mature and cause your weed problem to multiply exponentially.

A very famous experiment dated back to 1879, illustrated the longevity of a weed seed when Professor William James Beal, of Michigan Agricultural College, set up an experiment to determine how long seeds could be buried in soil and remain able to germinate.

Beal buried 20 different samples of common weeds in bottles at 3 feet below the soil surface. At five and ten year intervals he dug them up to check the viability of the seeds. Years later they were still growing strong.

There is one bit of good news about weeds. Research shows that if you are diligent and consistent about weed management, over time, you will reduce the number of viable seeds in the soil and make your life in the garden a lot easier!

So whether your weed control method of choice is your hand, a hoe, or an herbicide, control weeds before they go to seed. Also be careful with manure, compost and container-grown plants purchased at the nursery; all of these can transport new weed seeds into your garden. Plant diseases and insects may come and go, but you'll own the weeds forever!

Good book to have on the shelf:

"Edible Landscaping: Now You Can Have Your Gorgeous Garden and Eat It Too!"
by Rosalind Creasy



MARK YOUR CALENDER!

July 9 – 30 – Summer Saturdays, Tennessee Agricultural Museum, Nashville, 615-837-5197 or tnagmuseum.org

July 26 – RC Beekeepers meeting at the UT Extension Office at 7 P.M.

July 28 – Robertson County Master Gardeners monthly meeting at the UT Extension Office at 7 P.M.

“Four Tips to Save Water in Your Garden”

Can we agree it has been a hot summer so far this year? I was excited because I have installed a new rain barrel in my yard and was ready for the rain! No rain.....However, as most of you probably have been doing, I have been diligently watering my small garden every morning at the crack of dawn. In this extreme heat, it is important that we water early in the day so the plants will have enough moisture to survive the heat.

During the summer months we use twice as much water than any other time of year. And outdoor watering accounts for an average 50 to 70 percent of that usage! Maybe it seems that the only way you will keep your beautiful flowers and vegetables is by constant watering. However, you can create an eye-catching and healthy garden while also being water-conscious.

By combining conservation practices with a very efficient landscape design, you can lower your water bill, lessen the amount of time in the garden and create a healthy, vibrant wildlife habitat!

Here are some helpful tips:

Garden Design: Group plants with similar moisture requirements close together, matching them with appropriate yard conditions – sunny, shade, damp, dry. Then target watering only the vegetation that needs it.

Plant Selection: Focus on plants that are native to your area. They survive the natural rainfall, are resistant to local plant diseases and pests, and provide the best food sources for wildlife.

Efficient Irrigation: Water infrequently, deeply and thoroughly. This prevents runoff and encourages deeper root growth. Plants with deep roots develop greater resistance to dry spells.

Maintenance: Apply mulch where needed, such as bark or leaves, to planting beds. This helps the soil to retain moisture, discourages thirsty weeds and provides plants with essential nutrients.



If you are trying to keep up with squash, herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers or anything else and just simply have a great abundance; there are several organizations that will gladly accept your donations of extra veggies! **United Ministries** is open Monday through Thursday from 10 until 1:30.



Looking for something new and exciting to do? Want to add a few extra hours to your tally? Okay, how about just having some fun! Come on over to the YMCA Love Grows Garden and help us out. Our garden is in full production and we have a great group of kiddos. We even have frogs and lizards! We meet on Mondays and Thursdays at 5 P.M. weather and heat permitting. Come visit us or contact Catey Henning, mtnrider55@yahoo.com!

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