



Master Gardeners Hear it ... Through the Grapevine

UT Extension The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Volume 17, Issue 4

April 2010

MASTER GARDENERS OF HAMILTON COUNTY

Dear Master Gardeners,

April is such an exciting Month for gardening! Especially after the cold and wet winter we had this year. The Bradford Pears, Daffodils and Forsythia set the stage in March. And now Spring is here, and every day I see something new emerging in my yard. No matter how many times I experience the awaking of my plants in the spring, it's still exciting. I never grow tired of discovering a familiar plant peeking out of the ground. A couple of weeks ago, I planted lettuce, radishes, sugar snap peas and spinach. Then I went out of town for 5 days. What a treat, to return and they had already sprouted out the ground.

But I can tell if you want an experience, invite a little child to help you plant. My great granddaughter Autumn who's four, helped me plant seed potatoes. She wasn't sure what "eyes" meant and how were they going to see after I covered them with straw. Several days later I decided to recheck our work to how they were doing, because I had an uncomfortable feeling about our planting. Well, in my concern in watching her, I planted part of them upside down. Now, the error has been corrected.

There many plant sale opportunities this month: Reflecting Riding, Crabtree Farms, Bachman Garden and Art Expo, Chattanooga Area Food Bank and the Master Gardener Field Trip to Mary's Greenhouse in McMinnville. Check the calendar in the newsletter and online for details. It was wonderful to see so many of our 2010 interns at the March meeting. I hope many of you will attend their graduation party and awards ceremony at the April membership meeting at Chester Frost Pavilion on April 15th at 6:30. And a special 'Thank You' to the Mentors and other Master Gardeners who have gotten the new Interns off to such a wonderful start.

Patsy Boles, President

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Spring has sprung!



BOARD BUSINESS



MARCH 2010

April is upon us and projects and workdays will be coming in at a fast pace. This is the time of year when hours can be earned easily. The Projects Committee is reviewing a few new projects so watch for details on our Yahoo group mail that comes into your email Inbox.

Bud Hines is building the Master Gardeners a display case which will be installed outside of the main meeting room at the AG Center. This case will be used for our awards and certificates and other important items of our organization.

This year's County Fair theme will be ' Master Gardeners, Helping grow Tennessee'. Those interested in helping with the Fair should contact Bud Hines at BJH2222@aol.com. There are plenty of places for creative people to work on this fun project.

Long overdue, the Board voted unanimously to select Jane Mauldin, garden coordinator of the Food Bank to be appointed as an Honorary Master Gardener. Jane is our number one supporter of the Master Gardener program, where our members earn many of their hours for certification. Congratulations Jane. The award will be presented to Jane at the Graduation/Awards banquet on April 15 at Chester Frost Park.

For the Board,
Secretary Donna Smolinski

Yahoo Groups Tips & Techniques

Have you signed up for Yahoo Groups membership to [mghcmembers](http://mghcmembers.com) and aren't receiving mail? Here are some suggestions on getting your account straightened out. First, make sure you have your current and preferred email address saved in your Yahoo Groups profile. Some members stopped receiving mghcmembers@yahoogroups.com when they changed their email address, so make sure you have your correct email address saved in your Yahoo profile. The moderators cannot make this change for you.

Second, check your spam and junk folders for mghcmembers@yahoogroups.com messages. This possibility includes your original invitation to join the group. If you find messages in your junk or spam folder, make sure you instruct your program this is a "safe sender" (i.e., in Outlook, right click the message, select "Junk E-Mail" and either add it to the safe sender list or move the message to your inbox). How do I know this is possible? Around December of last year, I found my [mghcmembers](http://mghcmembers.com) mail in my Outlook junk mail folder, so I know it happens ("N=1 Research").

If these two possibilities don't explain your problem, please contact me at slwencil@gmail.com and I will try to help you resolve the problem. In the alternative, you can send a message from your preferred email account to mghcmembers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. The moderators will get an email letting us know you are trying to join and we can authorize your admission. It will be helpful to let us know who you are in the body of the message since we don't automatically know the true identity of "lluvtulips&roses@yahoo.com." Remember—this is a closed group, so membership is by invitation only. Either we moderators send you an invitation or you can ask to join.

Thanks for listening – Sally Wencil (slwencil@gmail.com)

In case you missed it:

If you weren't at the last member's meeting on March 18th., you missed a presentation on Aquaponics and "bucket" gardening.

Aquaponics is a self-sustaining system of agriculture combining hydroponic and aquarium life. The speaker showed us an inexpensive, home-made system as well as a for-purchase pricey one. Aquaponics is available to everybody and is ten times more productive than a dirt garden, is chemical-free and dramatically cuts a food budget.

Bucket gardening is simply that, growing plants using one or two 5 gallon buckets. There are many ways to do this. Check the internet for the method that suits your needs best.

Calendar Events

April

April 1, Thursday

MG Board meeting at the AG Center @ 6:00 pm.

April 3, Saturday

Work day at the new CAFB greenhouse @ 9:00am.

April 9, 10, 11, Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Reflection Riding Wildflower Festival and Native Plant Sale will be April 9, 10, & 11, 2010. Hours: Friday and Saturday 9:00am to 5:00pm and Sunday 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

April 10, Saturday

Trip to Mary's Greenhouse, McMinnville, TN. Contact Stephanie Payne: spayne@cbzmmmp.com or 423-842-3743

April 13, Tuesday

Newly formed Wildflower and Native Plant Group will meet at noon at Greenlife Grocery.

April 14, Wednesday

Crestwood Garden Club @ 12:00pm @ East Ridge Community Center. Program is: "Herbs Are Good For You".

April 15, Thursday

Graduation Party and Awards Ceremony @ the Pavilion in Chester Frost Park, 6:30pm.

April 17 & 18, Saturday & Sunday

Crabtree Farms Plant Sale, Sat. 8-4pm, Sun. 11-3pm

April 24, Saturday

Bachman Garden and Art Expo, 8:00 am-2:00pm

April 30 - May 1 & 2, Friday, Saturday and Sunday

CAFB annual spring plant sale on Friday, April 30, 9:00am to 6:00pm, Saturday, May 1, 9:00am to 3:00pm and Sunday May 2 @ 11:00 am to 3:00pm @ **CAFB GREENHOUSE @ 2009 Curtain Pole Road**

May

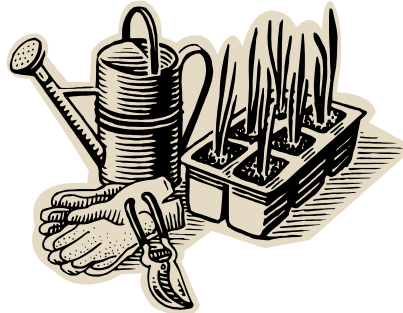
May 6, Thursday

MG Board meeting at the AG Center @ 6:00 pm.

CAFB Rock City Party @ 6:00pm

May 20, Thursday

MG monthly meeting at the AG Center @ 6:30 pm.



Send May CALENDAR EVENTS to lkbrant@aol.com by Saturday, April 24, 2010

Send June CALENDAR EVENTS to lkbrant@aol.com by Tuesday, May 25, 2010

Website, Yahoo Groups and Newsletter posting Policy

Purpose: Define information that may be communicated to MGHC members and the public through MGHC private and public communication channels at the request of non-affiliated groups or organizations. Private communication channels include MGHC member newsletters, Yahoo Groups, the members-only section of the website and other email-based communications. Public communication channels includes the public section of the MGHC website.

Policy: "It is the policy of the MGHC to communicate information about events sponsored by groups not affiliated with the MGHC, Tennessee Master Gardeners and the University of Tennessee only if the events provide members an opportunity to earn continuing education units (CEUs) or service hours. The MGHC newsletter editor and website administrator may deny any post or submission that does not fit these criteria. Members may, however, freely post items of general gardening interest, to include personal observations as well as non-commercial notice of bargains and availability of plant/gardening material(s).

Nothing in this policy statement is intended to limit a member's involvement in outside organizations or right to communicate directly with other members via public or private communication channels.

Adopted January 14, 2010,

Revised 2-16-10

Let's go to the County Fair!

Mike Payne & Bud Hines have thrown their hats in the ring to help coordinate our 2010 exhibit at the Hamilton County Fair in September! So if you see or think of any ideas that might be something they could expand on with our organizations educational mission in mind, **send it in!**

We have received several ideas to set it up as "Booths" with **HOW TO** projects in action. Things like building a birdhouse, rain barrel, raised bed garden, or compost pile. It could be a Three Sisters Garden, companion planting, wildlife attracters, green roofs, and the list goes on.

It will take a lot of great, creative minds to come up with an exhibit to measure up to our last several wonderful programs.

Bud Hines, bjh2222@aol.com, Mike Payne, TNMASTERGARDENER@aol.com

Winter School Reflections:

We had a large number of very good speakers and topics. Since I speak on the topic of Home Composting very often, I enjoyed the talk by Jeffery Ezell from Nashville Metro Environment Commission. They have created a very good program by supplying residents with a good selection of Composting equipment, i.e., 2 different types of Compost bins, collection buckets, thermometers and "How To" instructions at a very reasonable cost! Everyone should be aware that 23% of our Trash is Compost-able Material and will provide you with a very valuable product for all of our garden projects. Thank you for support of the Winter School Program!

Bud Hines

The Master Gardener Winter School experience is engaging, inspiring, and informative. The why, what, and where Master Gardeners are making an impact, a difference in the quality of life, not only now but for future generations encourages and swells the honor of membership. An interesting mix of University of Tennessee science coupled with the passion of planting, teaching, and providing keeps the intense schedule practical. Another treasured reward is the connection between gardeners. Our sharing with the dedicated from Hamilton County and around the State will be cherished forever. Thank you for the opportunity to learn and connect.

Denise "Nise" Chivington

Winter School made me realize that as an organization, it is all about communication among our members in order to know where projects are, what we can do on any given day and to keep all of us up-to-date on status of our volunteering. As we grow in numbers, we also need structure in order to keep work projects in accordance with the U.T. guidelines, our governing factor. I also learned that despite the fact that we are the 3rd largest city in Tennessee, we are the most active as for volunteering hours. Kudos to MGHC!

Donna Smolinski

This was my first year to attend Winter School. I really enjoyed the idea of training our members to become future leaders. I was also fascinated with groups traveling to other states and countries to tour gardens.

Barb Blankenship 2009

State Advocates report:

For those of you who did not attend this year's winter school you missed the best educational and fun time that you can have as a Master Gardener. The classes were excellent and in the evening we were able to socialize and enjoy good food.

We had two great awards for Hamilton County. Jerry and Donna Smolinski were awarded the state's first Yards and Neighborhood Certification Award and the Hamilton County Master Gardeners received an award for having the most volunteer hours of any county in the state, over 13,000 hours. That's an average of nearly 100 hours per person!

The Belgian Giant—considered by some to be the best tasting tomato

In about 1985 an elderly gentleman in Maryland gave me some seed for the only tomato he bothered to grow—the Belgian Giant. I've been growing them ever since, saving my seed and sharing it with others.

The Belgian Giant is an old low-acid, much praised heirloom 85-90 day indeterminate variety, available from Seed Savers Exchange and quite a few seed companies. Caged vines can reach over 7 feet in height and the meaty, low-acid fruit commonly weighs over 2 pounds. I've read that the record is around 5 pounds when grown in the hot sultry south.

To support these heavy plants I make 30-inch diameter cages, 5 feet tall from heavy welded concrete reinforcing wire, and stake them down—the 6-inch wire mesh used in floor slabs and sidewalks. Last year I bought a roll from the FM Russell Company in Chattanooga and split it with a friend. The cages will last many years. Alternately, these tomatoes can sprawl on the ground, but they take a lot of space and the fruits should be protected from ground contact by thick mulch.

Since I have been transferred every few years, I've grown these delights in Virginia, Kentucky, New York, New Mexico, Nebraska, and now in Tennessee. Being curious and hard-headed, I've also grown Brandywine, Siberian, Rutgers, Better Boy, and cherries—but my friend was right—nothing else I've tried is as good tasting as the Belgian.

Fruiting usually begins in July and continues until hard freeze so we only need three or four good plants to supply the two of us with all the fresh slicers we can eat and still have plenty to freeze for the winter. At the end of the season we enjoy a couple of weeks of Fried Green Tomatoes. This year we plan to can more so I will put out 5 or 6 sets this April.

Unfortunately, I lost all my seed when we moved to Chattanooga in 2008 so I've had to locate and purchase new seed. I'm truly sorry about this because I liked the idea that I was keeping my friend's seed stock going. But, Belgian Giant is an old stable variety developed in Ohio in 1930 and the seed is probably all the same. I talked to Seed Savers Exchange and they said it wouldn't cross with another variety unless that one was a potato-leafed tomato.

Seed catalogs use slightly different names and harvest days for *Lycopersicon esculentum*. You will see Belgian Giant, Giant Belgian, Giant Belgian Pink, and 85-90 days, but they all seem to be the same variety. One source is: <http://www.reimerseeds.com/giant-belgium-tomato.aspx>. I've also seen them at Johnny's, Victory Seed, and Burpee. Just do a Google search.

I would love to hear about your experience with Belgian Giants and your other favorite vegetable varieties for the Chattanooga area.

Stephen Elliott - 2009

MG PROJECTS CORNER:

For information about Master Gardener approved projects, contact:

Stephanie @ (423) 842-3743 or email spayne@cbizmmp.com
or
Lisa @ (423) 332-1780 or email lemzala@aol.com

ATTENTION MASTER GARDENERS:

ALL CORRESPONDENCE, DUES AND HOUR REPORTING SHEETS MUST BE MAILED TO:

**U.T. EXTENSION-HAMILTON COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS RESOURCE ROOM
6183 ADAMSON CIRCLE
CHATTANOOGA TN. 37416**

DO NOT SEND ANY MAIL OR CHECKS TO THE P.O. BOX LISTED IN THE DIRECTORY. THE P.O. BOX HAS BEEN CLOSED.

Chattanooga Herbies***Parsley***

Photo by: www.flowers.vg/flowers/parsley



The next meeting of the ("The Chattanooga Herbies") will be:

Day and Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2010

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Chattanooga Food Bank Conference Room

2009 Curtain Pole Road.

Chattanooga TN

Future meetings will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month, from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

At the next meeting, there will be a short presentation on **Parsley**. Dishes with **Parsley** as an ingredient will be shared. Please bring your ideas for future meetings – topics, speakers, cooking demonstrations, travel, information exchange, etc.

Any interested friends will be welcome.

For more information, contact Jane Goodin (janeqchatt@comcast.net) or Nora Bernhardt (nsbernhardt@aol.com).

UT Extension-Hamilton County
6183 Adamson Circle
Chattanooga, TN. 37416

Phone: 423-855-6113
Fax: 423-855-6115



<http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/>
<http://mghc.org/>

Board Members & Chairpersons

2010

Master Gardener Officers:

President – Patsy Boles

Vice President – Charlene Griffin

Secretary – Donna Smolinski

Treasurer – Carol Mathews

Past President/Advisor – Linda Billingslea

MG Coordinator – Tom Stebbins

Certification Officer – Gretchen Rominger

New Class Rep: Barbara Blankenship

1 Year Members

Lisa Clark

Jane Goodin

Jean Patton

2 Year Members

Denise Chivington

Bud Hines

Mike Payne

Master Gardeners Committee

Chairpersons-

Bonny Oaks Arboretum:

Jack Townsend

Budget/Finance:

Patsy Boles

County Fair Committee:

Bud Hines

Decoration and Door Prize Committee

Lisa Clark

Food Bank Garden Tour:

Jo Lawrence

Historian:

Joy Wooden

Hospitality Committee:

Lisa Clark

Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden:

Mike Payne

Mentor Coordinator

Ron Bohrer

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State Advocate:

Mike Payne

Website Committee:

Mike Smith