



# Master Gardeners Hear it ... Through the Grapevine

UT Extension The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

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March 2008

## President's Letter

## MASTER GARDENERS OF HAMILTON COUNTY

Spring, Spring, Spring! When I start to see patches of bright color everywhere I know it will not be long. These early bloomers are my favorite. I admire their tenacity and eagerness to pop their heads out first. The crocus and daffodils are like splashes of sunshine in the yard. And we need all the color possible in our backyard right now, because even though the pond is finished it looks pretty bare. We are still deciding on what plants we want to put in around it. It is like a blank canvas that Mike and I are both trying to paint at the same time. Actually, we are having fun. How many times do you have an opportunity to start from scratch?

Spring is also a time of change

and new beginnings. It is even time for change within the Master Gardeners. In March we will be electing new Officers and three new Governors.

The Master Gardeners have been busy and this next year will be no exception. I am very excited about helping the Chattanooga Area Food Bank make the Demonstration Garden and Learning Center a reality. The Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden is ready for expansion (and it was recently designated a "Rain" garden). Ser-toma is this month. And it is time to start thinking about the Hamilton County Fair Exhibit, not to mention all

the other wonderful projects we do every year. In April the new Master Gardener Trainees will be graduating. Every Master Gardeners and Trainees' participation is needed to make this next year a success...starting with our new Board. So, I hope everyone will attend this month's Membership meeting and welcome the new MG Officers and Governors aboard...'cause it is time to get to work and have some fun! Spring is almost here!

I have enjoyed being President of the Master Gardeners and I would like to thank each and every MG for your help to making our organization one the best in the State!

Stephanie Payne

## March Master Gardener Membership Meeting

The March membership meeting will be held at the Ag Center on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Our speaker will be Craig Walker from Holcombe Nursery. He will be speaking on: Perennials and

associated shrubs for attracting Wildlife.

### In a Nut Shell:

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## Upcoming Events

### •Beginning & Newcomer Gardening Classes:

The beginning and Newcomer Gardening Classes will be held on Four Tuesday nights in March.

March 11th Trees & Shrubs and Attracting Wildlife

March 18th Water Gardening and Herbs

March 25th Perennials & Annuals and Wildflowers

•**March 15th and 16th, Sertoma Lawn and Garden Show** at Camp Jordon in East Ridge. Master Gardeners will be teaching classes again this year and as last year, will be covering (2) Q&A tables.

### • Membership Meeting, March 20

### •Pigeon Mountain Wildflower Walk Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup> 2008

Pigeon Mountain's Pocket is famous for its magnificent early spring wildflowers. Bluebells, purple phacelia, celandine poppies and white and purple trillium are few of the many treasures in this cove. Our adventure begins by traveling the 800 foot boardwalk of the Shirley Miller Wildflower Trail. Then we follow Pocket Branch to a waterfall before climbing an old road bed to the top of the falls.

Pigeon Mountain Wildlife Management Area is about 30 miles south of Chattanooga in Walker County. The area's beauty has been known for years to hikers and horseback riders. Since *The Wildflowers of Pigeon Mountain* was published, the place has become famous!

The meeting place is Bi-Lo in St Elmo at **12:30 PM**. Bring water, cameras and wildflower books. The route is Highway 193 to Hog Jowl Rd and Pocket Drive.

## MARCH 2008

| Sun        | Mon | Tue                | Wed | Thu                   | Fri            | Sat                    |
|------------|-----|--------------------|-----|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------|
|            |     |                    |     |                       |                | 1                      |
| 2          | 3   | 4 Turf Class       | 5   | 6 6:00 Board Meeting  | 7              | 8                      |
| 9          | 10  | 11 Wildlife Class  | 12  | 13                    | 14             | 15 Sertoma             |
| 16 Sertoma | 17  | 18 Water and Herbs | 19  | 20 Membership Meeting | 21 Wildflowers | 22                     |
| 23         | 24  | 25 Flowers Class   | 26  | 27                    | 28             | 29 Azaleas at the Barn |
| 30         | 31  |                    |     |                       |                |                        |

Please contact Lynne Finnell to confirm or ask questions-423-634-6726 (work) or [Lyprs@aol.com](mailto:Lyprs@aol.com). Please leave your name and number as rain will cancel the trip.

### •March 22 and 29th, Bonsai Workshop

Sign up now for this two-session, two-hour, workshop taught by our own MG Jim Gumnick. The workshop is limited to 10 people, and will be taught at the AG Center on: Saturday, March 22 and Saturday March 29 from 10:00 to 12:00. A \$ 20 fee will cover the nursery stock, soil and container that will be used. If you have an established Bonsai that just needs pruning, you can bring it at no charge. Deadline for the sign-up is March 8th, 2008. For sign-up and information email [grominger@comcast.net](mailto:grominger@comcast.net) or call Gretchen Rominger at 875-9204.

### •March 29, Encore Azaleas at the Barn Nursery.

Robert Lee will give a short talk and have a question and answer session. Flowerwood Nursery is bringing in a trailer load of Encore Azaleas for this occasion with almost all 23 varieties available for observation and purchase.

## Upcoming Events

**• April 10th, 10 am - 1 pm; Potato Planting at Crabtree Farms, Free Training**

This informal training will introduce participants to potato planting. Joel Houser, Crabtree's Farm Manager, will instruct volunteers on how to plant potatoes for healthy growth. He will share his growing knowledge, from planting to harvesting through question and answer. Wear appropriate attire for gardening, such as comfortable work shoes and clothes (things that can get dirty).

**•April 15th, 10 am - 1pm; Greenhouse Growing; Farmer For a Day at Crabtree Farms, Free Training**

This informal training will introduce participants to growing in a greenhouse. Mike Barron, Crabtree's Greenhouse Manager, will instruct volunteers on how to grow and care for perennials and annuals in a greenhouse setting. He will share his growing knowledge, from pruning to hardening plants through question and answer. Wear appropriate attire for gardening, such as comfortable work shoes and clothes (things that can get dirty).

**• Membership Meeting, April 17th**

**• April 19<sup>th</sup> (8-1) and April 20<sup>th</sup> (11-3) Spring Plant Sale at Crabtree Farms.** Customers can choose from a wide variety of vegetable starts including heirloom tomatoes, herbs and annual flowers. All plants are cultivated in the greenhouse at Crabtree Farms using sustainable methods. Due to popular demand, Crabtree Farms will be offering over 6000 plants at this year's sale.

## APRIL 2008

| Sun           | Mon | Tue           | Wed | Thu                   | Fri | Sat           |
|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|---------------|
|               |     | 1             | 2   | 3 Board Meeting       | 4   | 5             |
| 6             | 7   | 8             | 9   | 10 Potatoes           | 11  | 12            |
| 13            | 14  | 15 Greenhouse | 16  | 17 Membership Meeting | 18  | 19 Plant Sale |
| 20 Plant Sale | 21  | 22            | 23  | 24                    | 25  | 26            |
| 27            | 28  | 29            | 30  |                       |     |               |

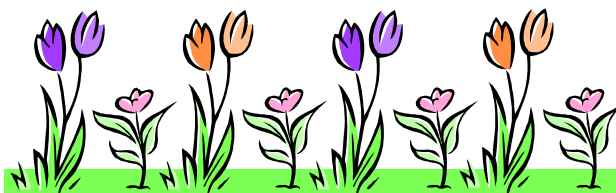
### Dues are Due

Your 2008 (\$16 ) membership dues need to be turned in before April 1st to have your name included in the 2008 Membership Directory.

Your ACE HOURS should also be turned in by March 31st, especially if you are receiving a 3-5- or 10 year award.

Please mail to: UT Extension-Hamilton County  
 Master Gardener Resource Room  
 6183 Adamson Circle  
 Chattanooga, TN 37416

If you need an ACE Hour form you can go to our MG website [www.mghc.org](http://www.mghc.org) click on Members link, then scroll down to Service Hours reporting form and print one.



## Tom's Tidbits for March 2008

### Bind Master Gardeners Together with a Notebook

Last weekend thirteen of the Master Gardeners from Hamilton County attended a Leadership/ Teaching Workshop in Lebanon. This workshop is called "Winter School". Master Gardeners came from many counties throughout Tennessee. The purpose of the conference was to gain knowledge and improve skills. The teaching track was excellent. The woman teaching the class started out by demonstrating many of the "bad" teaching methods. She talked softly, read from a script; her slides were hard to read. We got the point. It brought back memories of some of my old college teachers. Later in the day we had the chance to practice these skills in groups. Our Hamilton County representatives used some very creative presentation skills. They showed that a little comedy and fun can be a powerful educational tool.

#### Projects Binders

I attended another session on leadership. One idea that came up from another county was a "project binder". This is simply a three ring binder that contains 'stuff' from each project. It may have a few letters showing how the project was started. There can be diagrams of a garden, a

list of committee members, photos of the project in action, maybe news clippings from the media. I think this is an excellent idea for all of our projects. Some of our Master Gardeners already have wonderful notebooks. A notebook is great because it is durable, unlike a paper folder. It can be handed down to the next committee chair. It can be put in the Extension Office when the project is completed. We can have a library of projects for a historical record. We already have a nice archive of three or four huge binders. We could probably fill a wall if everyone started a notebook. I encourage everyone to start with a one inch binder for every project. Put pictures in plastic sheet protectors. You can also keep pictures on compact disks or other media in the folder pocket. Some people can get very creative with a scrapbook and 'show and tell' of their projects. I encourage you to bring your notebooks to meetings to share with others.

#### End of Year Reports

This is the time of year to complete and turn in your hours. March 31<sup>st</sup> is the

day for continuing Master Gardener certification. Use the paper form and turn them into the Extension Office. I would also like an end of year report for each project. This can be a paragraph or two describing the success of your efforts. At UT Extension, our Deans ask us to measure impact. They like to know the number of people that were taught. Were they children, minorities, disadvantaged, women, etc? Are there any nice stories to share? Please send them to me by email if possible. That way I don't have to retype.

Thanks so much to new students who are jumping right into many projects. Thanks to the mentors for helping me in so many ways during class. Thanks to all the Master Gardeners of Hamilton County. You are known in Chattanooga as the best source for gardening information. Keep up the great work. Or, should I say... Keep up the great fun!

For Masterful Gardens

Tom



## Spring Tour Sponsored by Master Gardeners April 19th, 2008

On Saturday, April 19th, from 1-5pm, five gardeners will be opening their gardens for a spring tour. The tour is open to Master Gardeners and their families, friends who may be interested in the Master Gardener program. This is an opportunity for gardeners to share their gardens and to visit a selection of private gardens.

This tour includes gardens owned by Herb and Sue Cohn, Marge Pasch, Nancy Ralhan, Susan Schott, and Randy and Cathy Walker. The gardens are within a small radius including Rivermont, Northgate, Lakeshore, Red Bank, and Hixson.

A brochure of gardens will be available in early March including directions, pictures of the gardens, and comments by the owners. Light refreshments will be served at certain gardens, so RSVP is requested. (More information about that later.)

It is interesting to see gardens in different seasons. At times, some gardens may be interesting, then beautiful, and at their best at a certain time. In winter, the basic design, the structure of a garden may be clearly seen, uncovered by lush greenery and colorful blooms of the summer. Gardens have been scheduled for tours in summer, fall and winter. The dates and times will be announced later. Put this date on your calendar as a Main Event!

Nancy Ralhan

### SPRING

The days of winter flee away  
as the sun creeps north this year.  
New Life around us now awakes  
and the time of flowers is here.

Buds on the trees begin to swell;  
wild onions spot the lawn with green.  
Jonquils and violets cast a spell;  
crocus and dandelion join the scene.

Peepers sound their urgent tone  
from pond and brook and stream.  
The wild geese seek their Northern home,  
and the goldfinch dons a golden sheen.

Master Gardeners get the urge of spring;  
the seed catalogs they avidly scan.  
Dirt under the fingernails is not obscene;  
a soil test tells what plant food to bring.

Gardener's itch is a contagious disease;  
it is only cured by a shovel and a hoe.  
Stir the ground, dig a hole, plant a tree;  
start some plants, sow some seed, help them  
grow.

Awww!! Spring is here again!!!

By: Gene Howard  
Master Gardener 2005  
February 18, 2006



## Speakers Needed

By Dee Clark

I am going to lead the MG Speaker Committee. I am looking for anyone who is willing to do talks, wants to do talks in the future, or would like to do research for talks. Or maybe you have some great garden, wildlife, etc. pictures that you would be willing to share if needed.

I would like to get a list of all the talks we have available to the public and post on our web site. I will only post my contact information and will arrange the talks. So with that said, if you are at all interested in doing talks for garden shows, garden clubs, Reflection Riding plant sale, etc., please let me know. If you would like to do a talk and need help with Power Point, slides, or need tips on how to do a talk/lecture that can be arranged. We just finished winter school and there is an excellent PowerPoint presentation on how to lecture. If you don't want to 'do' talks/lectures but like to do research we could use you as well. I will have a form at the next MG meeting or you can email me with the following information:

Your name and contact information (contact information is for me only)

What you want to talk about (as many topics as you would like or are comfortable with)

include title and brief description.

When can you talk? (days, nights, weekends, etc)

Provide a small bio about you. Something you would like to see in the paper or on fliers.

Do you have slides, PowerPoint, or talk without aides?

Is transportation an issue?

Would you like to do research?

Please put: speaker committee in the subject box on your email. My email address is [GDClark@bellsouth.net](mailto:GDClark@bellsouth.net).

thanks,

Dee Clark



## Certify Your Garden for Wildlife

By Lisa Lemza

One of the most appealing aspects of the master gardener program, to me at least, has always been its reliance on science. I am most grateful for how the Extension has increased my knowledge of botany, biology, and other natural sciences; this program repeatedly demonstrates the wondrous reliance in healthy gardens and bioscapes between animal, vegetable and mineral.

One of the best and most public ways we can demonstrate this reliance—even in highly urban settings-- is to certify gardens as wildlife habitats. For a small fee a certification registers your garden and gives you a sign to hang both for bragging rights and to advertise and educate the general public. Our little urban/suburban scraps can collectively provide significant habitat. These certifications are great for church and school gardens, as well as your own. I have even seen them on commercial properties (i.e., Holcombs on HWY 153).

I've certified my own home with the National Wildlife Federation as a wildlife habitat at

<http://www.nwf.org/backyard>. It's very simple; doubtless your garden already qualifies, requiring only that you list your plants. For example, I don't hang bird feeders but by merely listing the tree (oak, dogwood, maple) and other plant species on my property I more than qualified in the 'provide food' category. You can do it online.

The other certification I'm working on is for a Monarch Butterfly Waystation, which unsurprisingly relies heavily but not exclusively on milkweed (*aesclepius tuberosa*, *aesclepius incarnata*, etc.). This certification is at <http://monarchwatch.org/waystations>. Anything as small as a Monarch butterfly than can fly to Mexico deserves all the help it can get.

As many of us gardeners have learned to our everlasting astonishment and joy: if you build it, they will come. Thank God, thank God.



## **There is Always Next Year**

By Shirley McMasters, Intern Class 2008

Spring is right around the corner, I hope this spring is better than 2007. Last year was a killer, how much damage did your gardens receive? My garden has a little of everything but I have a special fondness for hostas. I was so excited before the freeze, my hostas were jumping out of the ground. The previous year, 2006, I tried an experiment --- I watered, watered and watered, till November. Bob Solberg (hosta hybridizer from N. Carolina) advised me the more water the hostas receive the bigger they grow. And then we had the freeze, so much for my experiment.

The weekend of the freeze Bob Solberg was a speaker at the Chattanooga Hosta Society meeting, he was also a guest in our home. Bob always brings hostas for the members to buy, his truck was full of tender plants. That Friday night we had dinner at one of the members homes, Bobs' truck was left in their garage to protect the hostas. I garden on ½ acre and could only cover my husbands hosta bed with row cloth, all the other beds would have to survive the freeze on their own. On returning home from dinner, Bob saw one of "his hostas" (guacamole), as we walked up the sidewalk. He asked, if we had a box or sheet to cover it, I responded that I have a lot of linens boxed up to donate to Good Will. I was surprised to learn that sheets would protect plants from a freeze. My husband retrieved the box of linens from the garage and I went to the linen closet to get my good linens.

Here it was 9:30 on a very cold Friday night, a wonderful plants man was helping me save my hostas. This is a sign of a true plant lover, not only did we spend several hours in the garden, but Bob stayed in the path to keep from stepping in the beds.

The larger leaved green hostas were affected the most, the hostas with the stronger leaf substance, variegated or blue did not receive as much damage. That next Wednesday, I removed the damaged leaves that was mush, filled 4 - 5 gallon buckets. I left the leaves that were limp but still standing, I did not have the heart to remove, surprisingly these leaves bounced back.

I just thought the spring freeze was hard on the hostas, summer drought was worse. I've always heard that gardeners were optimists, "there's always next year".

**MASTER GARDENERS OF  
HAMILTON COUNTY**

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[http://  
mastergardeners.tennessee.edu/](http://mastergardeners.tennessee.edu/)

**Board of Governors**

**2007-2008**

**Master Gardener Officers:**

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*Vice President*– Dee Clark

*Secretary*– Ron Bohrer

*Treasurer*– Nancy Williams

*Past President/Advisor*– Sue Henley

*Master Gardener Coordinator*–

Tom Stebbins

*Certification Officer*-Gretchen Rominger

**2 Year Members**

Linda Billingslea

Lisa Lemza

Sue Michelena

**1 Year Members**

Bud Hines

Jim Keown

Joy Wooden

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Elaine Barker

***Budget/Finance:***

Nancy Williams

***County Fair Committee-***

Charlene Smith

Lynn Wilson

***Crabtree Garden Plot:***

Linda Billingslea

***Food Bank Garden Tour:***

Susan Babineau

***Historian:***

Donna Adams

***Hospitality Committee:***

Kelley Walker

Tammy De Ark

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Chairperson:**

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***Photo Directory:***

Wanda Wilkey

***Project Committee:***

Sue Henley

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Jill Stebbins

***Newsletter Committee:***

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Gretchen Rominger

***Website Committee:***

Mike Smith