

CELEBRATE GARDENING AT THE RECOGNITION DINNER

The annual Master Gardener Recognition Program will be held on Tuesday November 13 at the Farm and Home Building on the Appalachian Fairgrounds. The schedule will be:

.....6:00 PM gather.....6:30 PM meal.....7:15 PM presentation of certificates.....

Spouses are invited to attend this event. The meal will be a covered dish meal. Please bring two dishes (meats, vegetables, desserts, bread). Drinks, cups, plates, cutlery, and napkins will be provided. This is a delightful evening providing a chance for all of the North East Tennessee Master Gardeners to gather and celebrate their hard work. Plan to come! Call Chris Ramsey for further information.

DON DAVIS NAMED VOLUNTEER OF YEAR

Don Davis of the fall 2005 MG class was named Adult Volunteer of the Year by Rocky Mount Historic Site. Don has been working on the grounds of Rocky Mount for two years and has most recently served as an historical interpreter explaining the ways the original owners of Rocky Mount produced their food in the late 1700s and 1800s. Don accumulated over 300 volunteer hours from June 2006 to June 2007.



MASTER GARDENERS MAKE THEIR MARK AT ROCKY MOUNT REGIONAL MUSEUM



Donna Kintner, Don Davis and Barbara Hollis working in the vegetable garden.

Editor's Note: This is the first article in a series describing the various projects currently underway by NETMGs. If you have a project you would like to have featured in the Thymes, please e-mail Jean at gardenergreen@gmail.com. Thanks.

Have you ever wondered how many Master Gardeners it takes to really make a difference in the gardening world? In the case of Rocky Mount Historic Site in Piney Flats, the magic number is three.

Master Gardeners from the fall 2005 class literally entered through the back door to become involved in Rocky Mount Historic Site in Piney Flats.

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MG Martha Pannell started working at Rocky Mount as a weaver demonstrating her skills for the visitors. Dona Kintner developed a love for Rocky Mount when her children worked there as interpreters. Don Davis was invited to join the group because he lives close by, and now he serves as an interpreter himself. All three MGs saw the site as a place where they could hone their gardening skills and accumulate many volunteer hours.

The group began by re-establishing a small herb garden. On their way to and from the site they began to notice other areas that needed a gardener's touch. Two years later they have accomplished incredible things. Some of their projects include:

- Creating three large beds near the parking entrance
- "Discovering" and re-establishing a pond near the entrance
- "Cleaning up" an already existing butterfly garden.
- Rejuvenating a "hot bed" that dated back to the original owner
- Creating and maintaining a large vegetable garden
- Building a compost bin and fencing the dumpster area
- Pruning the orchard
- Growing flax to be used for weaving
- Creating a "cutting garden" for Mrs. Cobb (the original owner's wife)



Don, Donna, and Barbara weeding one of the many beds.

The largest project by far is the vegetable garden. Two years ago it was just a flat, clay area near the rear of the property. It was backed by tall trees which effectively blocked the sun for most of the day. The first year the group amended the clay soil with manure hauled from Virginia Intermont College. They moved the "necessary house" out of the garden into a space nearby. Next, the trees were cut down so sunlight could flood the garden all day. This year sand pathways and a rain barrel have been added and the entire garden has been fenced. Interestingly, the fence was discovered in a pond area near the entrance to the site.



Apple gourds drying in the vegetable garden.

Field crops such as cotton and tobacco have been planted in various spots in and around the garden, along with vegetables that would have been grown during the late 1700s and 1800s. The produce grown in the garden is actually used by the museum for hearth-side cooking demonstrations. On a hot day in early October fall salad greens were visible, along with gourds, pumpkin, watermelon, and corn. One very interesting crop was apple gourds which the group hopes to paint red and sell in the museum gift shop.

Don Davis explained that he had acquired some "historic seed" from a group called "The Seed Exchange" to plant in the garden this year. He plans on saving seeds from this garden to use for next year's planting, just as the original owners did.

Don has been traveling to Williamsburg, Virginia twice a year to work with and learn from the historic gardeners there. He has brought many ideas to Rocky Mount from his Williamsburg visits. He currently serves as an interpreter at Rocky Mount, explaining historic garden techniques to visitors in his role as "Jim, the Overseer."



Martha Pannell holds a painted apple gourd ready to go to the gift shop.

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Dona Kintner loves the historic aura surrounding Rocky Mount and is eager to enlist more Master Gardeners to share in this rewarding project. She says Rocky Mount is: "For people who enjoy history and want to help make history come alive." Donna noted many different ways volunteers could help, including serving as interpreters, maintaining a specific bed or area, or writing a column on historic plants and gardens for the Rocky Mount newsletter. "If you don't want to teach," Donna said, "then come and listen to the interpreters yourself. They are all good and it is a wonderful way to learn."

The "founding trio" is already enjoying the help of new MG intern Barbara Hollis. Over the summer they were assisted by JP Barrett and Karen Campbell. Dona's husband Steve was also an enormous help to the group, along with Susan Evans and Sabrina Boucher.

Don Davis noted that in Williamsburg a group of 50 Master Gardeners maintain two flower beds, both of which are smaller than the vegetable garden at Rocky Mount. He was intrigued just imagining all of the things that could be accomplished at Rocky Mount with more workers.

The Rocky Mount Master Gardeners meet every Monday starting at 9:00 AM. Some of their winter projects include building raised beds with pavers, bringing more compost from Virginia Intermont, cutting and pruning trees, and general repair and maintenance. Don says they really need some strong workers to help with some of the heavier projects. MGs who are already regularly volunteering at other sites are invited to come to Rocky Mount as "storm troops" – to swoop in for a day (or part of a day), lend tools and time to a specific labor intensive event, and then return to working on their favorite project.

If you are interested in joining this group for an hour, a day or longer call Don Davis at 854-0152 (home) or 943-2392 (cell.) For more information about Rocky Mount, visit their web site

<http://www.rockymountmuseum.com/>



The trio inspecting the "hot bed." It can be used to increase the growing season for plants by eight weeks in the spring and fall.



Chris' Corner

CHRIS RAMSEY
SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
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Congratulations on your continuation in the University of Tennessee Master Gardener Program and your membership in the Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Association. I urge you to continue to be a member in this great local association. Its existence enhances the local Master Gardener program and allows so much more impact on the local level. It fosters an environment for great Master Gardener community projects and excellent educational programs. It is also a great opportunity for you to network with other Master Gardeners across the area. The NETMGA provides great benefits for the local Master Gardener program and its members!

I really appreciate you getting your hours reported either online or on paper copy. This is a dreaded but absolutely necessary thing that must be done to document impact to our funding sources. Keep up the reporting in 2008.

A change will be implemented in 2008 regarding the volunteer hours. In the past, we have referred to these hours as "ACE" hours. These letters stand for administrative, community, and education respectively. Next year, volunteer hours will be known as "ACT" hours. These letters will stand for administrative, community, and teaching respectively. This will eliminate the confusion between "E" hours and CEUs.

The Master Gardener hours report form is available on my website at sullivan.tennessee.edu. Click publications and then Master Gardener. A list of projects and CEU opportunities can also be found there. Call me if you have any questions.

NEED HOURS? PICK A PROJECT!

Healing Garden #2

For three years Master Gardeners have been involved with gardening projects at the Johnson City Medical Center. The focus has been on creating a calm soothing garden environment for patients, visitors, and staff. Many people have expressed their appreciation for the pleasant surroundings in the midst of a stressful atmosphere. In addition, the project has become an informal educational opportunity, as many people passing through the gardens will stop and ask gardening questions.

The hospital administration has asked if Master Gardeners would be willing to expand their efforts to other Mountain States hospitals in Washington County. MGs are currently considering establishing a new team to improve the existing gardens at Woodridge, a psychiatric facility located across the street from the Johnson City Medical Center. This project can only be undertaken with additional volunteers. If you would be interested in helping, or want more information, please contact Doug Hilton.

Kingsport's Greenbelt

The Kingsport Greenbelt Advisory Board is looking for a few good men (and women, of course) to help with the future development of the Greenbelt plantings. While there are building, paving, and development experts aplenty, there is a real need for people to assist in the actual 'greening' of the Greenbelt. With new sections of the Greenbelt recently opened, and more on the way, there is simply more to do than can be handled by the current group. They are looking for volunteers with ideas for sprucing up this well-loved and well-used recreational resource. Whether you forte is trees or native plantings, formal beds or wild meadows, the Greenbelt needs your help in planning, planting, and maintaining the area; for now and for the future. If you are interested please contact Carlotta Paulsen-Boaz at cpaulsen-boaz@charter.net or phone (423) 378-9361.

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PLAN TO ATTEND A HOLIDAY EVENT

Wreathmaking Day at Exchange Place



Exchange Place Living History Farm will hold its annual Wreath making Workshop on Thursday, November 29, from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. With inspiration and guidance from Judith Fox, Lifetime Tennessee Master Gardener and member of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild, participants will create an evergreen wreath and kissing ball to take home. All materials - fresh greenery (holly, magnolia, cedar berries, pine, yew, etc.), cones, dried flowers, wreath form, and wire - will be provided.

The cost for the day is \$30 (\$25 for SAPS members) and includes all materials and a soup lunch with artisan breads. To reserve a place, mail check, payable to "Exchange Place", to: Joy Moore, P.O. Box 87, Fall Branch, TN 37656. Please include your phone and/or e-mail for confirmation. Registration is limited to 15 participants. Registration deadline is November 21. Sorry no cancellations or refunds (though we will save your materials for you if you have to cancel.) Proceeds from the workshop go to Exchange Place's restoration efforts. For more information call Joy Moore at 423-348-6572 or e-mail at jonmoore@tricon.net.

Wreathmaking Tool & Supply List:

A limited number of tools will be available, but, if possible, please bring: pruning shears, wire cutters, needle-nose pliers, and scissors. Also bring "findings" - any special objects like angels, fruit, or reindeer; special greenery or berries that you wish to include in your wreath and 3-5 yards of 2" ribbon.



Christmas in the Country

"Christmas In the Country " will be held Saturday, December 1 from 10 -3, and Sunday, December 2 from 12 - 4:30, at Exchange Place Living History Farm, 4812 Orebank Road in Kingsport. The celebration features fresh greenery and trees, handcrafted wreaths and roping, traditional foods and their related folk arts, unique decorations, and creativity sessions for all ages. The traditional Yule Log Ceremony is at 4:30 p.m.Sunday. Admission is free. For more information or to preregister for workshops, please call 423-288-6071.

Combined Christmas Party

SAPS and Master Gardeners are having a combined Holiday Party on December 9 from 6-8 p.m. Join us at the historic Netherland Inn in Kingsport and enjoy the festively decorated Inn and the good fellowship of your gardening friends. Please bring a finger food to share. Wine and soda will be provided. Spouses are invited to attend. Hostess: Nancy Scott 423-230-0654.

Directions: From I-26 take the Wilcox Drive exit in Kingsport. Travel past Meadowview Convention Center and Williams Electric, turning left at the next light onto Industry Drive. Pass General Shale and take a left onto Netherland Inn Road. The Inn will be about 1 mile ahead on your right. Turn right at the Inn and go around to the back where there is ample parking.

CREATE A RAIN GARDEN IN YOUR YARD

When I first heard of rain gardens, I couldn't understand what the fuss was all about. A rain garden is simply a depression in your yard that is planted with native wetland or wet prairie wildflowers and grasses. So what was the big deal? But I soon learned that a rain garden is not just a garden but a garden on a mission—a

mission to help protect our local lakes, streams and groundwater.

When we think of water pollution, we tend to think of industrial discharges. But today the real risk to our water supply is from nonpoint source pollution—pollution that cannot be easily traced back to a single site. And storm water runoff is a major source of nonpoint pollution. When rain falls or snow melts, the runoff washes pollutants off our streets, parking lots, construction sites, and lawns. It carries oil and gasoline, soil sediment, excess lawn and garden fertilizer and pesticides, yard wastes, and pet wastes. Our efficient systems of ditches, gutters and storm sewers carry the polluted runoff to nearby lakes and streams where it damages sensitive aquatic ecosystems and leads to algae blooms and fish die-offs. In addition,



Plants are still small in this newly completed rain garden in Madison, Wisconsin. Garden is filling with water from the downspout. Homeowner Roger Bannerman is the local rain garden guru.

roads, buildings and parking lots prevent rain from soaking into the soil. A typical city block has nine times more runoff from rain than a wooded area of the same size. All this added runoff causes floods, carves gullies in hillsides and decreases underground water storage.

Rain gardens are nature's way to help control runoff pollution. A rain garden can be a relatively small area planted near the drain spout of a house, building or a paved area such as a driveway. The water from a rainstorm is routed to the rain garden and is filtered naturally by the garden's plants and soils. It is an easy, natural way of reducing the amount of water that flows from rooftops, lawns and even driveways. The water is collected close to the runoff source and held until it can help recharge our groundwater aquifers.

Rain gardens are typically planted with water-loving, colorful native wildflowers and grasses. These plants provide food and shelter for many interesting birds and butterflies, thus providing the homeowner with hours of enjoyable bird and butterfly watching. In fact, some of the primary wetland wildflowers such as swamp or red milkweed, are absolute butterfly favorites and will practically guarantee you a continuous stream of butterfly visitors.

Here are some helpful steps in creating a rain garden:

Once you select your site, do a simple soil test before you start construction. Dig a hole about 6-12" deep and at least 4" in diameter. Fill the hole with water and let stand for one hour to pre-soak the soil. Then fill the hole back up with water and measure the depth with a ruler. Measure again after 1 hour. If the difference in depth is one-half inch or less, look for another site.

Once your site has passed this drainage test, dig out a shallow depression (no closer than 10 feet from the foundation of the house to avoid flooding the basement). You can use the excavated soils to build a small berm around the edges to help hold the rain water. Try to make the bottom of the rain garden as level as possible to assure that the water will spread evenly across the surface. Locate the garden so that when it overflows, the

Editor's Note:

This article was submitted by guest columnist Joy Stewart, an intern in the 2007 Master Gardener class.

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water goes into the lot's existing drainage pattern. You can direct the water from the downspout into the rain garden by a number of different methods—directly dumping into the depression, making a swale to guide the water, digging a trench into which you place plastic piping, or laying piping on the ground.

A typical rain garden is 4-8 inches deep. But this size range is not rigid—you can build it to suit your preferences. If you don't want standing water, go down to 2 inches. If you want lots of standing water, you can go deeper and even add a slot down to 18 inches.

If you enjoy playing with numbers and really want to get “scientific” in your planning, you can do a series of simple calculations that take into account the land slope, square foot of surface area feeding into the rain garden, and type of soil. For some of us more compulsive planners, this is part of the fun. (Contact Joy for all the details in this part.)

Once all the planning and preparation is done, you can begin the fun process of selecting your plants. Take into account your soil type so you know what plants will thrive and make your rain garden as efficient as possible. You can start with either seeds or plants depending on what your budget can afford. If using plants, allow one square foot per plant. If using seeds, remember that in the first year, native plants put most of their growth into establishing those deep roots so you will only see a few blooms the first year. However, aside from some initial weeding, rain garden maintenance is minimal. In the third year and beyond, the native plants will begin to mature and will out-compete the weeds. You won't have to do any of the regular mowing and manicuring needed for traditional lawns and gardens. Just sit back and enjoy!

If you want to learn more about rain garden plants, I recommend these websites --

<http://www.prairienursery.com> <http://www.prairiemoon.com> <http://www.mowildflowers.net>



Left
Joy's rain garden in its early stages in September 2006 .

Right
Plants started from seed in Spring 2007 are not yet fully established one year later.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT THE NC ARBORETUM

Holly Show and Sale

On Friday and Saturday, November 2 & 3 the National Holly Society of America will hold a show and sale at the NC Arboretum in Asheville. Holly sprigs representing the wide variety of holly species and hybrids will be displayed, and Holly Society members will be present to answer questions. Hollies and companion plants will be for sale from five regional plant nurseries. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday & Saturday at the Education Center

Firewise Landscaping

On Tuesday, November 13th area Master Gardeners in cooperation with the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension will offer a program on ***Gardening in the Mountains: Firewise Landscaping***. The program begins at 10:00 in the education center.



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Master Gardener Interns from the Fall 2007 class. At center are Master Gardener Kathy Francescon, moderator of the class, and intern Ann Moore.



2007 DATES TO WATCH

Fri & Sat Nov 2 & 3	National Holly Society of America Show & Sale NC Arboretum
Tues Nov 13	<i>Gardening in the Mountains: Firewise Landscaping</i>
Tues Nov 13	MG Recognition Dinner Farm and Home Building - Appalachian Fairgrounds
Thurs Nov 29	Wreath making Workshop exchange Place
Sat & Sun Dec 1 & 2	“Christmas in the Country” Exchange Place
Sun Dec 9	SAPS and Master Gardeners Holiday Party Netherland Inn