

## Chasing the Sun

Sue Stanley, Master Gardener since 2006, gardening in Greenback TN

Container gardening has always been a passion of mine. Even though we live near the woods, we manage to get six or seven hours of sun daily. This is enough to easily grow most flowers and herbs. When I started adding bigger pots of tomatoes and peppers, I ran into a new problem. High winds turn over big pots. We decided to add wheels!

Each pot is now sitting on casters. When thunderstorms threaten, we simply move the most vulnerable pots to a safer location to keep them from turning over. Plus, if a plant needs more sun, I can just move it to accommodate its needs. Raising the pots off the ground has kept them from staining the patio and keeps pests from entering the pots through the bottom. The ability to rearrange and move them around has made the garden easier to manage and so much more enjoyable.

Successful container gardening is not difficult, but it does require more maintenance than growing in the ground. Most pots dry out fast during hot weather and must be watered once or even twice daily. In addition, the plants need more regular fertilizer to stay healthy. A drip irrigation system can be added to make watering effortless.

Larger pots, at least 18-24 inches wide, are perfect for growing vegetables. I always recommend using a good commercial potting soil and adding some compost or slow release fertilizer when you plant. For vegetables like tomatoes or squash, I only put one plant in each pot. Smaller crops like peppers and herbs can usually be planted two to a 24" pot. Mulching the surface to keep the soil from splashing on the leaves really helps avoid diseases too.

Adding pots of flowers like Marigolds and Nasturtiums have helped repel pests and attract bees. The strong scented herbs like Rosemary, Thyme, and Sage seem to help too. Of course, no patio garden would be complete without adding some fragrant herbs like lavender, mint or lemon balm. These companion plants not only help protect the vegetables, they make the garden a wonderful place to visit.



Lucky for us, there are several new patio sized vegetables being developed to grow in containers. Some are available in local nurseries or you can buy the seeds. My favorite online vendor for patio sized vegetable seeds is [reneesgarden.com](http://reneesgarden.com). This year I'm adding a new container zucchini squash "Astia" to the patio garden. Can't wait to see how it turns out!

## NETMGA Membership Meeting Programs

- June 4** Plant Swap, refreshments provided. 6 p.m. Blountville Library, Blountville Boulevard just down from the Extension Office; Please wear name tags.
- August 6** Second Annual Flower and Framed Photo Show. Prizes for cut arrangements and potted plants, and framed pictures. Only one entry per person per category. 6 p.m. meet and greet, bring a snack to share. 6:30 p.m. program. Door prices. Gray Fairgrounds Building 1. Please wear name tags.

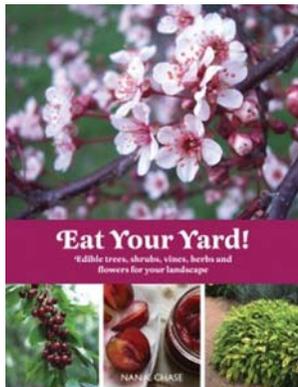
### Volunteer Opportunities **THROUGH THE GARDEN GATES**

This year the Jonesborough Garden Gala will be held on May 26th. The Schubert Club and Tuesday Garden Club are grateful for the assistance of the volunteers from the Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Association. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Joletta Woodward at 423-282-3234 myjoy-bird@hotmail.com or Pam Pope at pamelapope@gmail.com.

The shifts are from 12:30-2:45 and 2:45-5:00. Volunteers will receive swatches that will allow them to tour the gardens at no cost. The Garden Marketplace will open at 9:00 with an all-day plant and garden accessory sale. This is a fun and rewarding way to earn those "ACT" hours.



### May SAPS Program



Writer Nan K. Chase will present Eat Your Yard on Thursday, May 17, at 7 p.m. at the Jonesborough Visitor Center, 117 Boone Street in Jonesborough. In this Powerpoint program Nan will show fruit trees, shrubs, vines, herbs and flowers that provide beautiful blossoms, foliage, and structure, while also offering fruits, nuts, herbs, seeds and tuberous roots that you can eat fresh or preserve for year-round enjoyment.

Nan K. Chase has lived and gardened in the mountains of western North Carolina for more than 30 years, first in rural Alleghany County, then in downtown Boone for 25 years with her family, and most recently near downtown Asheville. During all that time her main interests have been the beauty and variety of native plant species, and the wonderful productivity of the land. Her book Eat Your Yard! Edible trees, shrubs, vines, herbs and flowers for your landscape combines those two subjects. In it, she describes some 30 different kinds of plants – nearly all of them perennials – that make for a beautiful, regionally appropriate home landscape and she shares about 35 imaginative recipes for preserving the bounty. Her talk with focus on some of the best choices for Southern Appalachian gardens and she will give a preview of her next book, tentatively titled *Vegevore! 50 Great Vegetables from A to Z*.

Nan K. Chase has been a freelance writer for such publications as The New York Times, Southern Living, and Carolina Gardener. An active garden club member, she was founding president of the new Asheville E-Z Gardeners, and serves on the Board of Governors of the Daniel Boone Native Gardens, in Boone, N.C.

Her book will be available for sale and autographing. Sponsored by Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS), this program is free and open to the public. For more information, call 423-348-6572 or e-mail [jjjmoore@embarqmail.com](mailto:jjjmoore@embarqmail.com).



### Chris' Corner

**CHRIS RAMSEY**  
SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT  
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#### May / June 2012

What an unusual spring. I am certain we will continue to see unusual results throughout 2012 in our gardens and landscapes. I trust that each of you are engaged in a Master Gardener Project somewhere in the local area. Keep track of those volunteer hours and take advantage of the many CEU hours available at local garden centers, garden clubs, gar-

den fairs, and Extension programs. We have many volunteer opportunities in need of MG participation. Please don't hesitate to turn in your volunteer hours. The hours can be submitted online at [mastergardener.tennessee.edu](http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu) or on the blue MG hours report form. The report form can be mailed to Angie Droke (address on the form) or to my office in Blountville.

Just a reminder....those MGs contributing 100 hours or more will become members of the Gold Leaf Club and will receive a gold leaf pin (native leaf of TN) for each 100 hours of volunteer time submitted.

If you have any questions or need ideas on where you can get involved, please email me at [chris.ramsey@utk.edu](mailto:chris.ramsey@utk.edu) or call 423-279-2723.

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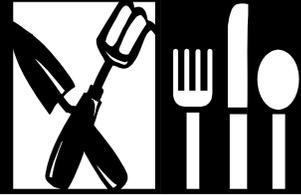
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# GARDEN BITES!



Spring is here and it is time to use fresh veggies from the garden! In this issue you will find a great dressing for fresh lettuce and onions from the garden. The dressing is hot and will wilt the lettuce. Also, you will find some variations, so feel free to experiment.

The second recipe is for Easy Ratatouille. This recipe was provided by an organic vegetable vendor at the Abingdon Farmer's Market last year. It is delicious!!!

## Wilted Lettuce Salad (serves 6)

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 5 slices bacon                                       | 2 Tablespoons water   |
| 1 lb. leaf lettuce                                   | 2 Tablespoons vinegar |
| 2 Tablespoons chopped green onions (more if desired) | 1/2 teaspoon salt     |
| 1/4 cup cider vinegar                                | 1/4 teaspoon pepper   |

Fry bacon until crisp; reserve 2 tablespoons drippings. Crumble bacon. Wash, dry and tear lettuce into serving bowl in bite-size pieces. Add onions. Combine bacon drippings, vinegar, water, sugar, salt and pepper. Heat just to boiling. Pour over lettuce. Toss lightly. Garnish with bacon and serve immediately.

VARIATIONS: Add 2 Hard-cooked eggs, chopped. Add any or all of the following: 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard; 2 to 4 Tablespoons blue cheese; 1/4 cup light cream; 1 to 2 teaspoons herbs.

## Easy Ratatouille

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Olive oil                              | 2 Tbsp. chopped basil                  |
| 3 - 5 cloves garlic, pressed or minced | 2 cups zucchini, sliced or chopped     |
| 2 med. tomatoes, chopped               | 1 large pepper, red or green, diced    |
| 1 med. onion, chopped                  | Salt and pepper to taste               |
| 2 Tbsp. chopped parsley                | 4 oz. Mozzarella cheese, grated        |
| 2 cups eggplant, diced                 | Grated fresh Parmesan or Romano cheese |

Heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic, onions, then eggplant and sauté. Then add zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, parsley, basil, salt and pepper. Stir well and sauté until veggies are tender for a few minutes. Top with Mozzarella and Parmesan.

If you wish, you can serve this over a favorite pasta and it is especially good on a cheese filled pasta found in the dairy case such as ravioli or tortellini which you prepare according to directions.

**Keep Kingsport Beautiful's  
"Saturday in the Gardens"  
Tour will be Saturday June 23, 2012**



**KINGSPORT, Tenn.—Keep Kingsport Beautiful's (KKB) popular "Saturday in the Gardens," fundraiser returns with the 5 local gardens on Saturday June 23, 2012 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The tour is sponsored by Eastman Chemical Company.**

Tickets for "Saturday in the Gardens" are \$20. Tickets will be available at the Kingsport Area Chamber of Commerce, 400 Clinchfield Street, Suite 100 in early May. Light refreshments will be included at two of the gardens. Children 12 and under are admitted free.

Visitors to the gardens may tour at their own pace. Light refreshments will be served. Comfortable shoes are recommended for the garden tours.

For more information, contact Keep Kingsport Beautiful at **(423) 392-8814** or KKB at [rcleary@kingsportchamber.org](mailto:rcleary@kingsportchamber.org).

Keep Kingsport Beautiful is a partnership of the City of Kingsport and the Kingsport Area Chamber of Commerce. An affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, KKB has won more than 60 national, state and environmental awards.

# 2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAY – OCTOBER** EXCHANGE PLACE OPENS 2:00 to 4:30 PM Saturday and Sunday
- MAY 1 - 20** Festival of Flowers Biltmore House and Gardens
- MAY 3** NC Arboretum “Garden Scents Workshop” 10:00 am to Noon
- MAY 4-6** Spring Naturalists Rally Roan Mountain State Park
- MAY 4 - 6** 23rd Annual Asheville Herb Festival WNC Farmers Market  
[www.ashevilleherbfestival.com](http://www.ashevilleherbfestival.com)
- MAY 10** NC Arboretum “Pretty but Poisonous” 10:00 am to Noon
- MAY 11-12** “From the Roots Up” Arbor Day Celebration in Jonesborough
- MAY 12** Bird Walk with Lee and Lois Herndon 8:00 am Sycamore Shoals State Park
- MAY 12** BLOOM DAYS Knoxville UT Gardens
- MAY 12 and 15** NC Arboretum Dahlia Tuber Sale and Mum Cutting Sale
- MAY 14** NETMGA Board Meeting 6:00 PM Gray Fairgrounds
- MAY 17** SAPS Meeting 7:00 pm Jonesborough Visitors Center, “Eat Your Yard” with Nan Chase
- MAY 18** Colonial Kids at Fort Watauga Sycamore Shoals State Park  
Kids Age 8-12 Reservations required.
- MAY 19 - 20** NC Arboretum Blue Ridge Rose Society Exhibition
- MAY 22** NC Arboretum “Creating an Heirloom Garden” 10:00 am to Noon
- MAY 26** 16TH Annual Garden Gala in Jonesborough (Garden Tours) 12:30 pm to 5:00 pm
- JUNE 1-2** HYDRANGEA SYMPOSIUM UT Gardens Jackson, TN  
Registration due by May 4. Check UT Gardens website for information.

## 2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS continued

- JUNE 1** NC Arboretum Planting for Monthly Interest in Your Garden” 10am to Noon
- JUNE 2** Eastern Region Master Gardener’s Day UT Ag Campus - Knoxville  
Plant Sciences Building
- JUNE 3** Asheville Botanical Gardens “Mosses and Liverworts” 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
Call 828-252-5190 to register.
- JUNE 4** NETMGA Meeting Sullivan County Library in Blountville  
Program - “Plant and Seed Swap” 6:00 pm
- JUNE 4 - JULY 27** Summer Apprentice Day Camp - “Cherokee Traditions” Rocky Mount Historic Site
- JUNE 4 - JULY 13** Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site “Summers Past History Program” Children Age 6 - 12.  
M - F 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
- JUNE 8-10** Love Lavender Festival in Jonesborough
- JUNE 12** Fruits of the Backyard Field Day 8:30 am Spring Hill, TN MTREC
- JUNE 16-17** Roan Mountain Rhododendron Festival
- JUNE 18** Warrior Path State Park 2nd Annual Dragon Fly Day 10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Richard Connors, TN State Parks Biologist and Larry Everett, TDEC  
Aquatic Biologist. Pre-register @ 423-239-6786
- JUNE 24** Asheville Botanical Gardens “Natural Garden Design”
- JUNE 29 - JULY 1** 42 Annual Jonesborough Days Festival
- JUNE 30** Roan Mountain Independence Day Celebration



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<http://netmga.net>

<http://mastergardeners.tennessee.edu>

Don't forget to sign up for the Taking Root Newsletter!

[http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/tmg\\_resources/default.asp](http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/tmg_resources/default.asp)

Check out NETMGA's website <http://netmga.net/>