

## It's Finally Warm and...



...the garden is beginning to burst forth with multitudes of plants and blooms!

If you haven't started earning volunteer hours, or need to earn more, and/or you need CEUs for 2018, check out the many opportunities.

See the Calendar of Events located at the end of this issue!

### CHRIS RAMSEY

SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

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cwramsey@utk.edu

## Chris' Corner May/June 2018

This spring has been unusually cool and wet. When temperatures warm, our gardens will come to life for sure. Be ready, it will happen soon.

If you missed the Spring Forward Garden Fair, you missed a gem of an opportunity this past weekend. This was the class project for the 2017 MG Class. The group did a fantastic job of planning and implementing an awesome gardening event for Northeast TN and Southwest VA. We had educational programs, vendors, music, and food. The attendance for the event was approximately 319 people, not counting those too busy to register for a door prize.

This event was a real success. I had given the 2017 class three goals for a project. These goals were to bring awareness to our Ag center, to provide horticulture education, and to raise money. This event accomplished all three of these goals.

We're thinking this may be an annual event. Vendors and attendees were already interested in getting this event on their 2019 calendar.

I also wanted to mention that the UT Extension MG Program is in the middle of transferring to a new database. This process will require all of our MGs to register and use this new database. Please experiment with the new database and report any problems you experience.

## NETMGA General Membership Meeting

The **June 4th** General Membership meeting will be held at the Ron Ramsey Agricultural Building at 140 Spurgeon Lane in Blountville, TN. Our speaker will be Selena Harmon. She will be talking about Garden Photography. Selena is a new Master Gardener from the class of 2017 but she's been a photographer since childhood. She will touch on some basic lessons in photography and visual theory. She will bring samples of her own photography to teach and inspire. The doors open at 6 for networking and fellowship. The speaker will start at 6:30. Feel free to bring finger food or small dish to share.

## Put These on Your Calendar



  
GARDENING SERIES

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homegrown

**May 12** 9:00 AM  
Gardening 101

**May 16** 12:00 PM  
Container & Straw Bale Gardening

**June 9** 10:30 AM  
Container & Raised Bed Gardening

**July 21** 10:30 AM  
Herb Gardening

**Aug. 11** 9:00 AM  
Winter Gardening

**Sept. 15** 9:00 AM  
Composting

FREE  
Kingsport Farmers Market  
308 Clinchfield St.

## SAPS Trip to Biltmore Gardens and Chihuly Glass Exhibit

Join SAPS for a trip to the Biltmore House and Gardens on Saturday, **June 2**, where we will view the wonderful house, gardens, and the special Chihuly exhibit. Lunch will be on your own at the Biltmore, and, after several hours of exploring the house and gardens, we will make a stop at B.B.Barnes Garden Center, one of the greatest nurseries in our area. <https://bbbarns.com/>

### Cost (including entrance to Biltmore, bus, bus driver tip, miscellaneous):

If we have 40 or more people sign up the cost is \$85 per person or \$38 for annual pass holders. *This does **not include** money for lunch.*

Please NOTE: The regular admission cost for a day to Biltmore is \$75 or \$65 when bought 7 days in advance.

If between 30 and 39 people sign up the cost will be \$94 per person, or \$47 for annual pass holders. We will inform registrants of the increase after May 15th and collect the additional money by mail before May 21.

If between 30 and 39 people sign up the cost will be \$94 per person, or \$47 for annual pass holders. We will inform registrants of the increase after May 15th and collect the additional money by mail before May 21.

If between 25 and 29 people sign up the cost will be \$101 per person or \$54 per person. We will inform registrants of the increase after May 15th and collect the additional money by mail before May 21.

**Departure times:** Kingsport 7:30 am, Johnson City 8:00 am

**Arrival time:** 9:15-9:25 am

**Lunch options:** Bring your own bag lunch and find a place on the grounds to picnic **OR** near the Biltmore House: choice of The Stables, a full service cafe, Ice Cream Parlor (sandwiches served), or the Kiosk (sandwiches), The Bake Shop, and The Conservatory Café at the Conservatory.

Depart Biltmore at 4:00 pm. Arrive at B B Barnes at 4:15 pm and leave at 5:00 pm. Arrive in Johnson City approximately at 6:30 pm and Colonial Heights around 7:00 pm.

**What is not included:** Cost of Lunch and purchases.

**Registrations and payment to be completed by May 15.** *No refunds after May 21.*

For more information call Earl Hockin at 423-817-5473 or email [ehockin@yahoo.com](mailto:ehockin@yahoo.com); or

Charlene Thomas at [Cthomas@milligan.edu](mailto:Cthomas@milligan.edu) or 423-483-4665.

**To register for the trip, please complete the reservation form (one for each person) found at <http://saps.us/>; and mail with check for \$85 per person or \$38 if you hold a valid Biltmore Annual Pass.**

**Non-members may participate by including \$20 for the membership to become SAPs members.**

**Mail to: Dave Rodgers**

**275 Grandview Ct**

**Kingsport, TN 37664**

**Keep Kingsport Beautiful's "Saturday in the Gardens" tour to be held Saturday, June 16, 2018**

Keep Kingsport Beautiful's popular "Saturday in the Gardens," fundraiser returns with a five garden tour on Saturday, **June 16, 2018** from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The tour is sponsored by Eastman. All proceeds support Keep Kingsport Beautiful. This will be a day of self-guided garden tours featuring some of Kingsport's most beautiful private gardens.

Tickets for "Saturday in the Gardens" are \$20 pre-sale and are available at the Kingsport Area Chamber, 400 Clinchfield Street, Suite 100, Monday-Friday, 8am – 5pm. Tickets will be \$25 the day of the event and will be on sale at the individual gardens from 9am until noon. Children 12 and under are admitted free.

Tour will be held rain or shine. Comfortable shoes are recommended. All areas may not be level or handicapped accessible. Tour at your own risk. No pets, strollers, motorized scooters or tobacco products of any kind are permitted.

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

## **“Featured Project”**

### **Church Hill Senior Center Garden**

The Church Hill Senior Center Garden is starting its ninth growing season. This raised bed vegetable, small fruit, and herb garden is located on Main Street in Church Hill – right next to the police station. The garden had its most productive season on record last year with over 4400 pounds of produce – which was distributed back to the community through the Senior Center lunch program and the food pantry run by Of One Accord ministry.



In 2017, the garden expanded to 41 raised bed and added a work table and multiple benches. A fourth compost bin was also constructed. Tennessee Promise students from Volunteer High School helped make these changes possible. In the summertime, the garden hosted the library summer reading group. The theme was “Building a Better World” and the children and their respective adults learned about herbs, cooking with vegetables, blooms and pollinators, and how to plant both seeds and transplants.



The 2018 growing season has already begun. With the help of covered hoops and the dedication of our gardeners, the early spring crops are flourishing despite our cold and rainy early spring. Scheduled work times this season are Wednesday mornings. Beginning in May, Monday mornings will also be added to the schedule.

The garden’s diverse plantings of edible crops, pollinator attracting native perennials, annuals, and native trees provide interest to a wide range of gardeners. If you would like to help with this community service project, please contact us at [chscgarden@yahoo.com](mailto:chscgarden@yahoo.com). Only a short drive from Kingsport – come and visit.

## 8 Plants That Repel Mosquitoes Naturally



Grow a garden full of your own natural pest control and never buy bug spray again!

Look, mosquitoes are awful. They fly around searching for animals or people, to take a bite and suck out their blood. Gross. They may be great food for birds and **bats**, but you don't want them hanging around your backyard with their diseases and viruses and whatnot (trust us, mosquito-borne diseases like west Nile virus, malaria, or Zika don't sound like health issues that we want to explore personally). You also don't want to spray yourself in harsh chemical mosquito repellents

that could themselves be the source of other health issues. So, aside from making your outdoor living areas less friendly to the eggs by getting rid of any standing water (including the water in clogged rain gutters), what are your best option for repelling these bugs, and keeping yourself free from disease?

It turns out that mosquitoes, along with many insects that bite, are attracted to certain odors in human skin. They're especially attracted to your body odor and other secretions, meaning that if you're spending a lot of time running around and sweating, or working hard in your garden at the end of the day, you can expect to have more mosquitos following you around.

Alternately certain strong-or unpleasant to the insect-smells can both hide the scent of people and prevent them from getting close enough to bite you. This is why deet sprays and citronella candles sell like hotcakes in the summer. There are several plants with strong scents that we find pleasant, which you can use to help mask your own smell and keep nearby mosquitoes populations under control. The aroma needs to be in the air around you, at the very least, and ideally on your skin.

To get the maximum effect of these natural mosquito repellents, crush herb leaves in your hands to release their perfume and essential oils, and then rub the leaves and their oils over your skin. By including these 8 plants in your garden, you can reduce your dependence on deet sprays and high chemical citronella candles.

### Lemon Balm



This member of the mint family has white flowers and a gentle lemony scent, as well as some healing properties. Lemon balm is particularly good at keeping mosquito bites low, but it's also an invasive species, so be careful when growing it in your garden. It does well if you plant it in a pot on your patio, or other outdoor areas.

### Catnip



This fragrant mint cousin contains a natural chemical called nepetalactone, which is both a feline attractant and a useful insect repellent. Though if you're not interested in a bunch of cats moving into the area, skip this one and move onto a different plant.

## Basil



A 2009 study showed that the essential oil from this delicious staple from your indoor herb garden is toxic to mosquito larvae. Grow this amazing plant around any natural water sources, such as a pond, to help control the rate of eggs being laid.

## Lavender



One of the cool things lavender can do is repel flying insects like mosquitoes, moths, and flies. The flower's perfume is well-known, and while it will scent the air, it's most effective way to control insects is by actually rubbing the plant on your skin to release the oils.

## Citrosium (aka Mosquito Plant)



This perennial is actually marketed as "mosquito plant," and sometimes referred to as the citronella plant primarily due to its strong citronella scent. Unfortunately, though it's the most heavily marketed, there's some research that suggests it's also the least effective garden plant at mosquito control. Still, there's some benefits to be had from rubbing the crushed leaves on your skin, and if there's nothing else around, it will provide some protection.

## Peppermint



In its concentrated form, peppermint is sometimes used as an insect repellent, and its oil has been shown to repel the adults and kill the larvae and eggs of several species.



## Sage + Rosemary

If you're planning to gather around a fire, try **burning a little sage** or rosemary. The incense these plants give off when they burn not only smells good but is unpleasant enough to most species of insects that it'll repel them - as long as you're near the smoke.

## Feed the hummingbirds! How to Make Hummingbird Nectar



Hummingbirds may be some of the smallest birds in the world, but fluttering those tiny wings can be quite a workout. Flapping away at up to 90 beats per second burns up calories fast; to maintain their momentum, hummingbirds need to eat—a lot! To satisfy their speedy metabolisms, these busy birds consume half their body weight in bugs and nectar, feeding every 10-15 minutes and visiting 1,000-2,000 flowers per day.

You can help these hardworking foragers get the nutrients they need by providing them with their favorite post-workout meal—nectar. This hummingbird sweet treat can be made right at home with a few simple ingredients. By filling your feeder with this DIY delight, you can complement nectar-rich plants and watch these beautiful little birds feed and flitter all day.

### Materials:

- 1/4 cup refined white sugar

*[Note: Please do use refined white sugar. Honey can promote dangerous fungal growth. Organic, natural, and raw sugars contain levels of iron that could be harmful. Plain white table sugar is sucrose, which, when mixed with water, very closely mimics the chemical composition of natural nectar.]*

- 1 cup boiling water
- Bowl
- Spoon

*Note: There's no need for red dye here. Red coloring is not necessary and the chemicals could prove to be harmful to the birds.*

### Steps:

1. Mix sugar and boiling water until sugar is dissolved.
2. Cool and fill feeder.
3. Hang up your feeder outside and wait for the hummingbirds to come.



### 2018 OFFICERS

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### Projects List

**Boundless Playground at Warriors' Path State Park** Kingsport  
Gwyn Duncan 423-239-0460 [geduncan@charter.net](mailto:geduncan@charter.net)

**Carver Peace Gardens** Johnson City  
Nancy Shilling 423-833-1420 [nancyshilling@gmail.com](mailto:nancyshilling@gmail.com)

**Church Hill Senior Citizens Center Garden**  
Marcia Vandermause [mmvdvm@charter.net](mailto:mmvdvm@charter.net)  
Christine Barger 423-288-5115 [o773h@hotmail.com](mailto:o773h@hotmail.com)

**Exchange Place Living History Farm** Kingsport  
Earl Hockin-Vegetable Garden [ehockin@yahoo.com](mailto:ehockin@yahoo.com)  
Dave Gostomski-Lawns, Trees, etc. [e3fan98@yahoo.com](mailto:e3fan98@yahoo.com)

**Harvest of Hope Community Garden** Kingsport  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 [howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com](mailto:howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com)

**Johnson City Medical Center, Woodridge Hospital** Johnson City  
Barbara Voigt 423-467-2013 [voigt7b@comcast.net](mailto:voigt7b@comcast.net)

**Northeast State Community College Gardens to Degrees**  
Contact Chris Ramsey for details

**Rocky Mount Living History Site** Piney Flats  
Don Davis home 423-854-0152, cell 423-943- 2392  
[donfdavis@aol.com](mailto:donfdavis@aol.com)

**Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park** Elizabethton  
TBA

**Tipton Haynes Historic Site** Johnson City  
Vern Maddux [vjornmaddux@embarqmail.com](mailto:vjornmaddux@embarqmail.com)  
Betts Leach [BettsL@aol.com](mailto:BettsL@aol.com)

**Vance Community Gardens** Bristol  
Gini Powell [PowellG@btcs.org](mailto:PowellG@btcs.org)  
Rebecca Craddock [Craddockr@btcs.org](mailto:Craddockr@btcs.org)

The following projects are one weekend a year for each of the 4 activities:

**Johnson City Home Show and Women's Expo**  
Penny Rutledge [pennyrutledge2@aol.com](mailto:pennyrutledge2@aol.com)

**Kingsport MeadowView Home Show**  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 [howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com](mailto:howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com)



## MAY 2018 Calendar of Events

- MAY 23      Trees of Rocky Fork: Intro to Tree Identification  
6:00-7:30pm. An easy one mile hike up Rocky Fork Trail to identify tree species in the park. Meet at Main Parking Lot. Contact: 423-271-1233 or email [garypurchasejr@gmail.com](mailto:garypurchasejr@gmail.com)
- MAY 26      Organic Gardening  
10:30am. Evergreen of Johnson City. Please register for this free class. Information and registration: <http://evergreenofjc.com> or 423-282-3431.
- MAY 29      Botany for Gardeners-A Two Week Class  
9:30am – 12:30pm. The course, instructed by Alexandra Holland, will cover plant structure, function, evolution and classification. Continues June 5. North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville. Cost: \$69-Member/\$79-Non-member. Registration required:  
<https://4020a.blackbaudhosting.com/4020a/SP18-Botany-for-Gardeners>

## JUNE 2018 Calendar of Events

- JUN 2      National Trails Day: Hike Snakeden Ridge at Rocky Fork State Park  
9:00am – 2:00 pm. A moderately strenuous 6.75 mile hike that offers several wildflower viewing opportunities and scenic views of the park. Rain or shine. Meet at Main Parking Lot. Contact: 423-271-1233 or email [anengle3@gmail.com](mailto:anengle3@gmail.com)
- JUN 2      National Trails Day: Tom Gray Nature Hike at Roan Mountain State Park  
1:30 – 2:30pm. A shady stroll along the Doe River to learn a bit more about the unique ecosystem of the park. Meet at Camp Store. Contact: 423-772-0190
- JUN 3      Orchid Society of East Tennessee – 1 pm Gray Community Center.
- JUN 4      NETMGA Membership Meeting.  
6:00pm. Program, presented by Selena Harmon, is “Garden Photography.” Location: Ron Ramsey Agricultural Center at 140 Spurgeon Lane in Blountville
- JUN 5      Washington County Bee Keepers Association  
7:00pm; 299 Gray Ruritan Rd. Gray TN
- JUN 10      Ecology and the Southern Appalachian Garden  
9:00-11:30am. This class will examine numerous aspects of ecology to create more dynamic, stable, and harmonious gardens. Cost: \$15 members/\$20 non-members. Asheville Botanical Gardens. Information: 828-252-5190.

JUN 12 Living Soil

9:30am – 12:30pm. The class, instructed by Phil Roudebush, will focus on all the forms of life found in healthy soil, the soil-food web and how to use this information to improve gardening techniques. North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville. Cost: \$39-Member/\$49-Non-member. Registration required: <https://4020a.blackbaudhosting.com/4020a/SP18-Living-Soil>

JUN 16 Keep Kingsport Beautiful's "Saturday in the Gardens" Fundraiser

9:00am – 2:00pm. A five garden tour. Tickets are \$20 pre-sale and \$25 day of the event. Contact: Keep Kingsport Beautiful at (423) 392-8814 or [rcleary@kingsportchamber.org](mailto:rcleary@kingsportchamber.org).

JUN 16-17 Rhododendron Festival 2018 at Roan Mountain State Park

10:00am – 5:00pm each day. Contact: 423-772-0190 or [www.roanmountain.com](http://www.roanmountain.com)

JUN 19 Summer Gardening Tasks

10:00am – 12:00pm. This garden maintenance class, instructed by Geoffrey Steen, offers tips, projects and considerations for activities like fertilizing, planting, pruning, pest control, planning, clearing and cleaning. North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville. Cost: \$29-Member/\$39-Non-member. Registration required:

<https://4020a.blackbaudhosting.com/4020a/SP18-Summer-Gardening-Tasks>

**Master Gardeners:  
report your hours  
each month!!**



Northeast Tennessee  
 Master Gardener Association  
 c/o  
 UT Extension Sullivan County  
 3258 Highway 126, Suite 104  
 Blountville, TN 37617

<http://netmga.net>  
<http://mastergardeners.tennessee.edu>



### UT Extension

Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Endowment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**I/We would like to contribute to the University of Tennessee Foundation**  
 (Please make checks payable to the University of Tennessee Foundation, Inc.)

My/Our gift is designated for:    **Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Endowment (MASTE\_06)**

Or other fund: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ a year for \_\_\_\_\_ year(s) for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Please remind me/us of our pledge  
                                 \_\_\_\_\_ annually  
                                 \_\_\_\_\_ semi-annually  
                                 \_\_\_\_\_ quarterly

Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Indicate month/year

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is the first payment on my/our pledge.

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We would like to make a gift via Credit Card. Circle one:  Visa    MasterCard    Discover.  
 Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is a one-time gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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 The Institute of Agriculture  
**Questions:** Please contact Tom Looney at 865-974-8622 or tom.looney@tennessee.edu  
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