

## FALL MASTER GARDENER CLASSES SET

By Nina Hedrick

The 2007 Master Gardener Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Tues. Sept. 18 and ending with a Graduation Dinner on Nov. 14. Since we are still in the process of confirming availability of our lecturers, please consider this a tentative schedule for now. Also, one class may be held on a Saturday. Classes will begin at 9:00 am and end at 12:30 pm. Coffee and social time is scheduled from 9:00 to 9:30, with the lecture starting promptly at 9:30. The classes will be held in the Ruritan Club at the Community Center in Gray.

Please consider serving as Moderator for one or more of the lectures. The main duties of Moderators include preparing the room for the lecture, welcoming students, introducing the speaker, and ensuring time schedules are adhered to. Two Moderators are needed per lecture. So please consider this. MGs get two benefits, ACE hours and CEU hours! If interested, please contact Elaine Kolp, [loosechpgs@juno.com](mailto:loosechpgs@juno.com), 423-926-6487.

We also encourage our Master Gardeners to serve as a "Bud" for our incoming Master Gardener Class of "Sprouts". Buds & Sprouts pairs a Master Gardener (BUD) with a member of the incoming class (SPROUT) for the main purpose of friendship and information sharing. Lois Bronson, who has kindly agreed to coordinate the program again this year, will pair you with a class member, and provide you more information. You may also use this as ACE hours. Please contact her at 423-239-4285 or [honeybee@copper.net](mailto:honeybee@copper.net).

## 2007 Tennessee Master Gardener Conference

\*\*\*STATE CONFERENCE IS BIG SUCCESS\*\*\*

The state conference held June 8, 9 and 10 at the Meadowview Conference Center was very successful. Many Master Gardeners attended the talks on Friday and the dinner/speakers on Friday and Saturday. The Garden Market was filled with exciting vendors and timely speakers. Congratulations to the entire planning committee for a job well done!

*(See Chris' Column for more on the state conference.)*

## **Habitat for Humanity®** HABITAT SEEKS GARDENING HELP

Holston Habitat for Humanity is interested in setting up a program where Master Gardeners can advise and work with Habitat homeowners to landscape their property. Habitat homeowners go from substandard rental housing to new homes to which they have contributed hundreds of hours of sweat equity. These new homeowners are gardening novices, and need help with suitable plant choice on a very limited budget to the home site. Low maintenance plantings are very important, and the advice of Master Gardeners could be invaluable to the Habitat homeowner.

If you are interested in this project opportunity, please drop a line to Jane Boyd @ [janeboyd@charter.net](mailto:janeboyd@charter.net).

## LEARN ABOUT ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Dr. Tom Samples, UT Plant Sciences, Extension Specialist, will speak on Ornamental Grasses on Thursday, July 19, at 7 pm at the Farm Bureau Building in Jonesborough.

This program, sponsored by Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS), is free and the public is invited. For more information call 230-0654.



PHOTO courtesy of  
[www.smithfieldgardens.com](http://www.smithfieldgardens.com)



Brandywine Heirloom  
tomato with sweet,  
spicy flavor  
[peoriagardens.com](http://peoriagardens.com)

## ANNUAL TOMATO FEST COMING SOON

On August 11 the Third Annual Homegrown Tomato Fest will be held in Kingsport.

This event is sponsored by SAPS and the Downtown Kingsport Association. Call any SAPS member for more details.

## MANAGING LAWNS AND LANDSCAPES DURING THE CURRENT DROUGHT

These suggestions have been published recently by The North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, NC. in response to questions from the public about the Arboretum's water usage during the current drought. We may want to consider using some or all of them here in our area:

- Wait as long as possible between mowings, and mow at the highest level possible to keep grass as healthy as possible.
- Water late in the evening or early in the morning to reduce evaporation
- Mulch with any available material to reduce moisture evaporation from the soil.
- Use drip irrigation or hand water when possible.
- Water less often (once a week) and water slow and deep.
- Apply water directly to the root system of the plants
- Prioritize watering to protect valuable or sentimental plants.
- Remove plants that are not healthy, are overgrown, or in the wrong place to reduce water needs.
- Group plants with similar watering requirements.
- Incorporate moisture retaining polymers into container soil mixes.
- As a long-term strategy, select native grasses and other drought-tolerant plant species.
- Utilize water catchment basins to capture rainfall and recycle it.
- Do not fertilize lawns and landscape plantings during the drought.

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## Chris' Corner

CHRIS RAMSEY  
SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT  
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Congratulations to the committee of Master Gardener volunteers who planned for the last two years one of the most impressive events I have ever had the opportunity to attend. If you didn't manage to work this conference into your busy schedule, you missed an awesome opportunity to network with Master Gardeners from across the Southeast and hear exceptional, nationally known speakers. UT Management, Master Gardeners, conference speakers all gave this conference extremely high marks. If you were involved with the planning of this conference, please give yourself a whopping A plus.

With the conference behind us, we must move forward with our many other

projects and opportunities. Please continue to record your volunteer hours as the target date for getting these hours submitted is September 30, 2007. The volunteer service requirement is 40 hours for Master Gardener Interns and 25 hours for certified Master Gardeners. Both of these groups should accumulate 8 hours of Continuing Education (CEUs).

The 2007 Fall Master Gardener class is in the planning stages. The class will tentatively be held at the Gray Community Center adjacent to the Appalachian Fairgrounds on Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The program will begin on September 18 and end on November 8. Please spread the word to other potentially interested individuals. They may call me at 423-279-2723 to put their name and address on our mailing list. Program details and an application will be mailed in late July.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Just a few thoughts:

A quick "thank you" to all the guest columnists for this edition. It is such a delight to receive so many varied and interesting articles from Master Gardeners in the region. I never know what to expect when I open my e-mail, but it is always a wonderful surprise.

Thanks to our readers for understanding the delay in this edition – everyone involved with the newsletter was traveling!

More congratulations to the folks involved in planning the State Conference. I spoke to some vendors in the Garden Market who said it was the most professionally organized event they **had every attended. Good job!**

## HERB GARDENS COME IN ALL SIZES

By Jeanne Cope



A small herb garden in a nice large, squatty pot containing sweet basil, purple leaf basil, chives and flat leaf parsley.

[Culinaryherbguide.com](http://Culinaryherbguide.com)

The most wonderful tiny herb garden in the sun, at your kitchen door, can be a large flowerpot. The contents are only limited by the size pot you choose. A useful size is about 20" diameter. Be sure the pot has good drainage in the bottom, and fill it with a light potting soil and a little slow-release fertilizer. During hot weather the pot may need watering daily. Plant your favorite herbs into the container, then just step out the door and harvest!

Another small, intimate herb garden I love is about 10'x 12'. It is interesting to make the bottom a raised bed and then add a smaller raised bed on a section of the big bed. This gives elevation and interest. Fill the beds with a mixture of compost and sand. Herbs do not need a rich soil, just lots of sun. Purchase two or three plants of each of your favorites, allowing about a foot for each plant.

Add some stepping-stones to create a walkway, perhaps using boxwoods to denote the entrance to a special place. It is nice to include an

herb with lovely flowers, like Rue. Grow perennial herbs to save replanting every year.

If you have a wall or railing, perennial Rosemary with little blue flowers in early spring is a wonderful background plant. My Rosemary grows along side the deck stairs and reaches into the stair railing. Pushing the Rosemary through the railing and tying it so it overhangs part of the steps requires the dogs to brush the Rosemary when using the steps. When they come in, they smell great; never have fleas and rarely a tick.

Happy Gardening everyone!



## Hardy Geraniums Are a Favorite in English Gardens

By Jeanne Cope

Hardy (perennial) geraniums are a gardeners' delight! They are beautiful, carefree and come in many shades of blue, lavender, pink, purple and white. There are combinations of these colors such as white with yellow centers, or dark pink with lighter edges. The blues are beautiful all by themselves and are a favorite in English gardens.



Hardy Geranium 'Brookside'  
plantsmen.com

Some geraniums grow 12" to 18" high and about 24" to 30" wide. Others are shorter, and less wide, while a few grow to 30" tall. When they spread beyond their assigned area it is easy to cut them back within bounds. They are very tolerant of near neglect, cutting and pruning.

Although they bloom most of the summer, even when not in bloom, the foliage is interesting. Some have fern-like leaves and others have leaves resembling old-fashioned annual geraniums. A few even have leaves of two colors. These plants are not finicky, thriving in part shade or full sun. Once established, they will endure some dryness, while enjoying a deep drink now and then.

To plant hardy geraniums, dig a hole about twice as wide as the container, but no deeper. If you have well rotted compost, incorporate it into the bottom of the hole, taking care the plant is situated at the height it was growing in the container. When taking the plant out of the nursery container, squeeze the pot in several spots around the bottom edge to loosen the plant. Then, placing your fingers around the base of the plant, invert the pot and slide the plant out of the pot into your hand. If you observe roots circling around the pot, these must be gently and carefully teased out or lightly cut with a sharp knife to encourage them to grow outward into the new hole you have prepared. If the entire bottom inch is a solid mat of roots, take your sharp knife and cut off half an inch.

Place the plant into the hole, add water, and as it soaks in, begin to fill the hole with soil to the depth it grew in the nursery pot. The greatest danger in planting anything is setting it too deep, thereby causing lack of air to the base of the plant. With the plant securely in its new location, tamp the soil to be sure no air is around the roots. Then form a saucer around the outside edge of the hole and fill it with water. Add a little mulch and your plant should be happy for many years. I know one perennial geranium that has lived ten years with minimum care.

These plants go completely dormant during the winter, then in spring they bring out new foliage and begin their growth cycle, blooming mid-May through late September. They are especially attractive planted with bright yellow sundrops and coneflowers which provide a lovely contrast to the colors of hardy geraniums.

If you plan to add hardy geraniums to your garden, be sure to read the tag to determine if the variety prefers more sun and less shade or the opposite. Also be certain the tag assures you the plant is hardy in zones 3, 4 or 5. I recommend Hardy Geraniums to your garden.





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## DATES TO WATCH

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|-----------------|--|
| July 19, 2007   | Talk on Ornamental Grasses 7:00 PM<br>Farm Bureau Building, Jonesborough |
| August 11, 2007 | Tomato Fest, Kingsport   |
| September 18    | MG Classes begin 9:00 AM<br>Ruritan Club, Gray Community Center          |