

2012 TMG Winter School Tennessee Master Gardener February 9-10, 2012

Erica Glasener

Erica Glasener, horticulturist, author, lecturer and award winning host of HGTV's A Gardener's Diary for 14 years. As the host for this popular TV show she introduced her audience to gardeners, horticulture professionals, specialty plant growers, landscape architects and more from across the country. Erica writes and speaks to garden enthusiasts to inspire more people to share her passion of gardening. She shares this passion with Tennessee Master Gardeners. Plant combinations and problems solving in the landscape are just two of her talents she hopes to share in helping you to inspiring more to garden.



Teaching and Training Tools

The purpose of the education track is to provide sessions for Tennessee Master Gardeners and Interns so that they will become more effective communicators with the gardening public. Sessions have been planned around effective teaching techniques, as well as providing information on specific garden topics. Special topics include: Engaging the Gardener through Mystery and Treasure Hunt, Using a Case Study Approach, The Importance of Using Simulations, and Role Playing. One large group session will be a live demonstration on using "cutting edge" technology to identify plant pests at the county Extension level.

Silent Auction

Every year the silent auction gets more exciting. This is our only fundraiser to support future Winter Schools. Counties have offered suggestions and MG are donating some fantastic items, including 2 rain barrels custom designed by Donna Smolinki from Hamilton County. Groups can bring a themed baskets related to gardening: gardening with kids, composting, vegetable gardening, etc. As always we accept individual items donated from you or your local retailers.

Search For Excellence

The Search for Excellence (SFE) presentations are always a highlight of the conference. Winners of the SFE awards will present a summary of the project and be on hand to share more details about the projects. This is a networking opportunity you won't want to miss.

Focus on Projects and Outreach

Our leadership track was coordinated with the outreach projects in mind. Of course this idea was captured at last year's Winter School. Breakout sessions and keynote speakers will emphasize project management, ideas and recruitment of new volunteers and recognizing contributions to the team. Carmen Burgos, from UT Extension's 4-H will share tips on how to attract more diversity to your programs.



Hotels

This year the Sleep Inn, 193 Chaffin Place, (615) 396-3000 is our conference hotel. Make your reservations soon to ensure the \$60 room rate. Make sure you indicate you are with the "Master Gardeners" when making reservations. Other conference hotels include: Comfort Suites, 226 North Thomson Lane (615)898-0950; Baymont Inn and Suites, (615) 896-1172, www.baymont.com; and Embassy Suites (615) 890-4464 www.embassysuites.hilton.com

The Joyful Gardener

The Semi-Retired Life of Hugh Conlon

Good Morning Gardeners. We read that we retire to and not from something. The retirement of Hugh Conlon on July 1, 2011 has given Hugh the time to create and expand an existing Blog he began several years before retirement. He has since taken his more than 30 years experience with ornamental horticulture into the exciting world of the Website.

Hugh still travels to gardens with his camera in his pocket, he examines many blooms and then takes photos of the best specimens to share with readers of his website. His favorite gardens are all gardens, regardless of whether they are Botanical, Arboretums, Demonstration Gardens or small home gardens. Hugh searches out new, different and unusual plant forms and blooms that will thrive in our gardens. He then writes about them, attaches a photo and posts it on his website and blog.



Hugh Conlon snaps pictures at the Athens GA Arboretum

At last report, Hugh had more than 800 photographs stored on his computer. He edits the photos judiciously and nothing mediocre is allowed in the collection. His personal garden is a wonder of amazing plants of many types and forms. His gardens have grown to take most of the grassy area.

A project Hugh has been pursuing for several years is designing and planting flower beds on the grounds of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Johnson City. He invites you to drive over and look at the growing landscape of the buildings. It is remarkable how the efforts of one person can add much enjoyment to many persons driving by or walking the grounds surrounding the Church.

On a recent trip to St. Mary's the pansies planted by Hugh were in full bloom. I encourage those of you who are thinking of retirement, to look beyond the end of regular work days,

and expand your thinking to include retiring to something you have always wanted to do. Hugh is an admitted plant addict and rarely meets an ornamental specimen he doesn't care for in some way.

I remember retired coach Vince Dooley telling us that when he was thinking of retirement, he thought about what he had always wanted to do and never had the opportunity. His decision was gardening. He then took "a class" at the University of Georgia and then proceeded to landscape his own garden, write several books about football and flowers and other topics. A good mind simply doesn't retire.

Hugh continues to assist the University of Tennessee as a consultant and filling other requests of that institution, but he has time himself to do what he was educated for and enjoys the most.

Hugh gives many talks and presentations, combining his photography collection with power point making a delightful evening of learning from a quiet and unassuming professional. During the fifteen years I have known Hugh, he cheerfully gives answers to questions he has been asked many times. When gifted with more plants than he has room to plant, he is quick to give them away or plant them on the grounds of St. Mary's.

In Hugh's retirement, we lost a favorite UT Horticultural Specialist, and gained a continuing resource. Check his world-class website: whatgrowsthere.com; you will be glad you did. Happy Gardening Everyone!

Jeanne Cope is a Garden Writer and UT Lifetime Master Gardener

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nual reports and many other essential functions that benefit you as a Master Gardener.

The TN Master Gardener Reporting System is getting stronger each year thanks to your participation by entering your hours. The information generated when your hours are compiled with other MGs across the state is essential for justifying the TN Master Gardener Program. Please continue to keep an accurate record and enter these hours. You can begin entering the hours immediately online or monthly if you prefer the paper report form.

We will again recognize Master Gardeners at the February NETMGA meeting. Hopefully, you and your family will be able to attend. The Master Gardener Winter School will also be held in Murfreesboro, TN on February 9 and 10. I hope you will consider attending this event. If you have any questions, please call me at any time at 646-9043.

January / February 2012

Hopefully, you have decided to again join the local Northeast TN Master Gardener Association (NETMGA). This group serves a vital role in creating a strong Master Gardener Program for you to enjoy. NETMGA also serves as a link to the State of TN Master Gardener Program. The group helps me manage programs, projects, event promotion, volunteer hours, an-

DISCOVERING MICROCLIMATES IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

You may know your USDA zone number, but you might not know that you also have areas in your yard that are colder or warmer than your typical zone description. These areas, known as *microclimates*, can challenge even the most experienced gardeners. You can make them work for you, but first you have to find them!

I started mapping my yard by making a drawing of the property on a large piece of white paper. Using the property's plat map for reference, I drew the house in the middle and added all the details including sidewalks, patios, flower beds, trees, etc. My plan was to chart the movement of the sun over a period of time so I could identify areas with full sun, full shade and everything in between.

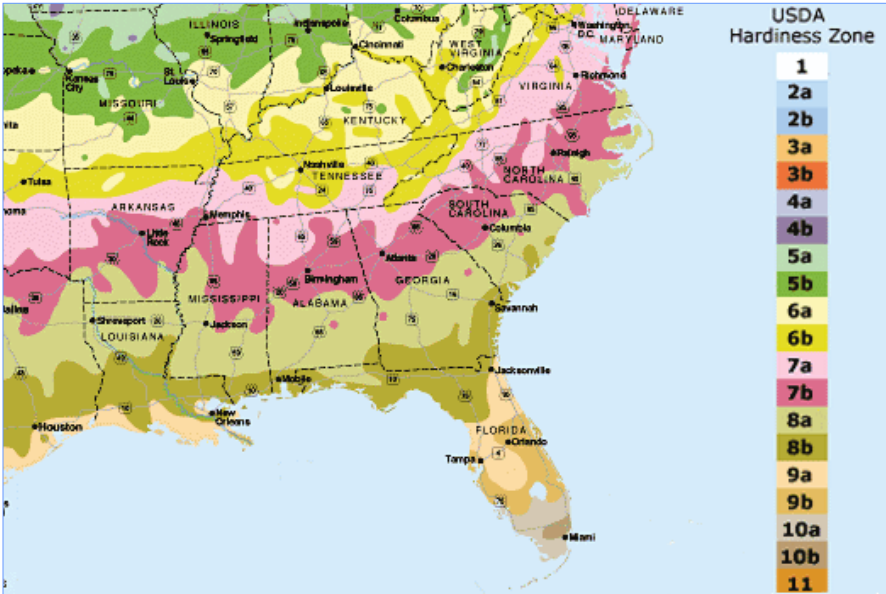
I already knew that the sun came up on the east side of the back of the house and it set in the front yard on the west side. That made it easy to find the north and south corners of the yard. After the trees leafed out in the spring, I started tracking the number of hours the sun or shade appeared in different areas. For example, I noted that the patio in the back of the house regularly received six hours of morning sun. By watching the way the sun traveled around the house, I was able to map out the entire yard in about two weeks. I used colored pencils to highlight areas of deep shade or partial shade and included the average hours daily for each, leaving the full sun areas white.

Since we live on a slope, I found that the ground at the top of the slope was dryer than the area at the bottom. That meant that plants requiring good drainage could go near the top of the slope and those that could handle more moisture could go near the bottom. All of this data went on my map.

We live near a lake; areas near lakes are more humid and even a few degrees cooler at certain times of the year. Because of that, it was important to identify areas with good air circulation to avoid mold and mildew. I also noted high wind areas near the house that might damage plants.

Making the map was a great learning experience and a lot of fun. It also helped me make better decisions when I started buying plants. Whether you have a new garden or an old one...mapping your microclimates can work for you too!

Submitted by Sue Stanley, MG since 2006, Gardening in Greenback TN



Southern Region Conference

By Lelia Kelly, Mississippi State University Master Gardener Coordinator



The 2012 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference is hosted in partnership between the [Mississippi Master Gardener Association](#) and the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

The Mississippi Master Gardener Association and Mississippi State University Extension Service are honored to be selected as the hosts for this prestigious conference in our great state. This event will bring together master gardeners, vendors, horticulture professionals and others with a common interest in all aspects of gardening, the environment and plant sciences.

You are invited to be our guest in beautiful Natchez, Mississippi. Come tour our historic homes, experience our colorful gardens, learn from Southern gardening experts, and visit with people passionate about gardening. Enjoy your stay!

Hosted by Mississippi Master Gardeners

Tour historic homes and gardens, ranging from large, formal gardens designed by well-known horticulturists to small cottage gardens cascading over fences throughout Natchez. A guided tour of the Natchez City Cemetery will highlight not only the many famous people buried there, but also the breathtaking heirloom camellias, roses, and crepe myrtles. The newly completed Natchez Trails will be open for walks along the bluff.

Southern gardening experts will share their enthusiasm and expertise on insect control, container gardening, computers as gardening tools, garden photography, and many other topics.

Share your knowledge and gain valuable tips from your fellow Southern gardeners.

\$105 - Early Bird Registration by January 14, 2012, MUST be postmarked by this Date

\$155 - Registration from January 15 through March 10, 2012, MUST be postmarked by this Date

\$205 - Late Registration from March 11 through April 15, 2012, ONLINE registration Only

Southern Region Master Gardener Conference Registration: http://msucares.com/lawn/master_gardener/2012conference/index.html

Check back often for the latest information and details on speakers and educational session topics.



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

http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/tmg_resources/default.asp



A vibrant red poinsettia brightens the counter in my kitchen, reminding me of our just-passed Christmas. Most of the house is still decorated for the holiday, the reds, greens, and golds glittering here and there, on the tree, the stair railing, and the dining table.

But something is amiss. Tucked beside that Poinsettia, almost hidden, is a lone reminder of fall. Measuring a scant 4 inches in length, perhaps three inches wide at its bulb-shaped base, it stands out sharply from the Christmas colors. It is green at the bottom, with straight lemon-colored vertical stripes running up its sides. A third of the way up it suddenly turns bright orange-yellow, as if a child decided to change crayons in the midst of coloring. It is so perfectly designed and colored it could hardly be real. And yet, real it is – a perfect example of a decorative gourd.

For several summers I have tried to grow gourds. I spot the seed packets each spring and am mesmerized by the colors and designs on the fruits. The directions are clear and I follow them carefully. I plant when frost danger is over. I water the new sprouts. I remove the weeds. And each year something goes terribly, dreadfully wrong.

Sometimes the seeds fail to germinate. Other times bright green seedlings appear, only to wither and die within a few days. Occasionally a healthy vine emerges, producing cheerful yellow flowers. This is the cruelest time. I see the tiny gourds developing, only to find the vine infected with some horrible mildew which kills it almost overnight. No vine, no flowers, no gourds.

But this summer, some kindly force of Mother Nature took pity on me. As I walked out my front door, far away from the raised beds where the gourds lay dying from disease, I noticed a strand of bright green growing over top of a barberry bush. I prepared to pull the suspicious “weed” but realized the leaves looked familiar. This was no ordinary weed, it was a vine - a pumpkin or squash or, could it be, a gourd. Smiling at its tenacity and silently thanking the birds or the wind or whoever “planted” it there, I left it alone to grow.

As fall approached, a cheerful yellow blossom appeared among the burgundy barberry leaves. Soon a small yellow gourd began to develop. When the first killing frost had its way with the vine, I went to harvest my first gourd. Alas, I was too late, the narrow end had already begun to decompose. I picked it anyway, as part of my fall clean up routine, and wondered if I would try again next year to grow gourds.

As I stepped carefully in the border to reach the gourd, my foot touched something hard. There, on the ground, like pirate’s treasure, lay a perfectly formed, beautifully marked, totally amazing, green and yellow decorative gourd. I never saw it growing. It was no longer attached to a vine. It had no spots or faults. It was perfect.

So, there it sits, on the counter, amid the Christmas decorations. It brings a smile to my face whenever I see it. What has it taught me? Never give up? Use fungicide? Read planting directions more carefully? Don’t pull weeds? No, it just reminds me that life can be full of surprises and that I should be grateful for small, perfect, unexplainable gifts.

Submitted by Jean Green



2012 Garden Seminars are scheduled at Mize Garden Centers

...in Johnson City and Gray

All talks are 10am - 12noon. Free, but seating is limited, so you must register at 434-1800 (Johnson City) or 467-2300 (Gray).

Mize (Gray)

- Jan 14** Herbs with Joy Moore and Container Gardening with Jeanne Cope
Jan 28 Raised Beds with Ben Hunter
Feb 11 Make Gardening Easy with Perennials with Nina Hedrick
Feb 25 Organic Gardening and Medicinal Herbs with Barbara Desso
March 10 Planting by the Moon with Valerie Hyrne and Turf Grass Management with John Hamrick
March 24 Birding with Bill Grigsby
April 7 Chickens with Anthony Shelton
April 14 Canning and Freezing with Elizabeth Elizondo
April 21 Preparing Your Beds with Tim Holmes

Mize (Johnson City)

- Jan 7** Raised Beds with Ben Hunter
Jan 21 Organic Gardening and Medicinal Herbs with Barbara Desso
Feb 4 Herbs with Joy Moore and Container Gardening with Jeanne Cope
Feb 18 Planting by the Moon with Valerie Hyrne and Turf Grass Management with John Hamrick
March 3 Bird Habitat with Bill Grigsby
March 17 Preparing Your Beds with Tim Holmes
March 31 Make Gardening Easy with Perennials with Nina Hedrick

GARDEN BITES!

Chris Barker MG Class of '08 is providing the first recipe in this series. Thank you Chris! Chris told me her Aunt Madge came up with this recipe several years ago and she has made it ever since... This would be a great way to use up all that extra Zucchini we have in the summer.



Zucchini Cheese Bake

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 cups shredded zucchini | 1/2 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese |
| 1 scant cup Bisquick | 1/3 cup canola or corn oil |
| 1 Tablespoon parsley, chopped | 1 Tablespoon onion, chopped |
| Salt and Pepper | 4 Beaten eggs |

Preheat oven to 375. Mix all ingredients together and place in a greased 8 x 8" pan or a large pie pan. Bake at 375 degrees for about 40 minutes. This recipe is very forgiving--you can add red or green pepper, other spices. Chris has made it with yellow squash and different cheeses. It is very good as a leftover and can be reheated in the microwave.

Thank you Chris for our first recipe!!! We hope to have more recipe submissions from other Master Gardener's. Please send them to Jane Mullins at ajtmul35@yahoo.com. Who will be the next person to share a great family recipe?

January SAPS Program



Horticulturist Hugh Conlon will present "Privacy Please", a primer on using trees and shrubs to create effective screening, on Thursday, January 19, at 7 pm at the Johnson City Power Board Building Auditorium on Boones Creek Road (Hwy 354.) in Jonesborough.

With outstanding photography, Hugh will show 25 recommended species of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs and also discuss ground preparation, plant spacing, and annual maintenance (as needed). A handout listing all plants with full plant heights and widths at maturity will be distributed.

Until his retirement in July, 2011, Hugh Conlon served 33 counties in East Tennessee as Extension Area Specialist—Ornamental Horticulture with the University of Tennessee. Over the past 35 years Hugh has written hundreds of garden features and articles for magazines and newspapers and has been a frequent lecturer at commercial horticultural and gardening events. Hugh is well known to Master Gardeners, since he organized the first UT Master Gardener class in the Tri-Cities area in 1994 and continues to play an active role in the Master Gardener program today. Currently, he posts articles on his website and garden blog: www.whatgrowswhere.com and continues to speak to Master Gardeners, garden clubs, and trade and professional associations.

Sponsored by the Southern Appalachian Plant Society, this program is free and the public is invited. For more information, call 423-348-6572 or e-mail jnjmoore@embarqmail.com.

February SAPS Program

Tom Peterson, Agriculture Education Coordinator for Appalachian Sustainable Development, will speak on "Growing Vegetables the Way Nature Intended" on Thursday, February 16, 2012, at 7 pm at the Recreation Building at Warriors Path State Park. Tom will discuss ways to raise healthy, productive, beautiful vegetable gardens without resorting to expensive fertilizers or potentially dangerous chemicals. He will cover building a rich, living soil, thwarting pests and diseases through smart garden planning and management and simple ways to keep weeds in check. He will also talk about vegetable varieties and helpful resources for organic gardening. 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 jnjmoore@embarqmail.com

At Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD), a regional not-for-profit organization that seeks to strengthen and diversify the rural economy in southwest Virginia and east Tennessee, Tom Peterson works to support the Appalachian Harvest network (a group of over 60 organic farmers in the area who collectively sell fresh produce to supermarkets throughout the southeast U.S.), regional farmers markets, and others interested in sustainable agriculture through developing workshops and farm tours and offering personal farm consultations. Tom is a founding member of the Appalachian Farmers Market Association.

Tom has a B.A. in Geology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He and Denise (and their boys Kaleb and Mason – 16 year-old twins) also farm a 1 acre market garden (Blue Door Garden) growing cut flowers, vegetables and herbs for the Abingdon Farmers Market, local restaurants and C.S.A subscriptions in Kingsport, TN and Bristol, VA.

Directions: From exit #59 on Interstate 81, travel north 1.4 miles to Hemlock Road and turn right. Follow Hemlock Road 1.6 miles into the park. Once in the park, follow signs to the Recreation Building.



Opportunity to get started on your 2012 ACT hours:

Where: Farm Expo, Meadowview Conference Center - Kingsport

When: Friday, Jan. 20th, Saturday, Jan. 21st and Sunday, Jan. 22nd

Ticket Booth Attendees and Information Table Attendees needed.

Please contact Doug Hilton @ 423-239-9433

Where: Home Builders Show, Meadowview Conference Center - Kingsport

When: Friday, March 2nd, Saturday March 3rd, and Sunday March 4th.

Volunteers for the Information Table are needed for Friday and Saturday

Please contact Doug Hilton @ 423-239-9433

Earn hours starting with the first Wed in January. We will help host and direct a seed swap. We will meet at the Blountville Library for 2 hours 4-6 the first Wed of each month. Master gardeners will be asked to simply answer questions. Great place to earn hours, sitting in a chair in the dry! This winter long program will be open to everyone.

Contact Gail Shavers at 423-323-1817 or cgs1995@gmail.com for more information.

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

Dates to Note

January 2012

- Jan 9 MG Board Meeting @ Gray Fairgrounds 6-8 pm
- Jan 7 - 14 Wilderness Wildlife Week at Pigeon Forge, TN.
- Jan 19 "Privacy Please", a primer on using trees and shrubs to create effective screening at 7 pm at the Johnson City Power Board Building Auditorium
- Jan 17–Mar 15 New Virginia Master Gardener Class Tuesday and Thursday 6-9 pm Call 276-676-6309 to register
- Jan 20 - 22 Farm Expo, Meadowview Conference Center, Kingsport
- Jan 20 - 21 23rd Annual Winter Garden Seminar at Warrior's Path State Park: Native Ferns in the Landscape with Tom Goforth. Friday at 7pm or Saturday at 10 am. Pre-registration required: email MartySilver@tn.gov
- Jan 26 – 28 Tennessee Horticulture EXPO, Nashville Airport Marriott www.tnthe.com
- Jan 26 – 28 Agritourism - Cultivating Farm Revenue Conference, Nashville Airport Marriott . Call Megan at 931-486-2777 or Pamela at 615-837-5160

February 2012

- Feb 6 NETMGA Annual Recognition Dinner 6 pm, Building 1, Appalachian Fair Grounds
- Feb 9 - 10 Tennessee Master Gardeners 2012 Winter School Murfreesboro, TN Pre-registration required
- Feb 16 Growing Vegetables the Way Nature Intended at 7 pm at the Recreation Building at Warriors Path State Park

March 2012

- Mar 2 - 4 Home Builders Show, Meadowview Conference Center, Kingsport
- Mar 12 **MG Board Meeting @ Gray Fairgrounds 6-8 pm**



NE T MGA

Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Association

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<http://netmga.net>

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2012 NETMGA Membership Form

Membership dues are **\$15.00** per year (**\$25.00** for a couple) and are due by January 31, 2012. ***After January 31, 2012, membership dues are \$20.00 (\$35.00 for a couple).*** Please complete the membership form, make note of any changes to your contact information and include the form with your dues. Make your check payable to **NETMGA** and mail to:

**Sally Richard
137 Bentwood Lane
Gray, TN 37615**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

County _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____ Class Year _____

Please check if you **cannot** receive the newsletter via e-mail _____

Please check if you do **not** want your contact information shared with all members _____