

## EVENTS FOR EARLY 2014

### Farm Expo January 17 - 19, 2014

Farm Expo returns to MeadowView Convention Center in Kingsport. Families love this three-day event. There is something for everyone, Dads browse and shop for mowers, vehicles, farm equipment, boots, etc., Moms enjoy the taste and smells of the Country Fair & Ladies Market while the children play in the 4-H Playland & Petting Zoo, have their faces painted, learn about old timey games. Mark your calendars and plan a weekend of farming and family fun.

Show hours for Farm Expo 2014 are Friday, January 17, from 4 pm – 9 pm; Saturday, January 18, from 10 am – 6 pm; and Sunday, January 19, from 1 pm – 5 pm.

For more information:

<http://www.tricityeventmarketing.com/event/17th-annual-farm-expo-is-coming/>



### Healthy Plants/Healthy People

### Master Gardener Winter School set for February 20-21, 2014

The 2014 Master Gardener Winter School is set for February 20 and 21 in Murfreesboro at the Lane Agri-Park. Two distinct learning tracks are available for Master Gardeners and Extension personnel to help manage and facilitate volunteers as well as to provide community support and education to sustain the mission of the Tennessee Master Gardener program. Come join us in the great city of Murfreesboro on February 20-21 for this grand event.

For additional information and/or to register, go to Event and Registration Information using the link below.

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/MasterGardener/WinterSchool/>

### Upcoming NETMGA Meetings

**Monday, January 13th** Board Meeting @ Gray Fairgrounds, 6:00 PM

## 2014 NETMGA Membership Dues

Membership dues are **\$15.00** per year (**\$25.00** for a couple) and are **due by February 3, 2014**. ***If dues are not paid by February 3, 2014, there will be a late fee of \$5.00 (\$10 for a couple) assessed.*** You can also pay your dues at the Annual Recognition Dinner on Monday, February 3, 2014 at the reduced rate.

***NOTE: Membership is limited to Certified Master Gardeners who have met and reported their volunteer service and CEU requirements in 2013.***

Please complete the membership form (located on the back page of this newsletter), make note of any changes to your contact information and include the form with your dues.

## January SAPS meeting: Wildflowers of the Southern Appalachians

Photographer, gardener and wildflower enthusiast Bob Hale will present **Wildflowers of the Southern Appalachians** on Thursday, January 16, at 7 pm at the Washington County Farm Bureau Building Auditorium, 1103 Boones Creek Road (Hwy 354), Jonesborough. With beautiful photographs Bob will show a sampling of the wildflowers found blooming in the Southern Appalachians from March into October.

A retired chemist, Bob has had a camera in his hands since he was a teenager. He enjoys nature, landscape, and wildflower photography. He was a member of the Eastman Camera Club for over 25 years, where he served as president and taught numerous photography classes. Bob has used SLR cameras for many years, taking both slides and negatives for prints. With the coming of the digital age, he switched to a digital in 2004.

Bob has been gardening since the mid-1960's, growing a wide variety of annuals, perennials, bulbs, and shrubs. He developed a strong interest in daylilies and grew, hybridized and sold them for more than 40 years.

Bob's interest in wildflowers began with photographing spring wildflowers in the late 1960's. Through the years, his interest expanded into the summer and early fall varieties. During the past five years, Bob has made 35-50 wildflower trips annually resulting in thousands of digital wildflower images using a digital SLR. This program includes pictures from Grayson Highlands, Blue Ridge Parkway, Unaka Mt., Buffalo Mt., Cherokee National Forest, Appalachian Trail, middle Tennessee, and the Great Smoky Mountains and includes photographs of 29 native orchids.

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 [ijnmoore@embarqmail.com](mailto:ijnmoore@embarqmail.com).

## Chris' Corner



**CHRIS RAMSEY**  
SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT  
(423) 646-9043  
cwr Ramsey@utk.edu

Hope you are looking forward to spring as much as I am. I enjoy each of our four seasons – even winter. Usually by January, I have already enjoyed enough winter and I am ready for spring.

The first event of the year will be our Annual Master Gardener Recognition Dinner, which will be on the first Monday in February (Feb 3). This will be a great opportunity to recognize our Master Gardeners for their contribution

to gardening in Northeast Tennessee for the 2012 year. We will also eat, socialize, network, and reflect on our good times and successes.

We have many awesome projects around the Tri-Cities Area for you to become involved and contribute to the community. Let me know if you need ideas on where to get involved. We also have many opportunities for CEUs (continuing education).

If you haven't paid your dues for NETMGA for 2014, I hope you will rejoin the association by the first Monday in February at the meeting. NETMGA is an integral part of the success of the Master Gardener program in Northeast Tennessee. To use an old saying, "It is the glue that holds everything together."

Thank you for making our Master Gardener Program and NETMGA one of the strongest programs in Tennessee. In many cases, NETMGA is regarded as an association for others to seek guidance.

## 2014 NORTHEAST TENNESSEE MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

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## Thyme to Reflect

***“My blue terraced pot is alive this year,  
Growing basil, chives, oregano and sage.  
It sits on my patio in the filtered sun,  
Ready for creative culinary inspiration.  
Maybe after I finish this glass of wine.”***

-Author Unknown



My mother was an amazing cook when she was alive. She could make anything taste fabulous. I always wanted to cook like her, but life and a busy career got in the way. Somehow, there was never enough time to be creative in the kitchen.

Today, I have more time. I've even become a fan of using herbs. Not the ones that come from the store in little cans or jars. I'm talking about the kind you plant in various sized pots to grow on the patio every summer. At the end of the growing season, I usually dry or freeze some to use through the winter.

This year will be different. I'm planting some herbs to put under grow lights in the basement. Several popular varieties of oregano, sage, rosemary and thyme are easy to grow either indoors or under lights in a cool basement.

If you choose to grow them on a windowsill indoors, it's best to choose small plants from a nursery. Buy the ones that come in little four inch pots. Transplant them to slightly larger six inch clay pots in well draining soil. I like to use a potting mix that's sold for use with cactus. Its quick draining quality keeps your herbs from getting too wet. Nothing kills these plants faster than wet feet!

Good light is critical for growth. Place your pots in a south facing window. It helps to add some small pebbles in a tray or saucer underneath the pots to aid drainage. Water sparingly and don't overdo the fertilizer. Less is better. It is winter, so growth is going to be slower. Trim your herbs often to keep them small and they should do just fine.

Fresh herbs are wonderful in so many dishes and soups. In fact, one of my favorite ways to use them is in homemade soup. The rule of thumb for substituting fresh herbs for dry is easy. The ratio is three to one. If your recipe calls for one teaspoon of dry herbs, use three teaspoons of fresh herbs instead. They not only taste good, they'll look pretty in whatever you use them. Now, let's go cook something!

Sue Stanley, Certified Tennessee Master Gardener

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

## Monarch Butterflies



This past summer you may have noticed that there was hardly a monarch butterfly to be seen. You were not alone, and statistics on the butterfly's decline are downright scary. Number of monarch butterflies has crashed in the last two decades, and 2012 was a record low. In winter 2012 there were 2.9 acres of hibernating butterflies in Mexico as compared to the recorded high of 51.8 acres in 1996. Only about 60 million butterflies are expected to reach Mexico this winter, which is about 1/5 of the usual migration of about 300-350 million butterflies.

Causes involve a combination of factors, ranging from extensive habitat loss to bad weather patterns in 2012-2013, including the drought of summer 2012 and the cold spring of 2013. Milkweed habitat is virtually gone in the Midwest, with experts estimating we have lost about 147 million acres since 1992. This loss is due to the following:

- a) increased production of genetically modified corn and soybeans that have been altered to tolerate widespread spraying with Round-Up, which is fatal for milkweed;
- b) farmers removing land from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in order to grow corn for ethanol; and
- c) loss of an estimated 6,000 acres of potential habitat per day in the U.S. due to development.

Plants in the Milkweed Family are the only source of food for Monarch caterpillars, as well as one of the nectar foods for adult butterflies. Monarch butterflies that emerge in the fall are genetically different from the broods emerging earlier in the summer, and are programmed to live longer and make the 1,000-3,000 mile flight to the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico for the winter. On their way south, they must eat heavily to fatten up for their winter hibernation when they will neither eat nor drink. They roost for the winter in oyamel fir forests at an elevation nearly two miles above sea

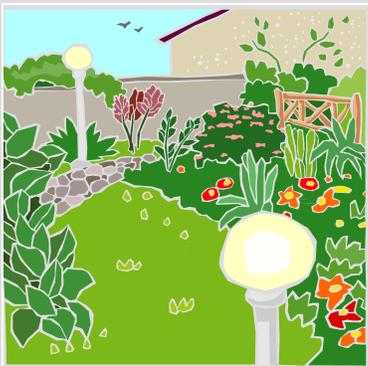
level where the temperature hovers just above freezing. When spring arrives, they awaken to begin their migration north but they have no reproductive system. So they must eat well in order to fully develop and successfully lay their first eggs as they arrive in Texas. Then these butterflies die, and their young hatch and resume the trek northward. They follow the milkweed north as it grows in spring, and it takes 3-5 generations of butterflies to cover the distance from Mexico to their northern most range in Canada. Loss of food sources in this long, involved trek can be fatal.

Research has shown some rather amazing facts about monarchs and milkweeds. Plants in the milkweed family contain heart toxins called cardenolides which make monarchs poisonous to predators. Milkweed species vary in the amount of cardenolides that they contain, from almost none to levels so high that even monarch caterpillars cannot eat the leaves. The level of cardenolides in the milkweed plant is positively related to level of cardenolides in the caterpillars' bodies; however, it is not a one-to-one relationship. Monarch caterpillars can produce the highest level of cardenolides in their bodies from plants that contain a moderate level of cardenolides; and when Monarch butterflies lay their eggs, they seem to prefer plants with moderate levels and will ignore plants with very high or very low levels if they have a choice. Plants with moderate levels include Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*), Common Milkweed (*A. syriaca*), and Swamp or Red Milkweed (*A. incarnata*). Butterfly Weed (*A. tuberosa*) is very low, and Tropical Milkweed (*A. curassavica*) is very high; however, any milkweed is better than no milkweed.

You can help make a difference by planting milkweed! Gardening is the number one hobby in the United States. Combine that fact with the fact that we have over 32 million acres of lawn in this country, and think of the potential we have to create islands of milkweed habitat in our yards. Tennessee has 13 different species of native milkweeds. If you are looking for help in selecting plants for your yard, check out the Tennessee Herbarium (<http://tenn.bio.utk.edu/>) and also the Bring-Back-the-Monarchs' Campaign conducted by Monarch Watch, a nonprofit educational outreach program run by the University of Kansas (<http://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/>).

- Joy Stewart

Note: An article about milkweed, will appear in the Mar/Apr *MG Thymes*.



**Featured Projects**  
will resume in the next  
*Master Gardener Thymes* issue

## NETMGA Projects List

1. **Appalachian Fairgrounds** Gray  
Herb Garden Debbie Green [djgreen1955@gmail.com](mailto:djgreen1955@gmail.com)  
Water Wise Gardens Joy Stewart [joylarry@btes.tv](mailto:joylarry@btes.tv)
  2. **Boundless Playground at Warriors' Path State Park** Kingsport  
Gwyn Duncan 423-239-0460 [geduncan@charter.net](mailto:geduncan@charter.net)
  3. **Carver Peace Gardens** Johnson City  
Sam Jones 423-773-3204 [simpleintn@yahoo.com](mailto:simpleintn@yahoo.com)
  4. **Church Hill Senior Citizens Center Garden**  
Marcia Vandermause [mmvdvm@charter.net](mailto:mmvdvm@charter.net)  
Judy Penley [chscgarden@yahoo.com](mailto:chscgarden@yahoo.com)
  5. **Exchange Place Living History Farm** Kingsport  
Dave Gostomski [e3fan98@yahoo.com](mailto:e3fan98@yahoo.com)
  6. **Harvest of Hope Community Garden** Kingsport  
Doug Hilton [howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com](mailto:howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com)
  7. **Johnson City Medical Center, Woodridge Hospital** Johnson City  
Barbara Voigt 423-467-2013 [voigt7b@comcast.net](mailto:voigt7b@comcast.net)  
**Quillen Rehabilitation** Carol Collins 423-639-0341 [ccollins47@Comcast.net](mailto:ccollins47@Comcast.net)
  8. **Northeast State Community College Gardens to Degrees**  
Johnny Sutters 423-323-2202 [jchemie@aol.com](mailto:jchemie@aol.com)
  9. **Rocky Mount Living History Site** Piney Flats  
Don Davis home 423-854-0152, cell 423-943- 2392 [donfdavis@aol.com](mailto:donfdavis@aol.com)
  10. **Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park** Elizabethton  
Vikki Bradach [vbradach@gmail.com](mailto:vbradach@gmail.com)
  11. **Tipton Haynes Historic Site** Johnson City  
Claudia Hazel [claudiajhazel@yahoo.com](mailto:claudiajhazel@yahoo.com)
  12. **Vance Community Gardens** Bristol  
Gini Powell [PowellG@btcs.org](mailto:PowellG@btcs.org)  
Rebecca Craddock [Craddockr@btcs.org](mailto:Craddockr@btcs.org)
- Projects 13 and 14 are one weekend a year for each of the 5 activities:
13. **Johnson City Home Show and Women's Expo**  
Penny Rutledge [pennyrutledge2@aol.com](mailto:pennyrutledge2@aol.com)
  14. **Kingsport MeadowView Women's Expo, Home Show and Farm Show**  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433

## JANUARY 2014 Calendar of Events

- JAN 3-4 Small Ruminants Conference, Brehm Animal Science- UT Knoxville Campus  
Jan 3-9:00am – Jan 4-12:00pm. Keynote Speaker Dr. Joan Burke will speak about Alternative Parasite Control Methods. Cost is \$65 per individual or \$100 per couple, which covers the cost of the training sessions, educational manuals, other teaching/instructional materials and lunch on both days.
- JAN 6 Planning Session for 2013 MG Class's NETN Gardening Seminar in 2014  
9:00 a.m. Extension Office in Blountville.
- JAN 6 Ijams Nature Center Winter Day Camp, Knoxville  
9am – 4pm. The fee for this program is \$35 for Ijams members and \$45 for non-members. Registration by email ONLY. Please email Jennifer at [jroder@ijams.org](mailto:jroder@ijams.org) to register.
- JAN 7 Washington County Bee Keepers Association  
Boones Creek Christian Church – 7:30 pm
- JAN 12 Sunday Garden Talks: Green Gardening - at UT Gardens, Knoxville  
2:00 – 3:30 pm. Contact Derrick Stowell at [dstowell@utk.edu](mailto:dstowell@utk.edu) to pre-register or for more information.
- JAN 13 2014 NETMGA Board Meeting, 6:00 pm, Gray Fairgrounds Ticket Office
- JAN 15 Home Grown: Indoor Gardening - at UT Gardens, Knoxville  
1:00 – 3:00 pm. Contact Derrick Stowell at [dstowell@utk.edu](mailto:dstowell@utk.edu) to pre-register or for more information.
- JAN 16 January SAPS Meeting: Wildflowers of the Southern Appalachians  
Speaker: Bob Hale, Photographer. 7 pm. at the Farm Bureau Auditorium, Jonesborough. For more information, call 423-348-6572; or e-mail [ijnmoore@embarqmail.com](mailto:ijnmoore@embarqmail.com).
- JAN 17-19 Farm Expo 2014 – MeadowView Convention Center, Kingsport  
Show hours for Farm Expo 2014 are Friday, January 17, from 4 pm – 9 pm; Saturday, January 18, from 10 am – 6 pm; and Sunday, January 19, from 1 pm – 5 pm.
- JAN 18 Composting and Raised Beds with Master Gardener Ben Hunter  
Mize Garden Center – Johnson City; 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Admission is free but please call to reserve your seat: 423-434-1800.
- JAN 25 Composting and Raised Beds with Master Gardener Ben Hunter  
Mize Garden Center – Gray; 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Admission is free but please call to reserve your seat: 423-467-2300.
- JAN 25 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Garden Seminar at Warrior's Path State Park  
10AM - For more information and to pre-register contact Marty Silver at 423-239-6786 or [marty.silver@tn.gov](mailto:marty.silver@tn.gov).
- JAN 25 Growing Together: Worm World - at UT Gardens, Knoxville  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Contact Derrick Stowell at [dstowell@utk.edu](mailto:dstowell@utk.edu) to pre-register or for more information.

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

## FEBRUARY 2014 Calendar of Events

- FEB 2 Orchid Society of East Tennessee – 2:00pm - Gray Community Center
- FEB 3 2014 Master Gardener Awards Dinner, Gray Fairgrounds (Building 1), 6:00 p.m.
- FEB 4 Washington County Bee Keepers Association  
Boones Creek Christian Church – 7:30 pm
- FEB 5 Home Grown: Bird Brain - at UT Gardens, Knoxville  
1:00 – 3:00 pm. Contact Derrick Stowell at [dstowell@utk.edu](mailto:dstowell@utk.edu) to pre-register or for more information.
- FEB 8 What and Where to Plant with professional landscaper Tim Holmes  
Mize Garden Center – Johnson City; 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Admission is free but please call to reserve your seat: 423-434-1800.
- FEB 9 Sunday Garden Talks: A Splash of Color - at UT Gardens, Knoxville  
2:00 – 3:30 pm. Contact Derrick Stowell at [dstowell@utk.edu](mailto:dstowell@utk.edu) to pre-register or for more information.
- FEB 15 Roan Mountain Naturalists' Rally
- FEB 20 February SAPS Meeting; Speaker: Dr Allen Straw ,Extension Vegetable Specialist at the Southwest Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center  
7:00 pm;. Location TBA
- FEB 20-21 Tennessee Master Gardeners Winter School Conference  
Murfreesboro, TN
- FEB 22 Growing Together: Egg Carton Garden - at UT Gardens, Knoxville  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Contact Derrick Stowell at [dstowell@utk.edu](mailto:dstowell@utk.edu) to pre-register or for more information.
- FEB 22 Fruit Trees and Honey Bees with UT Extension Agent John Hamrick  
Mize Garden Center – Gray; 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Admission is free but please call to reserve your seat: 423-467-2300.
- FEB 25 2014 NETN Gardening Seminar, sponsored by the 2013 Master Gardener Class. 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. More info to follow soon.

**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>

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Sally Richard  
137 Bentwood Lane  
Gray, TN 37615

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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 \_\_\_\_\_