

Spring 2016 is here!! Or is it summer?!

With temperatures hitting the 80's it feels like summer but it truly is spring. We've had "Red Bud Winter" and "Dogwood Winter" but "Blackberry Winter" is still to come. This is a good time to get your CEUs and learn a few new things to try! Take advantage of the seminars and workshops being offered right now. Check out the Calendar of Events located at the end of this issue!



NETMGA Garden Tour Road Trip to Blacksburg, VA



Friday, June 17 we invite you to travel with us to Blacksburg, VA to visit the Hahn Gardens, the Historic Smithfield Plantation and last but not least the fabulous private one acre garden of Elissa Steeves. We will leave Ingles parking lot in Kingsport at 7:00 a.m. to travel by van to Blacksburg. We will have room for approximately 20 people. So reserve your spot ASAP! We should return to Ingles by 8:00 p.m. on June 17th. The tour includes:

** The Hahn Horticulture Garden, six acres of teaching and display gardens located on the campus of Virginia Tech. It is a lovely garden that was established in 1984 but the horticulture faculty. The garden serves undergraduate students and the local community as a learning resource for plant material, landscaping concepts and environmental awareness. The garden features perennial borders, water gardens, shade gardens, a meadow garden and the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion (and plants, of course Lots of plants).

** The Historic Smithfield Plantation, restored 18th century home and heirloom gardens of the William Preston family. It is located near the campus. We will tour the property and view the gardens and the heirloom orchard which features apple, pear, plum and cherry varieties of the period.

** The third stop will be a tour of the special one acre garden of Elissa Steeves. Elissa is a graduate of VA Tech and wrote the first edition of the VA Master Gardener Handbook. Her gardens have been featured in Horticulture Magazine, Southern Living, Virginia Gardener Magazine, and the Roanoke Times News, just to mention a few. Elissa will show how an older garden was brought back to life after an ice storm took out many older trees. She practices a "no-bare-earth policy." She says, "If you've got room for weeds, you've got room for perennials." She has a water garden, garden art, many tropical plants and sculptures.

Cost for the tour:

\$50.00 which includes van rental, fuel, lunch, snacks and entry fee to Historic Smithfield Plantation. Please send your reservation fee (cash or check only) to: Pat Mazurkiewicz, 232 Cherry Street, Blountville, TN 37617. The deadline to register for this trip is Monday, June 6. Watch your email or snail mail for a registration form.

NETMGA Meetings

NETMGA Board Meeting: Monday, May 9 at 6:00 p.m. at Bill Speed's Mountain Cabin, Johnson City.

NETMGA General Membership Meeting: Monday, June 6 at the Second Harvest Food Bank, located in the old Sam's Warehouse at I-81 Exit 63, 1020 Jericho Drive, Kingsport, TN.

The speaker for this program will be Ms. Lexy Close from the Build It Up Tennessee program. She will talk to us about natural methods of insect and weed control in the garden. This is also the last day to sign-up for the road trip to Blacksburg, VA.

Please bring a snack to share, if you have time. Hospitality will provide drinks and paper supplies. Door prizes! (Note: Door prizes at the last meeting were provided by NETMGA and Doug Hilton and Jerry Ramey from the Harvest of Hope.)

Please remember to bring a non-perishable food or a cash donation to help the Food Bank.

6:00 p.m. Networking and refreshments

6:30 p.m. Meeting begins

Put These on Your Calendar

Herb Saplings Meeting on May 5

Speaker: Christy Shivell will share the history, folklore and medicinal benefits of Peppers - Herb of the Year, along with a discussion of the many wonderful varieties and how to grow them. Bring an herb snack to share. 7:00 pm, Exchange Place, Kingsport.

NETMGA Plant Swap

Saturday, May 14, 10:00 A.M. - Noon

Eastman Picnic and Recreation Area, Shelter # 27

Address: 404 Bays Mountain Park Road, Kingsport, TN 37660

Please bring any plants you would like to share. Also, you may bring other gardening items you would like to trade with your friends. Please remember, if no one claims the items you bring, please take them home to share another day. Bring a snack to share, if you have time. Drinks will be provided. Come and enjoy some fun and fellowship with your Master Gardener friends. Feel free to bring a friend! For more information, call 423-737-7915

Dr. Susan Hamilton, University of Tennessee Gardens Director, to Speak

Dr. Susan Hamilton, Director of the University of Tennessee Gardens, will discuss "2016 Gardening Trends and Hot, New Plants" on **Thursday, May 19**, at 7 p.m. at Kingsport Renaissance Center, 1200 E. Center Street in Kingsport, TN. Learn about the new face of home gardening, what gardeners are into growing this year and new plants being introduced that gardeners will want to watch for at garden centers.

Dr. Sue is the Director of the University of Tennessee Gardens known as the "State Botanical Gardens of Tennessee," where more than 100,000 visitors enjoy their beauty and education each year. The Gardens are important "proving grounds" where each year hundreds of different cultivars

of trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials and herbs are evaluated for their landscape performance.

Dr. Sue has a BS in ornamental horticulture from UT, a MS in horticulture from Ohio State University, and a doctorate degree in adult education from UT. She is co-host of "Garden Talk" radio show that airs weekly. She has authored the book "The Best Garden Plants for Tennessee" and writes for the Knoxville News Sentinel, "Tennessee Farm & Home Magazine" and "Fine Gardening Magazine" and produces the UT Gardens monthly e-newsletter and bi-annual magazine. She enjoys plant and garden photography and regularly speaks to groups on various horticultural topics. She also is an avid gardener and enjoys traveling to visit gardens, nurseries and garden centers.

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

Herb Saplings Meeting on June 2

Speaker: Jane Mullins will discuss "Lemon Herbs". 7 pm at Exchange Place, Kingsport.

Keep Kingsport Beautiful "Saturday in the Gardens" Tour coming in June

Keep Kingsport Beautiful's popular "Saturday in the Gardens," fundraiser returns with a five garden tour on **Saturday June 18**, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The tour is sponsored by Eastman Chemical Company.

This will be a day of self-guided garden tours featuring some of Kingsport's most beautiful private gardens: The England Garden on Suffolk Street in Preston Forest, The Hedrick Garden on Claymore Street in Colonial Heights, The Perdue Garden on West Main Street in historic downtown Kingsport, and two gardens located in the historic Park Hill District-The Norrell Garden and the Meade Garden

From the English style of the England Garden to the Meade and Norrell gardens that grace the Tutor Revival homes of the Park Hill District, the tour offers something for just about everyone. Visitors will be introduced to outdoor living urban style at the Perdue Garden in downtown Kingsport and bask in the shade of mature growth shade trees and over 55 species of Hostas surrounding a cascading backyard waterfall and pond filled with fish and water plants at the Hedrick Garden. Light refreshments will be included at one of the gardens.

Tickets for "Saturday in the Gardens" are \$20 pre-sale and \$25 at the gardens. Children 12 and under are admitted free. Tickets will be available beginning May 9th at the Kingsport Area Chamber of Commerce, 400 Clinchfield Street, Suite 100, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Tour will be held rain or shine. Visitors to the gardens tour at their own pace. Comfortable shoes are recommended for the garden tours. All areas may not be level or handicapped accessible. Tour at your own risk. No pets or strollers.

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

Featured Project

Tipton-Haynes Historic Site

Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site, where Project Master Gardeners had a busy and exciting 2015, is located in South Johnson City.

The vegetable gardens at Tipton/Haynes consist of two small plots in the historical area. The Kitchen Garden is representative of a small garden near the house that would have grown those vegetables that need a little extra care and be handy for meal preparation. Vegetables that require a lot of room, such as corn and pumpkins could be grown out in the fields. We emphasize heirloom varieties where we can using varieties grown in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello gardens. Colonel Tipton knew and corresponded with Jefferson, so we infer that maybe they exchanged gardening information.

In the Kitchen Garden we have some perennial plants: strawberries, rhu-barb, and asparagus, and the herbs Sage, lavender, and rosemary. Garlic is planted in the fall around the edges. In spring we plant some broccoli and cabbage, onions, carrots, beets, lettuce, spinach, and chard. As it warms up, we add Brandywine tomatoes, peppers, and Scarlet runner beans. We also add some of the annual herbs. We may add some vine crops as the spring crops mature and are harvested.



The Slave Garden as we call it is located behind the restored slave cabin, home to George, the Haynes family's slave. It was usual for slaves to have a small garden to provide some of their own food. Historical information is scarce so we choose to plant vegetables that originated in Africa, such as Okra, field peas, and peanuts, plus other staples that George might have adopted: Potatoes and squash. This garden is fenced in a wattle style, using branches and tree trimmings, such as George might have used to keep out the wildlife. Groundhogs and deer are our major challenges, today.

Our emphasis in these gardens is to display for the entertainment of visitors to the historical site, we don't try to maximize production. We do produce quite a bit of food, though, which we share with the staff, but mostly we just have a good time.

In the front Nature and Herb gardens, our focus is variety and visual appeal for visitors to the site, AND for butterflies and bees. Having been designated a Certified Monarch Waystation in 2014 we emphasize native plants & those that attract and/or serve as hosts for Monarch & other caterpillars.



We began documenting the types and number of caterpillars in 2015, and noted successful hosting of at least 3 dozen Monarch caterpillars, 3-4 dozen Gulf Fritillary caterpillars, Black Swallowtail caterpillars, and Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars.



Our plans in 2016 for the Nature and Herb gardens include completion of the rock/brick edging and adding native plants for birds, butterflies, bees, and other beneficial insects. We plan in May to be adding 14 new plant varieties, including anise hyssop, aromatic aster, orange coneflower, royal catchfly, and Prairie Coreopsis (to name a few). These plants will add to succession of blooms through the growing season. Species will provide both nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds and food for caterpillars.

We have a lot going on at Tipton-Haynes this year and only a few people to get it done, since two of our "team" moved away last year.

We welcome any Master Gardeners who are looking for a place to share fun and earn volunteer hours, please contact us! We typically work on Thursday, but are flexible if YOU want to help on another day. Contact: Vern at vjornmaddux@embarqmail.com or Betts at BettsL@aol.com

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



Chris' Corner

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

Spring is finally here! And rain too! Hope you are having a great year. Our Regional Agriculture Center is getting closer every day. The demolition on the current site has been completed. Construction on the new facility will begin soon. This new facility will be home to the UT-TSU Extension Sullivan County Office. The address of the new facility will be 140 Spurgeon Road, Blountville. This location is about 1 and 1/2 miles east of the Tri-Cities Airport. We will have access to a demonstration kitchen with a meeting room and a large meeting room with a

capacity of 300. Directly behind the conference center, there will be an arena where we can conduct livestock shows, horticulture expos, and many other educational events. This agriculture center will provide opportunities for educational programs and demonstrations. I'll continue to keep you updated on the progress of the center.

If you need to contact me, the best way is by text message or calling my cell phone at 423-646-9043. Enjoy your gardening and Master Gardener volunteering!

2015 NETMGA Projects List

- 1**
Boundless Playground at Warriors' Path State Park Kingsport
Gwyn Duncan 423-239-0460 geduncan@charter.net
- 2**
Carver Peace Gardens Johnson City
Sam Jones 423-773-3204 simpleintn@yahoo.com
- 3**
Church Hill Senior Citizens Center Garden
Marcia Vandermause mmvdvm@charter.net
Judy Penley chscgarden@yahoo.com
- 4**
Exchange Place Living History Farm Kingsport
Earl Hockin-Vegetable Garden ehockin@yahoo.com
Dave Gostomski-Lawns, Trees, etc. e3fan98@yahoo.com
- 5**
Harvest of Hope Community Garden Kingsport
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com
- 6**
Johnson City Medical Center, Woodridge Hospital Johnson City
Barbara Voigt 423-467-2013 voigt7b@comcast.net
- 7**
Northeast State Community College Gardens to Degrees
Contact Chris Ramsey for details
- 8**
Rocky Mount Living History Site Piney Flats
Don Davis home 423-854-0152, cell 423-943- 2392
donfdavis@aol.com
- 9**
Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park Elizabethton
Vikki Bradach vbradach@gmail.com
- 10**
Tipton Haynes Historic Site Johnson City
Vern Maddux vjornmaddux@embarqmail.com
Betts Leach BettsL@aol.com
- 11**
Vance Community Gardens Bristol
Gini Powell PowellG@btcs.org
Rebecca Craddock Craddockr@btcs.org
- 12 & 13**
Projects 12 and 13 are one weekend a year for each of the 4 activities:
Johnson City Home Show and Women's Expo
Penny Rutledge pennyrutledge2@aol.com
Kingsport MeadowView Home Show
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PEONY

The fattest and most scrumptious of all flowers, a rare fusion of fluff and majesty, the peony is now coming into bloom. - Henry Mitchell, American writer (1923-93)



The first peony I ever saw was growing in front of an old house in Virginia over 20 years ago. It was spring, I was a new gardener, fascinated with its enormous blooms and that wonderful intoxicating fragrance. I was told it was an old garden peony and it had been there over 40 years. This year, in a new home with a few empty garden beds to fill, I finally have a place to grow a few peonies, but which ones? I figured I'd better do some research first.

I started with an article by Beth Willis, Trials Coordinator at UT Gardens, that named the Garden Peony their plant of the month in May of 2011. In her article, Beth said "peonies (*Paeonia* hybrids), native to Asia, have been cultivated for many years for their ornamental displays and are often classified by the type of bloom they exhibit. Flower types range from the fairly simple to increasingly complex: Single, Japanese, Anemone, Semi-Double, Double, and Bomb-Double forms."

There are three main types of peonies: herbaceous, tree, and intersectional. The herbaceous type, also known as a "garden peony" or Chinese peony (*Paeonia lactiflora*) dies down in the fall, is dormant in winter and grows up from the ground in spring. This includes the peony commonly seen around older homes that have been growing there for decades. Since they don't have woody stems, some varieties have such heavy blooms that they require staking. There are over 3000 registered cultivars. So many choices to choose from!

The tree peony (*Paeonia rockii*) has woody stems, it loses its leaves in the fall, but the stems stay intact. They're usually described as much bigger shrubs with bigger flowers, but slow growers and not as commercially popular as the herbaceous types. Many tree peonies take five to ten years to fully mature and can grow up to 5 feet tall and wide.

Intersectional Peonies are hybrids, a cross between an herbaceous and a tree Peony. Developed by Mr. Toichi Itoh, they're also referred to as Itoh hybrids. These newer peonies have stronger stems that don't require staking and many come in colors not available in herbaceous varieties. They also have more than one bloom on each stem, so they produce an abundance of blooms for a longer period of time.

Most peonies grow and bloom best in full sun locations; however, there are some varieties available that do well in dappled sun. I plan to plant mine in beds that get both. I've decided I want an herbaceous type and an Itoh hybrid. I went online to check out plant catalogs for varieties and colors and made a list of possibilities to choose from. Now that I'm armed with some knowledge, let the shopping begin!

Sue Stanley, Certified Tennessee Master Gardener since 1986 – Gardening in Knoxville TN

Sources:

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, Willis, Beth, utgardens.tennessee.edu, May 2011 "Plant of the Month- Garden Peony"

P. Allen Smith Garden Home, P. Allen, Smith, pallensmith.com, October 19, 2014 "Perfectly Beautiful Peonies"

The Old Farmer's Almanac, www.almanac.com, "Peonies", n.p.

MAY 2016 Calendar of Events

- MAY 3 Washington County Bee Keepers Association
7:30 pm; Appalachian Fairgrounds, Building #1
- MAY 3 Weekly Outdoor Wonder Wanders (W.O.W.W.)-Warriors' Path State Park
3:00 pm. Meet at Warrior's Path Pool Entrance and come along for an hour or so of nature exploration. Contact: 423-239-8531.
- MAY 5 Herb Saplings meeting, Exchange Place in Kingsport
7:00 pm. Christy Shivell will share the history, folklore and medicinal benefits of Peppers - Herb of the Year.
- MAY 7 Big Spring Master Gardeners' Spring Plant Sale
8:00 am – 1:00 pm; Greene County Fairgrounds, Greeneville, TN.
- MAY 7-8 Blooms Days Garden Festival & Marketplace at UT Gardens, Knoxville
9:00 am – 5:00 pm. \$8 per day per person or \$12 for both days OR \$5 per day or \$8 for both days for new or renewing members. Contact: 865-974-7324 or utgardens@utk.edu.
- MAY 9 NETMGA Board Meeting
6:00 p.m. at Bill Speed's Mountain Cabin, Johnson City.
- MAY 10 Weekly Outdoor Wonder Wanders (W.O.W.W.)-Warriors' Path State Park
3:00 pm. Meet at Warrior's Path Pool Entrance and come along for an hour or so of nature exploration. Contact: 423-239-8531.
- MAY 14 NETMGA Plant Swap
10:00 am – 12:00 pm at Eastman Picnic & Recreation Area, Shelter #27, 404 Bays Mountain Park Rd, Kingsport, TN. Information: 423-737-7915
- MAY 14 Container Flower Gardening with Optional Workshop 10:30 am – Evergreen of Johnson City. Tips for making your own mixed flower containers. Optional "Plant Your Own" workshop to follow includes 14" container, soil, and plants. Workshop fee: \$17.50. Pre-registration requested: (423) 282-3431.
- MAY 14 Bird Walk with the Lee & Lois Herndon TOS Chapter
8:00 am at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park. Meet other birders and naturalists for a morning of birding during the migratory season. Contact: 423-543-5808.
- MAY 14 Summer Loving Perennials 10 am - Evergreen – Riverport Rd, Kingsport and Moreland Dr, Colonial Heights. Register: www.eGardenplace.com.

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MAY 17 Weekly Outdoor Wonder Wanders (W.O.W.W.) -
Warriors' Path State Park
3:00 pm. Meet at Warrior's Path Pool Entrance and come
along for an hour or so of nature exploration. Contact: 423-
239-8531.

MAY 17 & 24 Gardening with Native Plants – The North Carolina
Arboretum
10:00am – 12:00 pm. Instructor: Nina Shippen. Week one will
include an overview of the topic of native plants and begin a
review of native trees, shrubs, vines and perennials. Week
two will look at using native plants as members of plant com-
munities in a variety of garden conditions. \$47 Member/\$57
Non-Member. Registration:
[https://4020a.blackbaudhosting.com/4020a/Gardening-with-
Native-Plants](https://4020a.blackbaudhosting.com/4020a/Gardening-with-Native-Plants)

MAY 19 SAPS Meeting - "2016 Gardening Trends and Hot, New
Plants"
7:00 pm. Speaker: Dr. Susan Hamilton, Director of the Univer-
sity of Tennessee Gardens. Kingsport Renaissance Center,
1200 E. Center Street in Kingsport, TN. Contact: call 423-348-
6572 or e-mail sapsinfo@embarqmail.com.

MAY 21 Gardening for Wildlife (A 2 Part Seminar)
10:30 am – Evergreen of Johnson City. Part 1: Learn how to
add beautiful trees and shrubs into your landscape to add
food, nesting, and shelter for birds, butterflies, etc. Part 2:
Special speaker will discuss honeybee care with emphasis on
safe gardening practices that will not harm honeybees. Pre-
registration requested: (423) 282-3431.

MAY 21 Urban Chicken Gardening
10 am - Evergreen – Riverport Rd, Kingsport. Register:
www.eGardenplace.com.

MAY 28 Organic Gardening
10:30 am – Evergreen of Johnson City. Tips for pest control
and providing nutrients using natural components often from
items around the home. Pre-registration requested: (423) 282-
3431.

MAY 28 Summer Annual Container Make and Take Workshop
10 am - Evergreen – Riverport Rd, Kingsport and Moreland
Dr, Colonial Heights. \$25 Fee. Register:
www.eGardenplace.com.

JUNE 2016 Calendar of Events

- JUN 2 Herb Saplings meeting, Exchange Place in Kingsport
7:00 pm. "Lemon Herbs" with Jane Mullins.
- JUN 4 Summer Patio Gardens
10:30 am – Evergreen of Johnson City. Learn how to enjoy the sound and beauty of a running water garden on your porch, patio, or small area without constructing a large ground pond. Pre-registration requested: (423) 282-3431.
- JUN 4 Fairy Garden Workshop - Make and Take
10 am - Evergreen – Riverport Rd, Kingsport. \$25 Activity Fee. Register:
www.eGardenplace.com.
- JUN 5 Orchid Society of East Tennessee – 1 pm Gray Community Center.
- JUN 6 NETMGA General Membership Meeting
6:00 pm-Networking; 6:30 pm-Meeting begins. Second Harvest Food Bank, Blountville, TN. The program topic is "Natural Methods for Insect and Weed Control" presented by Lexy Close of Build it Up East Tennessee.
- JUN 7 Washington County Bee Keepers Association
7:30 pm; Appalachian Fairgrounds, Building #1
- JUN 8 Healing Gardens – The North Carolina Arboretum
10:00am – 12:00 pm. Instructor: Nina Shippen. This class examines the role of gardens and nature in health and wellness. Garden elements used to create a successful therapeutic garden will also be discussed and students will learn how these elements and principles can be applied in residential and community settings. \$37 Member/\$47 Non-Member. Registration: <https://4020a.blackbaudhosting.com/4020a/Healing-Gardens>
- JUN 11 Creating Outdoor Living Spaces
10:30 am – Evergreen of Johnson City. Tips for creating pleasant and calming "rooms" in one's landscape, including using lawn and garden décor. Pre-registration requested: (423) 282-3431.
- JUN 11 7th Annual Dragonfly Day at Warriors' Path State Park
9 am – 4 pm. Contact: 423-239-6786 or <http://tnstateparks.com/events/details/7th-annual>.
- JUN 17 NETMGA Garden Tour Road Trip to Blacksburg, VA
7:00 am – 8:00 pm. Cost \$50. Registration due by June 6; registration form coming soon.

JUN 18 Daddy and Me

10:30 am – Evergreen of Johnson City. Children will make and paint a birdbath (terracotta pot and saucer) and a pine cone birdfeeder. Attendees will also receive a 5 pound bag of bird food. Materials fee: \$15. Pre-registration requested: (423) 282-3431.

JUN 18 Keep Kingsport Beautiful “Saturday in the Gardens” Tour

9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Tickets: \$20 pre-sale and \$25 at the gardens. Children 12 and under are admitted free. Contact Keep Kingsport Beautiful at (423) 392-8814 or rcleary@kingsportchamber.org.

JUN 18-19 Rhododendron Festival at Roan Mountain State Park

10:00 am. <http://tnstateparks.com/events/details/rhododendron-festival1>.

JUN 25 Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Garden with Lisa Wagner

10:30 am – 12:00 pm; Asheville Botanical Gardens Visitor Center. Cost: \$12 members; \$17 non-members. Participants must register and pre-pay. Information or to register: 828-252-5190 or bgardens@bellsouth.net.



