



Official Publication

# Master Gardener Thymes

Volume 18, Issue 2 May-Jun 2021

## It's Mid-Spring!

Temperatures are warming up a bit, but as we know in NETN, we will have more cool nights, and maybe days, before warmth settles in for good. Typically, we go from this to full on hot quickly!

Check out the calendar at the end of this newsletter for possibilities to learn, and earn CEUs.



### **NETMGA Board Meeting**

The NETMGA Board Meeting will be **May 3rd**, 6:30pm., via Zoom.

### **NETMGA JUNE 2021 MEMBERSHIP MEETING via ZOOM**

The **June 7** General Membership Meeting will be via Zoom at 6:30pm, and will include a presentation by Ben Casteel. See additional information in this newsletter.

### **SPECIAL NETMGA MEMBERSHIP MEETING via ZOOM**

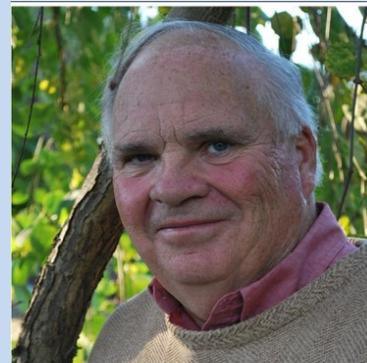
This special **June 28** General Membership Meeting at 6:30pm will feature a slide show displaying members' gardens. See additional information in this newsletter.

### **WHAT'S INSIDE:**

- SAPS May Program via Zoom
- NETMGA June Membership Meetings
- NETMGA Featured Projects
- Colorful Plants for the Shade Garden
- CEU Opportunities

## SAPS May Program via Zoom: 25 Highly Dependable Perennials for Appalachian Gardens

Horticulturist and garden writer Hugh Conlon will present “25 Highly Dependable Perennials for Appalachian Gardens” on **Thursday, May 20**, at 7 pm in an online program sponsored by Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS). This program is free via Zoom, but preregistration is required. To register, see the SAPS web page: <http://saps.us/>. Registration deadline is noon on Thursday, May 20.



Tri-Cities Area gardeners continue to search for dependable long blooming perennials that require little to no annual maintenance. Based on his long experience as a professional horticulturist and as an avid gardener, Hugh will point you toward 25 of the very best perennials, including several new choices that are far better performers than older varieties. He will also offer tips on maximizing performance of your perennials.



Hugh Conlon is an active garden writer and speaker since his retirement from the University of Tennessee in 2011. He has been a professional horticulturist for over 45 years and is the creator and content provider of the gardening website: [What Grows There](http://www.whatgrows.there.com/). He currently speaks at Master Gardener classes in Tennessee and presents garden club talks and nursery/landscape programs in Tennessee and other states. In addition, he contributes articles to *Tennessee Gardener* and other garden/trade magazines, organizes garden tours throughout Tennessee and nearby states, and consults with gardeners, commercial landscapers and growers.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Hugh attended Cornell University (BS degree), University of Delaware (MS degree), and Michigan State University. Hugh has served on the SAPS Board since its inception including two terms as president. Other memberships include Perennial Plant Association, Garden Writers Association, American Conifer Society, and Tennessee Nursery and Landscape Association. Hugh and wife Jane are the proud parents of four children and five grandchildren. His hobbies include gardening, photography, and writing.

## **NETMGA June General Membership Meetings via Zoom:**

June is a busy and fruitful month in the garden, so we could do no less and are offering 2 General Meetings for the month of June 2021. The first meeting will be on Monday, **June 7**, 2021 at 6:30 pm and the speaker will be Ben Casteel. He will be hosting the meeting from the greenhouse at Virginia Highlands CC where he is an Instructor and the Director of their Horticultural Program. Ben will be giving us a tour of the facility and then will be answering questions about commercial and personal home greenhouses. Ben is a native of Southwest Virginia and has Agricultural and Horticulture degrees from Virginia Highlands, Prescott College and Virginia Tech.

Our second meeting will be held on Monday, **June 28**, 2021 at 6:30pm and will feature a slide show of photographs of MG member's gardens. We did this last year and those who participated enjoyed the show and the impromptu question and answer period after the slides. Please send any photos of your gardens to [tarag8008@gmail.com](mailto:tarag8008@gmail.com); we will accept entries until Friday, June 18, 2021.

Both meetings will be on Zoom and we will send out the links prior to each session.

### **Chris' Corner**

Chris's Corner will return soon! If you have any questions, call Chris at 423-646-9043.

### **Note:**

There will be no Herb Saplings Meetings in May or June.

## ***“Featured Project” - Church Hill Senior Center Garden***

The Church Hill Senior Center Garden has started its 12<sup>th</sup> growing season. Located on Main Street in Church Hill – right next to the police station – it has 41 raised beds, a berry berm and a two-tier herb garden. Since its inception in 2010, the members have made it a true community service garden, with all produce donated back to the community. The Senior Center’s daily lunch program and the food pantry run by Of One Accord ministry have made good use of the over 36,000 pounds of vegetables grown by our dedicated crew. Meals on Wheels has also benefitted from the garden during the pandemic.



May Crops



June Crops

Currently, the garden is a three season one – beginning its plantings in early March and finishing up in late October. This year, we meet on Wednesday mornings. There are occasional special work days when community groups come to help with big garden projects.

The diverse plantings in the garden provide an area of interest for all gardeners. Besides over 35 varieties of vegetables grown each year, there are also berries, native perennials, annuals for pollinator attraction, and both annual and perennial herbs. We are slowly adding native trees and shrubs to the surrounding area to both beautify and educate the public on the advantage of native plants. We also make all our compost on site. This is a no pesticide use garden, with companion planting, beneficial insects, row covers and mechanical control providing insect control.



The educational focus of the garden is on the youth of the community. Local scouting and library groups have sessions at the garden, and Volunteer High School FFA students help with the “heavy-lifting” work days. We also are sanctioned for TN Promise students to obtain their community service hours in their quest for 2 years of community college education. The visible Main Street location has a lot of people dropping by to ask questions of the gardeners during regular workdays.

We welcome all interested master gardeners to come visit the garden and to come join our crew. The garden is only a short drive from Kingsport. If you would like to visit or be notified of our work schedule, please contact us at [chscgarden@yahoo.com](mailto:chscgarden@yahoo.com). We look forward to seeing you at the garden.

## ***“Featured Project” - Harvest of Hope Community Garden***

The Kingsport Harvest of Hope Community Garden was founded in 2011 as the first initiative developed by United Way's Safety and Stability Vision Council and the Food Security Initiative. Its initial purpose was to feed and support the homeless in our community and was supported by AARP.

While we still encourage our gardeners to donate surplus produce they grow to local food kitchens like the Kitchen of Hope and the Salvation Army, we have opened up opportunities to any and all gardeners on a first come, first served basis.

When the initial raised beds were built in 2011, there were only a total of 25 beds, and they were quite shallow, perhaps 4-6 inches deep based on photos I have seen. We now have 92 beds, many as deep as 16 inches, and we are currently about 75% occupancy level. Many of our gardeners live nearby in apartment buildings where they have little, or no, opportunity to raise food where they live. But some come from as far away as Jonesborough.



In addition to the raised beds available at no cost to gardeners, we also have free water (paid for by donations) and compost (thanks to Small Miracles Therapeutic Riding Stables), and free vegetable plants and seeds (thanks to Evergreen of Kingsport, Doby's-Bennett's horticulture program, Master Gardeners, and others). We generally offer classes in spring, summer, and fall to help gardeners learn best practices from research-based publications offered by Extension Service scientists. However, due to Covid-19, we have avoided gathering everyone together for classes. I hope to resume those by Fall and this could be an opportunity for a Master gardener to get some volunteer hours if they would like to be the presenter. Dave Rogers has been the primary presenter since Phil Ramey passed away, but the gardeners might like to have a fresh perspective from a new presenter.

This year, we again participated in the “SeedMoney” (<https://seedmoney.org/>) grant program and raised a few dollars through crowdfunding and received a “challenge grant” of \$300.

We have used the money to purchase treated lumber and screws to repair or rebuild some of the deteriorating raised beds. We also need to buy some more crushed rock to fill in some of the thin spots in the aisles. We could use some volunteers to help spread the rock since it is all done manually with wheelbarrows.



Northeast Tennessee Master Gardeners have been involved with this project from its very inception. Current MG's volunteering at HOH include Doug Hilton, Nancy Walker, Liz Blakely, Jacqueline Cox, Carla Rogers, Earl Hockin, Johnny Suthers, and Dave Rogers. We can always use additional help with mowing and weeding, particularly outside the usual vegetable gardening period when our gardeners do not typically maintain the area in and around their beds, as well as hauling and unloading the horse manure. Please contact Dave Rogers if you are interested in earning some hours at HOH ([dave\\_carla@chartertn.net](mailto:dave_carla@chartertn.net)).

## ***“Featured Project” – The Nature Center at Steele Creek Park***

One of the newest NETMGA projects is located at The Nature Center at Steele Creek Park in Bristol Tennessee. *Friends of Steele Creek Nature Center and Park*, in conjunction with the City's Parks and Recreation Department, has several garden projects around the Nature Center requiring significant volunteer work. Our current major effort is to develop an educational Native Plants Garden to accompany a new permanent Native Plants exhibit inside the Nature Center.

The roughly 6,000 square foot garden area next to the Nature Center was established about 10 years ago as a woodland wildflower garden. However, over the years it had become greatly overgrown with invasive plants, both native and non-native. Our work to date has involved clearing as many of the undesirable plants as possible from the area, determining what native plants already exist there, and establishing basic paths through the garden. This spring we have begun planting additional specimens that we deem to be high priority. We now have well over sixty identified native plant species in the garden.



In addition to maintaining control of the undesirable plants as they re-emerge, we will continue to acquire and plant new specimens. We work closely with the Nature Center naturalists to identify and prioritize native species of high educational and/or aesthetic value. This summer we will also be turning over a new plot adjacent to the woodland area, with the plan to make it a section for meadow wildflowers and other plants favoring a sunnier environment.



Another important role for volunteers will be to compile educational information for all the species we have in the garden. We'll be using [PlantsMap.com](https://plantsmap.com) to maintain a catalog of all these species. Specimens will be labelled with common and scientific names along with QR codes linking to our own *PlantsMap.com* page. This online resource will allow us to provide as much of our own information as we desire for each species listed. The information compiled for our *PlantsMap.com* site will also be used to develop printed guides for visitors to the native plants garden.

A key feature of the new exhibit inside the Nature Center is that it incorporates existing windows overlooking the garden area, tying the two exhibits together. Eventually, we also plan to have an educational kiosk located outdoors, next to the Nature Center, at the entrance to the garden.

This ongoing project will require many volunteer hours in the coming years, for installation, educational development, improvements, and maintenance. We typically work as a group at least once weekly during the spring and summer months. We don't have set days but rather schedule the days each week depending on volunteer availability and anticipated weather conditions. In addition, once volunteers are familiar with the garden and tasks to be done, they are welcome to work on their own. To learn more, or to sign up as a volunteer, contact the project leader, Robin Feierabend, at [feierabe@etsu.edu](mailto:feierabe@etsu.edu).

\*\* Don't forget the NETMGA Projects Scavenger Hunt!!

**Editor's Note:**

At my work place customers frequently ask me for plants that will provide all season color in their shade garden. In response I try to steer them to certain plants that I know work well to achieve what they want.

As I prepared for this edition of the *Master Gardener Thymes* I ran across the following article on White Farms website, which addresses this topic.

Enjoy!

## Favorite Shade Plants for Colorful Combinations

Shade gardens offer a cooling refuge in hot weather, and as all good gardeners know, they can do so much more, providing interest and remarkable beauty in places where it's often least expected. Shade-dwelling plants are not the showiest in the garden, but their subtle beauty quietly captivates, especially if a variety of different plants are combined to advantage. When choosing combos for shade, keep in mind the importance of creating plant adjacencies that accentuate contrasting forms, textures, and colors. Create new plant combos, pairing perennials (which come back year after year) with a changing lineup of annuals (which last a single season).



In the photo above are grassy Hakonechloa and a blue-leaved Hosta, both perennials, with the colorful foliage and flowers of annuals including two Coleus varieties, a pink-flowering Impatiens with variegated green-and-gold leaves, and the dragon-wing, polka-dotted leaves of an upright-growing Begonia. Mix and match colors and forms to create fabulous combos.

### Perennial Choices for Shade include:

Hosta



Ferns



Astilbe



Brunnera



Lamium



Heuchera



Dicentra



Helebores



Cimicifuga



**Annual Choices for Shade include:**

Begonias



Coleus



Caladium



Impatiens



Fuchsia



Heliotrope



-Information provided by White Flower Farm

## Projects List

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

**Branch House Family Center** Blountville  
Margaret Woolery [margaret.woolery@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.woolery@gmail.com)

**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 [mmvdm@charter.net](mailto:mmvdm@charter.net)  
Christine Barger [chscgarden@yahoo.com](mailto:chscgarden@yahoo.com)

**Discovery Garden at Gray Fossil Museum**  
Barbara Radice [bradice@charter.net](mailto:bradice@charter.net)

**Exchange Place Living History Farm** Kingsport  
Earl Hockin [ehockin@yahoo.com](mailto:ehockin@yahoo.com)

**Harvest of Hope Community Garden** Kingsport  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 [howlathmoon1775@gmail.com](mailto:howlathmoon1775@gmail.com)  
Dave Rogers 423-502-2459 [dave\\_carla@chartertn.net](mailto:dave_carla@chartertn.net)

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

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

**Steele Creek Park** Bristol, TN  
Robin Feirabend [Feierabe@ETSU.edu](mailto:Feierabe@ETSU.edu)

**Sycamore Shoals State Historic Site** Elizabethton  
Carol Ludiker 423-707-0026 [jaxlud26@gmail.com](mailto:jaxlud26@gmail.com)

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

**Unicoi County Hospital** Erwin  
Gina Clark [gclarkx4@gmail.com](mailto:gclarkx4@gmail.com)

### NETMGA Yearly Projects List:

**Johnson City Home Show and Women's Expo**  
Penny Rutledge 423-612-4785 [pennyrutledge2@aol.com](mailto:pennyrutledge2@aol.com)

**Farm Expo**  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 [howlathmoon1775@gmail.com](mailto:howlathmoon1775@gmail.com)

**Kingsport Pepper Festival**  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 [howlathmoon1775@gmail.com](mailto:howlathmoon1775@gmail.com)

**Kingsport Tomato Festival**  
Dennis Marshall 423-288-3675 [dmarshall@chartertn.net](mailto:dmarshall@chartertn.net)

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



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## Monthly Gardening Tasks – May & June

<https://ag.tennessee.edu/utg/Pages/monthlytasks.aspx>

## Feed the birds!



## MAY and JUNE 2021 Calendar of Events

**Covid-19 is still having an effect on events. Please note that some programs, events and tours may require masks for participants. Before going you should confirm that event has not been cancelled.**

Monday Musings with Melody Rose, Greene County TN Extension

Information and Registration: <https://sites.google.com/utk.edu/mondaymusings/home>

North Carolina Arboretum Online and Field-Based Classes Schedule:

<https://www.ncarboretum.org/education-programs/adult-education-classes/>

MAY 3 NETMGA Board Meeting via Zoom  
6:30pm

MAY 3 2021 Northeast Tennessee City Nature Challenge

5:00-6:00pm at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park. Take a guided walk around the park to observe and take pictures of everything in nature that calls Sycamore Shoals its home. Meet in the side parking lot, near the tennis courts. Download the iNaturalist app on your phone and create an iNaturalist account BEFORE the event. Event is free, no registration required.

Information: <https://tnstateparks.com/events/details/#/?event=2021-northeast-tennessee-city-nature-challenge>

MAY 8 Bird Walk at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park

8:00am. Meet other birders and naturalists at the Visitors Center Parking Area for a morning of birding during the migratory season. Information:

<https://tnstateparks.com/events/details/#/?event=bird-walk-5-21>

MAY 8 Give Your Plants a Boot (or Two!) at UT Gardens

2:00-4:00pm at Friendship Pavilion. In this program, we use shoes as containers for plants. We will teach you how to make them ready to hold water and how to choose the best materials for the plants as well. Cost: \$45 Garden members / \$55 Non-members. Registration required.

Information and registration: <https://utgardens.wildapricot.org/event-4123140>

MAY 20 SAPS Meeting – Horticulturist and Garden Writer Hugh Conlon

7:00pm, online Zoom program. Topic: “25 Highly Dependable Perennials for Appalachian Gardens” Preregistration is required. To register, see the SAPS web page: <http://saps.us/>.

MAY 29 Jonesborough’s 25th Annual Garden Gala

10:00am-3:00pm. The self-guided walking tour will delight visitors with popular private gardens from past years as well as gardening presentations. Registration will be held at the Historic Jonesborough Visitors Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tickets for the Garden Gala are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door and may be purchased online at [Jonesborough.com/tickets](https://jonesborough.com/tickets) or by calling the Historic Jonesborough Visitors Center at 423.753.1010.

JUN 5 National Trails Day at Rocky Fork State Park

12:00-4:00pm. Join Ranger Jeff and give back to the park by volunteering your time and muscle to help maintain Blockstand Creek Trail. Information and Registration:

<https://tnstateparks.com/events/details/#/?event=national-trails-day-blockstand->

JUN 7            NETMGA General Meeting via Zoom  
6:30pm. Program. Speaker: Ben Casteel, Director of Horticultural Program at Virginia Highlands Community College.

JUN 12    Upscale Your Pots at UT Gardens  
10:00am-12:00pm at Friendship Pavilion. Learn creative ways to use spray paints to make beautiful pots for your garden. We will use plastic garden pots and show you how to use spray paint to transform them into a thing of beauty. Each participant will get two pots, but feel free to bring a pot or two of your own to embellish. Cost: \$30 Garden members / \$35 Non-members. Registration required. Information and registration: <https://utgardens.wildapricot.org/event-4151932>

JUN 19-20        Rhododendron Festival 2021 at Roan Mountain State Park  
Information: <http://www.roanmountain.com/rhododendron-festival/>

JUN 28    Special NETMGA General Meeting via Zoom  
6:30pm. Featuring a slide show with photographs of MG member's gardens

