



Official Publication

Master Gardener Thymes

Volume 19, Issue 4 Jul-Aug 2022

It's Summertime!

Summer heat and scattered heavy thunderstorms have arrived! Are your vegetable gardens surviving and thriving? Soon it will be time to think about fall vegetable and flower gardening. Time flies when you're having fun!

Don't forget to work on gathering 2022 continuing education hours! There are other opportunities to learn in-person, via Zoom, and other online resources. Check out the calendar at the end of this newsletter for possibilities.



NETMGA BOARD MEETING

NETMGA Board meeting will be on **July 11**, 6:30pm, at Ron Ramsey Ag Center, 140 Spurgeon Lane in Blountville or via Zoom.

NETMGA AUGUST MEMBERSHIP MEETING

August 15 General Membership Meeting will be held at 6:30pm, at Steele Creek Park in Bristol, TN. See the article in this newsletter for information about this meeting.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- NETMGA August General Meeting Details
- Hamlett-Dobson Farm Fest
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- July/August Calendar of Events

NETMGA August General Meeting

Come join us at the Steele Creek Park Lodge on **August 15** at 6:30 pm for a program on Winter Gardening. Our presenter is Ben Casteel from Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon, Virginia. Ben is the Program Coordinator and Horticulture Instructor at VHCC and many of you will remember him as the presenter for our zoom meeting on greenhouses.

The program will be inside the lodge and it has AIR CONDITIONING! We will be providing sub sandwiches, chips, desserts and beverages. This will be our first meeting since February of 2020 that we are asking members to bring your favorite dish to compliment our picnic food. The Lodge has a large kitchen with ovens and refrigerators to keep your potluck dish warm or chilled before serving. We only ask that you bring your own serving utensils as they will not be provided by the park.

We have rented the Lodge from 4:00 pm until 8:00 pm. You can come early and tour the park or hang out on the covered porch and take in the view (see the photograph below). There are beautiful walking/hiking trails and the Train runs until 6:00 pm. The Nature Center is also open until 6:00 pm. Here is a link to a park map and all the activities available.
<https://www.bristoltn.org/166/Steele-Creek-Park>



The Lodge is located right next to Steele Creek Lake and has a large covered porch with a dozen picnic tables to sit at. Parking is available at the Lodge, the Nature Center and various spots on the lakeside. A map of the park will be provided and the entry fee will be waived, just identify yourself as a Sullivan County Master Gardener at the gate.

Steele Creek Park is one of our projects that is also maintained by the Washington County VA Master Gardeners; we have invited their SC park volunteers to join us. This is a good opportunity to meet our closest MG neighbors.

The park is easily reached from Blountville Highway (TN126-E). From TN126 East turn right onto Rock Rd. Drive a short distance and make a left onto Old Stage Road. This will take you to Steele Creek Park Rd. Turn right here and you will find the entrance gate on your left.

Looking forward to seeing you all there! Contact Teresa Gaffner if you have any questions or concerns. Tarag8008@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendar!

Hamlett-Dobson Farm Fest

Hamlett-Dobson Farm Fest will provide old-fashioned family fun on Sunday, **July 17**, from 2-5 p.m. at Exchange Place Living History Farm, 4812 Orebank Road in Kingsport. Farm Fest celebrates the pleasures of country life as visitors step back into the nineteenth century and enjoy fresh summer food like watermelon, join in activities from bygone days like sack races, hay rides, and cakewalks. Listen to music on traditional instruments, pet the farm animals, and try your hand at old time crafts. The event is part of Kingsport's Fun Fest and is free with no ticket or registration required. This is a fun, family-oriented community event and we always need volunteers to help with garden related activities. For Master Gardeners your time counts as volunteer hours. For more info or to volunteer, contact Joy Moore at 423-348-6572 or [jemmoor@gmail.com](mailto:jemoor@gmail.com).

Homegrown Tomato Fest!

After a hiatus due to the pandemic Homegrown Tomato Fest will be back this year extolling the virtues of this favorite summer vegetable and encouraging gardeners to grow their own. Homegrown Tomato Fest will take place on Saturday, **August 6**, 2022, from 8 - 11 a.m. at the Kingsport Farmers' Market, Center Street & Clinchfield Street in Kingsport. This celebration of the juicy red fruit features tomato contests, free tomato tastings (including many heirloom varieties), free tomato refreshments, cooking demonstrations, tomato-growing advice, tomato recipes, activities for kids, and fun for the whole family.

Gather your finest and/or funkiest tomatoes and enter them in the contests for Best Tasting, Biggest, Prettiest, Ugliest, Most Bizarre and/or Best Dressed Tomato. Make an extra batch of your favorite salsa recipe and compete for bragging rights in the Best Salsa Contest. Admission is free and there are no entry fees. Entry forms may be downloaded from the SAPS website, www.saps.us or picked up at the event. Entries will be accepted from 8 - 9 a.m. for all contests, and winners will be announced after 10 a.m.

Volunteer to help on this fun morning with fellow Master Gardeners and SAPS members. Volunteers are needed to slice tomatoes, staff the salsa booth, help with children's activities, etc. For Master Gardeners your time counts for your volunteer hours. If you can help contact Kathy Waldo, Tomato Fest Chair, at kathywaldo1@comcast.net.

Homegrown Tomato Fest is sponsored by the Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS) and the Kingsport Farmers' Market. For more information, contact sapsnews@gmail.com

“Featured Project” – Exchange Place Historic Farm

Exchange Place Historical Farm located at 4812 Orebank Rd in Kingsport is an 1850s farm. Historically it was a location to exchange horse, money and stories. It sits on both sides of Orebank Rd.

Master Gardeners are involved with three projects. First, is the crew who do minor maintenance for fences and buildings, cut the grass during the growing months. This group tends to work on Mondays. The second project is to maintain a small flower bed around the museum store, this project requires working for a couple of hours bi weekly. The third project is growing and maintaining the demonstration vegetable garden and adjacent pollinator garden.

In the demonstration garden we grow both heirloom vegetables and hybrid vegetables. Our goal is to demonstrate how to grow a wide variety of vegetables through all three growing seasons in the raised beds that have been created. Additionally, each year we grow one or two unusual varieties of vegetables. Recent unusual vegetables we have grown are Yacon, Yard long beans, black peanuts, and a variety of dwarf tomatoes.

During the Spring Garden Festival and the Fall Craft Festival at Exchange Place we are present in the garden to educate visitors to the varieties and method we use. In the pollinator garden we grow a variety of flowering plants to attract a variety of pollinators including but not limited to monarch butterflies. We work in the vegetable garden and pollinator garden on Wednesday mornings. Those who work in the vegetable and pollinator garden get to enjoy some of the vegetables that we grow. When we have an excess of any crop we donate it to food kitchens in Kingsport or Second Harvest.

One thing that few people know is that Exchange Place gets no funding from federal, state of local government. It is maintained based on funds raised during festivals and from donations. Everyone working at Exchange Place is a volunteer.

If you are interested in learning more or volunteering contact Earl Hockin at ehockin@yahoo.com





Chris' Corner		CHRIS RAMSEY SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT (423) 574-1919 cwramsey@utk.edu
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The 2022 State Master Gardener Conference was an overwhelming SUCCESS! Our local UT Extension Master Gardeners came together to ensure this conference went very well. I know the NETMGA MGs grew as an association and will benefit from this collaboration a long time. You did a great job of planning, organizing, and implementing a great conference! You showed the rest of TN all of the great horticulture and sites in NE TN. GREAT JOB!!!

Horticultural information and resources for Tennessee gardeners
<https://www.uthort.com/>

Tomatoes aren't easy, but they ARE doable – Tips for success

By: Katie O'Lenic

Tomatoes are a great plant for the home gardener. Fresh tomatoes are delicious and can be enjoyed for weeks during the summer. Here are some tips for getting the best tomatoes from your plants.



Prevention can be a gardener's best friend and includes making sure the soil is healthy and well-drained, practicing crop rotation, choosing disease resistant varieties, and using preventive disease and pest practices.

Healthy soil is a must for healthy plants. Make sure the area is free of previous crops' debris, has the right pH and nutrients, and has good drainage. Avoid using an area that was covered in sod during the previous 2 years. If not previously done for the garden in the past 3 years, a soil test is beneficial in determining what additions are needed well before planting to ensure a good crop. Proper fertilizing is also important for healthy soil. The right amount of fertilizer at the right time during the growing season helps these hungry plants produce the best crop. Too much nitrogen before fruit sets will result in increased leafing and reduced or lack of fruit.

Avoid the same place tomatoes and other plants in the same family were planted within the previous 3 years, such as, eggplant, Irish potatoes, and peppers. Also avoid the same spot that was planted with okra. Plant rotation can help avoid disease and pests living in the soil from the previous year's crop.

Look for disease resistant varieties. A letter code after the variety name tells you what the plants are tolerant or resistant to. For example, Better Boy will have codes F, SRKN, V after its name. A few other codes include: ASC or A for Alternaria Stem Canker, GLS or St for Gray Leaf Spot (Stemphylium), EB for Early Blight, TMV or T for Tobacco Mosaic Virus, SWV for Spotted Wilt Virus, and N for nematode.

Choose a warm, sunny spot for the plants. Tomatoes love the sun and need at least 8 hours of sunlight. Consider companion plants. Basil and tomatoes love each other's company. And, even better, basil planted with tomatoes may improve tomato flavor, health or yield.

Space plants appropriately ensure good air flow around the plants. Plant deeply enough so that much of the stalk is underground and just 2 or 3 true leaf sets are aboveground. Stake or cage the plants for good support and air flow. Good air flow helps reduce the possibility of fungal disease.

Tomatoes are thirsty! Consistent watering is critical for developing good fruit and avoiding blossom-end rot. More water is also needed at the time of transplanting, during flowering, and during fruit development. Conversely, decrease watering a bit when fruit is ripening. Avoid waterlogging the plants. Mulching can help. It suppresses weeds, helps keep roots cooler during hot weather, reduces water evaporation, and biodegradable mulches will break down into the soil over time.

During the growing season, pinch out suckers/side shoots at the branch/stalk junction. Also remove lower, older branches. This practice improves air flow, helps avoid disease development in the older branches, and, just as importantly, provides more nutrients to the ripening fruit. Be sure to take away any debris from around the plants to prevent development of disease.

Some problems that may arise throughout the growing season include diseases and pest invasion, including early blight, late blight, leaf spot, wilts, viruses, bacterial diseases. Pests include hornworm, Colorado potato beetle, aphids, mites, Japanese beetles, nematodes. This article will review early and late blight and a few of the common pests. Additional resources are provided below for those with curious minds.

Early blight: Weather conditions that favor development of early blight include temperatures above 80 deg. F and frequent rain. University of Tennessee Extension and North Carolina State Extension services have excellent articles on early blight, a fungal disease. See resources at the end for more information. Photos below depict typical early blight.



From: UT Extension Publication W1027

Cultural methods to control blight include choosing disease resistant plants, ensuring plants are vigorous and healthy, removing weeds, volunteer plants and debris, and rotating crops every 2 to 3 years. Chemical control involves preventative use of a fungicide.

Late blight: In contrast to early blight, late blight develops in cooler, cloudy, and wet weather. The lesions are also different. See photos below from NCS Extension service.



From: NC State Extension Publications

To prevent late blight, plant early to avoid late season weather conditions, keep water off leaves as much as possible, monitor closely remove infected plants and debris, choose resistant varieties, and proactively use fungicides to prevent disease.

Non-chemical control of pests includes rotating crops, fertilizing appropriately, planting as early as possible, using physical barriers (aluminum foil around the lower stem of the tomato plant can prevent cutworm damage), handpicking horned worms and Colorado potato beetles, choosing pest tolerant or resistant plants, encouraging predator insects, such as lady beetles, and lacewings. UT Extension Publication PB595, "You Can Control Garden Insects 2020," has a wealth of information about controlling pests in the garden and can be found at <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB595.pdf>

If insecticides are necessary, properly identify the pest, choose the least toxic product for the target insect, and carefully follow directions for use. Information on insecticides may be found in: UT Extension publication W661, "Conventional and Organic Product Overview for Home Vegetable Gardeners in Tennessee,"

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W661.pdf>.

For more information:

Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, Publication 426-418 "Tomatoes" available at:

<https://digitalpubs.ext.vt.edu/vcedigitalpubs/4183189132728711/MobilePagedReplica.action?pm=2&folio=1#pg1>

UT Extension publication W346-H "Backyard Vegetables: The Tennessee Vegetable Garden - Growing Tomatoes"

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W346-H.pdf>

UT Extension publication SP 291-K, "Vegetables – Tomatoes for the Home Garden"

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/SP291-K.pdf>

University of Missouri Extension publication G6461, "Growing Home Garden Tomatoes"

<https://extension.missouri.edu/media/wysiwyg/Extensiondata/Pub/pdf/agguides/hort/g06461.pdf>

UT Extension publication W235-F, "Trap Crops, Intercropping and Companion Planting"

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W235-F.pdf>

UT Agricultural Extension publication SP277-K, "Plant Diseases - Disease Resistance in Recommended Vegetable Varieties for Home Gardens"

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/SP277-K.pdf>

UT Extension publication W1027, "Managing Early Blight of Tomato in Tennessee"

<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W1027.pdf>

NCS Extension publication, "Early Blight of Tomato", <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/early-blight-of-tomato>

NCS Extension publication, "Tomato Late Blight;" <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/tomato-late-blight#>

Projects List

Boundless Playground at Warriors' Path State Park Kingsport
Gwyn Duncan 423-239-0460 geduncan@charter.net

Branch House Family Center Blountville
Margaret Woolery margaret.woolery@gmail.com

Carver Peace Gardens Johnson City
Nancy Shilling 423-833-1420 nancysilling@gmail.com

Church Hill Senior Citizens Center Garden
Marcia Vandermause mmvdvm@charter.net
Christine Barger chscgarden@yahoo.com

Discovery Garden at Gray Fossil Museum
Barbara Radice bradice@charter.net

Exchange Place Living History Farm Kingsport
Earl Hockin ehockin@yahoo.com

Harvest of Hope Community Garden Kingsport
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com
Dave Rogers 423-502-2459 dave_carla@chartertn.net

Johnson City Medical Center Woodridge Hospital Johnson City
Barbara Voigt 423-467-2013 voigt7b@comcast.net

Rocky Mount Living History Site Piney Flats
Don Davis home 423-854-0152, cell 423-943-2392
donfdavis@aol.com

Steele Creek Park Bristol, TN
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Sycamore Shoals State Historic Site Elizabethton
Carol Ludiker 423-707-0026 jaxlud26@gmail.com

Tipton Haynes Historic Site Johnson City
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Unicoi County Hospital Erwin
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NETMGA Yearly Projects List:

Johnson City Home Show and Women's Expo
Penny Rutledge 423-612-4785 pennyrutledge2@aol.com

Farm Expo
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com

Kingsport Pepper Festival
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 howlatthemoon1775@gmail.com

Kingsport Tomato Festival
Dennis Marshall 423-288-3675 dmarshall@chartertn.net

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



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Feed the birds!



JULY and AUGUST 2022 Calendar of Events

Covid-19 is still affecting events. Please note that some programs, events and tours may require masks for participants. Before going you might want to confirm that event has not been cancelled.

Melody's Monday Musings with Melody Rose, Greene County TN Extension
Information and Registration: <https://sites.google.com/utk.edu/mondaymusings/home>

Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum Classes/Workshops: <http://knoxgarden.org/classes-events/workshops/>

North Carolina Arboretum Classes Schedule:
<https://www.ncarboretum.org/education-programs/adult-education-classes/>

Steele Creek Park iNaturalist Challenge 2022: <https://www.friendsofstelecreek.org/?p=4999>

Tennessee Native Plant Society Seminars: <https://www.tnps.org/tnps-speakers/>

Appalachian Highlands Chapter of Wild Ones:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/783213076410695/about>

Tennessee Valley Chapter of Wild Ones/Programs and Events:
<https://tnvalleywildones.org/programs-events/public-programs/>

Wild Ones Webinars: <https://wildones.org/webinars/>

JUL 17 Farm Fest 2022 at Exchange Place
2:00-5:00pm. Hamlett-Dobson Funeral Home and Exchange Place Living History Farm, Farm Fest celebrates the pleasures of country life. No ticket, entry fee or registration required. Information: <https://www.exchangeplace.info/festival-details>

JUL 22-24 NC Herb Association's Wild Herb Weekend in Vale Crucis
Information and registration: <https://www.ncherbassociation.org/whwregistration>

JUL 23 Volunteer Day at Rocky Fork State Park
9:00am-1:00pm. Join ranger Jeff to help lop and weed-eat the trails. We will meet up at the parking lot at 9am and head up to the trails for a few hours of light trail work. Please bring water, snacks, and hiking apparel. Feel free to bring loppers and gloves, however the park has a few extra tools and gloves. Information: 423-735-9289.

AUG 6 19th Annual Elizabethton Butterfly Count
9:00am. Meet naturalist Don Holt at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park, Elizabethton, for this day-long winged adventure across town. Come for all or part of the day. Contact: 423-543-5808

AUG 6 Gardening Seminar Series with Ben Hunter: Review of Summer Gardens
9:00am – 12:00pm. at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park, Elizabethton. Master Gardener Ben Hunter will discuss what went right and wrong in the summer garden; planting a fall garden, and pruning of berries and fruit trees plus renovation of strawberries. Meet in the Community Room. Contact: 423-543-5808

AUG 6 Homegrown Tomato Fest
8:00 – 11:00am. Kingsport Farmers' Market, Center Street & Clinchfield Street in Kingsport

AUG 7 Orchid Society of East Tennessee – 2 pm Gray Community Center.

AUG 15 NETMGA General Meeting
6:30pm. Meeting will be at Steele Creek Park Lodge. Program Speaker: Ben Casteel, Program Coordinator and Horticulture Instructor from Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon, Virginia.

Question:

Did you detect a theme in this edition of the Master Gardener Thymes?

