



Official Publication

# Master Gardener Thymes

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## Finally Warm Weather Has Arrived

It seems as if we jumped from Winter to Summer, then Spring, then Winter, then Summer again, and now we are finally in Spring! According to folklore it should be okay to plant your summer blooming flowers, and veggies such as tomatoes and peppers.

During “down time” (a/k/a coming inside after gardening) you can work on getting your 2023 continuing education hours. There are opportunities to learn in-person, via Zoom, and other online resources. Check out the calendar at the end of this newsletter for possibilities.



### NEXT NETMGA BOARD MEETING

The next NETMGA Board meeting will be on **July 10**, 6:30pm, at Ron Ramsey Ag Center, 140 Spurgeon Lane in Blountville.

### NETMGA JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**June 5.** Details about this event will be provided at a later time.

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

- May SAPS Program
- Featured Project: Church Hill Senior Center Garden
- Featured Project: Native Plant Garden at Steele Creek Park
- May/June Calendar of Events

## Mark Your Calendar!

### **SAPS May Program-“The Impact of Weather Events on Our Trees and Shrubs”**

Lee Rumble, Certified Arborist and UT Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, will discuss "*Handling the Holiday Freeze--The Impact of Weather Events on Our Trees and Shrubs*" on Thursday, **May 18**, at 7 p.m. at BrightRidge Auditorium, 2600 Boones Creek Road (Hwy 354) in Johnson City. Sponsored by Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS) the program is free and the public is invited. For more information phone 423-348-6572 or email [sapsnews@gmail.com](mailto:sapsnews@gmail.com), <https://saps.us/>.



Gardeners are concerned about how the 2022 holiday freeze affected the trees and shrubs in our landscapes and are wondering what they should do now. Certified arborist Lee Rumble will explain how extreme weather, in particular the December freeze, affects woody plants and what next steps to take to deal with any damage and promote plant health.

Lee Rumble is an Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent in Knox County. As a Tennessee native originally from Nashville, he has always considered east Tennessee to be his “forever home.” Lee received his International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Arborist Certification in May of 2010 after nearly a decade in the arboricultural industry. This milestone became the inspiration for his future educational endeavors. Immediately thereafter, he began following his passions and by 2019 had completed an A.S. in Horticulture, a B.S. in Plant and Soil Science, and a M.S. in Botany—even conducting his master’s research in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Lee’s close working relationship with the public prior to his schooling, along with his desire to educate others is precisely what led him to UT Extension. After graduation, he immediately sought to find a role that would allow him to continue to be both a life-long learner and an educator in east Tennessee.

Lee works closely with commercial landscapers, arborists, and the residents of Knox County in order to promote the proper management and care of urban and rural landscapes. He recently taught the state-wide TEMG classes on Woody Ornamentals. In his spare time, Lee can be found somewhere among the trees. Most commonly, this means backpacking in the Smokies, mountain biking, or even in a climbing saddle high up in the treetops!

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



The Church Hill Senior Center Garden has started its 14<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 38,000 pounds of vegetables grown by our dedicated crew. Meals on Wheels has also been added as a recipient of fresh garden produce.

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 Monday mornings.



The diverse plantings in the garden provide an area of interest for all gardeners. Besides over 30 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.

Due to the large number of deer roaming in Church Hill, this year we have constructed garden rooms around several of the beds. These are fenced in areas containing 2 to 3 beds with plenty of room for the gardeners to work, but not enough room for the deer to jump. All beds that are not currently in use due to the low number of volunteers are covered to prevent weed encroachment.

The educational focus of the garden is on the youth of the community. Local scouting and library groups have had sessions at the garden. We also are sanctioned for TN Promise students to obtain their community service hours in their quest for two 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” – The Nature Center at Steele Creek Park - Native Plants Garden***

The Native Plants Garden at The Nature Center at Steele Creek Park, in Bristol Tennessee, was begun in 2019 to accompany a native plants exhibit contained within the Nature Center itself.

While there are several garden projects around The Nature Center that require significant volunteer work, our current primary effort is development and maintenance of the educational Native Plants Garden. Both the indoor exhibit and the garden itself are focused exclusively on the native plants of our region. A key feature of the indoor exhibit is that it incorporates three windows overlooking the garden area, thus tying the two exhibits together.



The roughly 6,500 square foot garden area next to The Nature Center was established more than a decade ago as a woodland wildflower garden. Over the years, due primarily to a lack of able volunteers, it had become greatly overgrown with invasive non-natives, and aggressive native plants.



Beginning in 2019 we cleared as many of the undesirable plants as possible and documented over forty native plant species already existing in the garden area. Since then, we have added many new species, created paths through the garden area, and begun adding plant labels identifying representative specimens of most of the native species. We now have approximately 90 species in the garden, with the goal of eventually having at least 100 species represented. We work closely with the Nature Center naturalists to identify and prioritize the species to be added. In addition to further developing the existing woodland area, we have added two new sections for meadow wildflowers and other plants favoring a sunnier environment.

Representative plants are labelled with attractive signs containing their common and scientific names, and printed trifold guides for garden visitors are being developed. Our plan is to have brochures for all seasons of the year, as well as ones covering special topics such as traditional uses of native plants. Eventually, we will have an educational kiosk located outdoors next to The Nature Center, at the entrance to the garden.



This ongoing project provides volunteers the opportunity to help with further planning, development, and maintenance of the garden in the coming years. Volunteers are needed to help acquire and plant new specimens, as well as to maintain control of the inevitable re-emergence of undesired plants. We also need help with maintaining the paths and performing other tasks. In the next year or so we anticipate the addition of a native fern garden on the other side of The Nature Center. This will require considerable volunteer support as we prepare the area, acquire and plant new specimens and, ultimately, maintain this additional educational area.


Other important roles for volunteers are to maintain our plant database, to compile educational information for all the species exhibited, and to assist in the development of the printed plant guides. Once installed, information in the educational kiosk will be maintained and updated by volunteers.

The Nature Center at Steele Creek Park has numerous, wonderful new exhibits, all focused on the flora and fauna of the region, as well as an extensive herbarium collection started several years ago by several Friends of Steele Creek Nature Center volunteers. The newly opened Explorers' Library contains one of the largest collections of regional natural history books and journals within a 100-mile radius. Steele Creek Park also hosts a certified Native Trees Arboretum and certified Monarch Watch Waystation garden.



The staff does extensive programming, both on-site as well as outreach, especially in the area schools. Jeremy Stout, the full-time Nature Center Naturalist (and City of Bristol Tennessee arborist) has done presentations on Native Plants in the Landscape for Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener classes.

For more information about The Nature Center and Steele Creek Park visit the Friends of Steele Creek Nature Center and Park website: [www.friendsofstelecreek.org](http://www.friendsofstelecreek.org) or on Facebook [@FriendsOfSteeleCreekPark](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekPark). If you think you'd like to become a gardens volunteer, contact Project Leader Robin Feierabend at [mail@friendsofstelecreek.org](mailto:mail@friendsofstelecreek.org) or (423) 764-3336.

<b>Chris' Corner</b>		<b>CHRIS RAMSEY</b> SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT (423) 574-1919 <a href="mailto:cwramsey@utk.edu">cwramsey@utk.edu</a>
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Chris's Corner will resume soon! Stay tuned! Until then check out Chris's articles on the NETMGA website: <https://www.netmga.net/chris-column/>

**Horticultural information and resources for Tennessee gardeners**

<https://www.uthort.com/>

## 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  
Pat Mazurkiewicz 423-323-1644  
[robmazur@chartertn.net](mailto:robmazur@chartertn.net)

**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 [chscgarden@yahoo.com](mailto:chscgarden@yahoo.com)

**Discovery Garden at Gray Fossil Museum**  
John Hitchcock 423-525-8587 [jhitchcock25@gmail.com](mailto:jhitchcock25@gmail.com)

**Exchange Place Living History Farm** Kingsport  
Earl Hockin 423-817-5473 [ehockin@yahoo.com](mailto:ehockin@yahoo.com)

**Harvest of Hope Community Garden** Kingsport  
Dave Rogers 423-502-2459 [dave\\_carla@chartertn.net](mailto:dave_carla@chartertn.net)

**Johnson City Hospitals** 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 423-764-3336 [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  
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Betts Leach 423-571-8662 [BettsL@aol.com](mailto:BettsL@aol.com)

**Unicoi County Hospital** Erwin  
Gina Clark 423-956-2426 [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**  
Wes Walker 804-824-5308 [wes.walker@me.com](mailto:wes.walker@me.com)

**Kingsport MeadowView Home Show**  
Doug Hilton 423-239-9433 [dh535651@gmail.com](mailto:dh535651@gmail.com)

**Bristol PepperFest**  
Wes Walker 804-824-5308 [wes.walker@me.com](mailto:wes.walker@me.com)

**Kingsport Tomato Festival-TBD**

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



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**Feed the birds!**





## MAY and JUNE 2023 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.**

CHECK THE SITES BELOW MONTHLY FOR CLASSES, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS:  
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/>

Asheville Botanical Gardens: <https://ashevillebotanicalgardens.org/events-classes/adult-classes/>

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/>

MAY 18 SAPS May Program – *“Handling the Holiday Freeze--The Impact of Weather Events on Our Trees and Shrubs”*

7:00pm; Presentation by Lee Rumble, Certified Arborist and UT Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, at BrightRidge Auditorium, 2600 Boones Creek Rd. For more information, call 423-348-6572 or e-mail [sapsnews@gmail.com](mailto:sapsnews@gmail.com).

MAY 27 Rye Patch - an “Orchidaceous” Hiking Adventure at Warriors’ Path State Park  
7:30am – 5:30pm. Climb up Rye Patch and Taylor Ridge, a rarely-visited side of Holston Mountain; explore high-country geology and mountain plant and animal communities; be on the lookout for undocumented populations of some rare native orchid species. This is a long and difficult 11-mile hike! Meet at former pool parking lot. Pre-registration required. Cost: \$5. Registration and information: [Tennessee State Parks — Tennessee State Parks \(tnstateparks.com\)](https://www.tnstateparks.com)

MAY 27 Growing Flowers in Containers

10:30am. Evergreen of Johnson City. Registration is highly recommended. Call: 423-282-3431.

JUN 3 All About Hydrangeas!

10:30am. Evergreen of Johnson City. Registration is highly recommended. Call: 423-282-3431.

JUN 3 27th Garden Tour and Tea – Jonesborough

10:00am – 3:00pm. Tickets: \$20. Information: [27th Annual Garden Tour & Tea - Town of Jonesborough](#)

JUN 3 National Trails Day – Rocky Fork State Park

2:30 – 5:00pm. Help trim overgrown vegetation along the trail system. Meet at the parking lot where for a short safety meeting and to sign waivers (all participants must sign waiver). Loppers will be used to trim overgrown vegetation. Registration requested. Registration and information: [Tennessee State Parks — Tennessee State Parks \(tnstateparks.com\)](#)

JUN 3 Trails All Day on National Trails Day – Warriors' Path State Park

6:00am – 10:00pm. Spend National Trails Day "out on the trail" all day long at Warriors' Path State Park! You can enjoy a day full of guided hikes and outdoor discovery. And it's all FREE! Information/schedule: [Tennessee State Parks — Tennessee State Parks \(tnstateparks.com\)](#)

JUN 4 Orchid Society of East Tennessee – 2 pm Gray Community Center.

JUN 5 NETMGA Membership Meeting

Details to be announced.

JUN 10 Summer Lawn Care

10:30am. Evergreen of Johnson City. Registration is highly recommended. Call: 423-282-3431.

JUN 17 Perennials for Pollinators

10:30am. Evergreen of Johnson City. Registration is highly recommended. Call: 423-282-3431.

JUN 24 BBQ, Brews, & Tunes on the Mount – Rocky Mount State Historic Site

4:00-10:00pm. Information: [Schedule of Events — Rocky Mount State Historic Site \(rockymountmuseum.com\)](#)