

Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Board Meeting

Ramsey Agricultural Center

Date: September 8, 2025

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Janet Smith, Susie Morrison, Mary Cain, Donna Fowler, Michelle Hejny, Sherry Ragsdale, Barbara Voigt, Brenda Snead, John Hitchcock, Melody Rose.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Adam Watson, Brenda McKinnis, Don Davis, Karen Rowell, Nancy Shilling, Carl Voigt, Betts Leach, Sarah Cox

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Susie Morrison called the meeting to order.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

After the following corrections were agreed to, the Board approved July 2025 minutes: Title correction of date (Programs for 2024 to Programs of 2025), the removal of Lauren Hagy as project manager for the October 2025 meeting and adding the name of Shawn Barr as guest speaker at the covered dish meeting in October. John Hitchcock made the 1st motion to accept the minutes, and Donna Fowler seconded the motion.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Michelle Hejny presented the budget as of 09/08/2025.

Michelle opened a \$5000.00 7-month CD. 4.75% APY. She also stated that she will be selling merchandise at the October Membership meeting. John Hitchcock asked to whom to send project reimbursements requests. Michelle answered she would take the reimbursement requests but that each project leader needs to identify the name of project and amounts along with the receipts.

PROJECT REPORT AND GRANTS FOR 2025: Don Davis

Don Davis was absent from the meeting. Melody Rose stated the Sycamore Shoals Project is no longer active. She will be working with Park Rangers to ensure that park regulations are followed, and a better communication system will be established before the project is reinstated. Barbara Voigt stated that communication between Project Leaders and Location leaders can be hard at times. Melody stated she and Don Davis will be working to create better communications opportunities between Master Gardeners and location directors.

PROGRAMS FOR 2025: Brenda McKinnis

John Hitchcock, Lauren Hagy, Susan Breitling, Brenda McKinnis, and Melody Rose met to discuss the need for more materials and items to have a better presentation at community events. From the meeting it was determined there would be two setups for community

events. This would include tables, NETMGA table clothes, brochures, etc. Melody Rose will review the handout materials currently available and provide information of materials currently available through UT Hort. As opportunities for community events are presented, Sherry and I will be working together to get the information out to the Master Gardeners. Lauren will then determine if she or Susan will be available for the event and how many master gardeners will be needed and get the appropriate materials needed for community events. The Master Gardeners will also be taking information on the number of contacts, any questions that need to be answered after the event and collecting names of the visitors who may be interested in future MG classes. Any other ideas are welcome.

Donna Fowler said the next membership meeting will be on October 6, 2025, at the Ramsey Agricultural Center. Shawn Barr from Evergreens will be giving a presentation on the planting and care of bulbs. Master Gardeners will be asked to bring their favorite dish.

The December meeting will be held on December 1, 2025 and is the annual Christmas dinner. Eugene Wolf will provide entertainment for the evening. The fee may be raised from \$24.00 to \$37.00 to cover the cost of the meal. Susie Morrison suggested that Members pay \$20.00 this year and that the Board will cover the rest of cost of the meal. Barbara Voigt suggested that committee members investigate catering services through area restaurants/grocery stores to reduce the dinner costs. Donna Fowler offered the idea of a potluck dinner. Susie Morrison stated that members could bring their favorite desserts. Details will be finalized as soon as possible.

MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION REPORT: Mary Cain

Mary will be sending out membership forms in November to verify personal information, remind members to log hours to get certification, and collect annual dues. The dues will be \$25.00 or \$35.00 if the dues are late. She will need funds to cover the cost of mailing materials. Melody Rose offered to place the form online to reduce costs. Mary stated that she was not sure how the members would pay dues online so sending the form and a pay envelope to each member would make it easier for them to pay their dues.

Melody Rose said that she had to have an updated roster of certified members to University of Tennessee by January 15, 2025. For that reason, she suggested that the cut off date for members to log in their hours for certification be December 1, 2025 instead of December 31, 2025. Mary asked about those members who are still volunteering in December. Melody stated that they could estimate the hours they will be working and log them in by December 1st.

PUBLICITY: Brenda McKinnis (Nancy Shilling)

Brenda McKinnis/Nancy Shilling were absent from the meeting.

2026 Intern Class Report: Melody Rose

The 2026 Intern Class will be a night class. Melody Rose will conduct interviews with applicants once the applications are completed to ensure that applicants are aware of the volunteer requirements and goals of the Master Gardener Program. Susie Morrison suggested that a morning class as well as a night class be offered. Melody stated that offering both would not be feasible at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS: Sherry Ragsdale

Sherry Ragsdale stated that everything was going well with the Genius Sign up Program.

NEWSLETTER: Betts Leach (Absent)

FACEBOOK: Sarah Cox (absent)

MENTORS: John Hitchcock

John Hitchcock stated that he called the members of the 2024 class and stated that everyone is working at one of the NETMA projects.

WEBSITE: Carl & Barbara Voigt

Barbara Stated that she will remove the Sycamore Shoals Project from the website until it is reinstated.

WASHINGTON COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT: Adam Watson (absent)

SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT: Melody Rose

The Master Gardener Laptop was sent to UT to be updated. If it cannot be updated, a new laptop will be provided. Melody suggested that changes such as the date to log in hours deadlines be presented to members to vote on during membership meetings.

NEW BUSINESS:

The board discussed the following fund raiser options:

- Spring Garden Fair
- Project Tours
- Plant Sales (needs to be raised in a certified greenhouse)
- Art in the Garden
- Donation boxes at Master Gardeners' events

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING plans:

There will be a Christmas Dinner on December 1, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the Ramsey Agriculture Center.

Next Board Meeting Plans:

The next Board Meeting will be at the Ramsey Agricultural Center on January 5, 2026, at 6:30 pm.