

Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • February 2021



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However, *Garden Thyme* is best viewed in your browser (instead of viewing it within your email). Formatting within an email often gets messed up (sorry for the technical jargon there), which is a frustration for you and for your newsletter committee that works so hard to provide you with a newsletter lovely to behold. **So, to view *Garden Thyme* in its full glory, just click on the link at the top of this page that says "View this email in your browser."**

February Zoom Meeting

Mark your calendars for our meeting featuring our annual Project Fair on **February 2 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom**. A link inviting you to participate will be sent out through Mail Chimp and through Colin's listserv.

Each project leader has provided information that will be shared via PowerPoint and ZOOM to entice each of you to volunteer for their project! Project/Proposal Committee co-chairs Nancy Sloan and Regina Gabel have worked to make this informative and fun. This is your chance to decide where you would like to volunteer.

Will we be volunteering this year? That's still to be decided. The State Office will decide in early March. Whether there will be regular workdays or informal work days, there will be opportunities for each of you to get among the plants, if you choose.

The Project Fair will highlight the normal workdays and times for each project, as well as information about the types of gardens, things you could hope to learn working at that site, past awards, project locations, and a few photos. The names and contact information for the project leaders will also be included. You will be asked to choose the projects you'd like to work on and notify those leaders so they may include you on their rosters. Be sure to tune in on February 2!

Photo by [Alina Grubnyak](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Taking Care of Business

We will vote on the following at our February 2 Zoom meeting.

December 2020 Meeting
Minutes

November 2020 Treasurer's
Report

January 2021 Meeting
Minutes

December 2020 Treasurer's
Report

From Your President

KATHRYN BIRKHEAD

Dear friends,

A new year means beginning again. Vaccines are available now that may speed the time we can meet again in person; spring is on the way; and we have 25 trainees who have finished the Master Gardener course and are eager to meet each other and those of us who have been in the organization for some time.



In my life there's another beginning. You may recall that both of my dogs died last year—one in March and one in August. The pandemic was already hard to deal with, and the deaths of my dear companions and the loss of their company during this period of isolation added to the difficulty. A few days ago, Bear, a rescued 1½ yr.- old yellow lab mix, came to live with me, and I can already tell a difference in my attitude. For one thing, she gets me up and moving, as we get outside for walks. Because I've been outside with her, I've seen the buds on the service berry and on the little hollies I planted in the fall. It's also nice to have a living creature who hangs around and listens uncritically, which my cat, despite her many positive attributes, doesn't do.

It's exciting to think of what this year may bring to us. By the time you read this, I will have had my first vaccination, and it delights me to think of the potential that awaits our society as we build up resistance to this dreaded virus that has caused such hardship and taken people we love. We'll know soon if we can re-instate regular volunteer hours for our members and if there will be a county fair and a state-wide Master Gardener conference in 2021. May we have lives that look more normal before too long!

For now, I'll enjoy Bear's company, the swelling buds on the serviceberry, and the beautiful blue sky. Every day is a gift.

All of us who save seeds or shop for new ones will recognize what Muriel Stuart is talking about in this poem.

The Seed Shop

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbled stone and shifting sand,
Forlorn as ashes, shriveled, scentless, dry –
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.

Dead that shall quicken at the voice of spring,
Sleepers to wake beneath June's tempest kiss;
Though birds pass over, un-remembering,
And no bee find here roses that were his.

In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams;
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust

That shall drink deeply at a century's streams;
These lilies shall make summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,
Sealed in their shells, a million roses leap;
Here I can stir a garden with my breath,
And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

Have a good month,
Kathryn

A Memo from Mr. Massey

COLIN MASSEY

County Extension Agent—Agriculture

Dear Washington County MGs,

I hope your 2021 is off to a better start than the one we just left. I enjoyed visiting with so many of you in our December and January meetings to recognize our graduates, welcome new trainees, and install new officers.

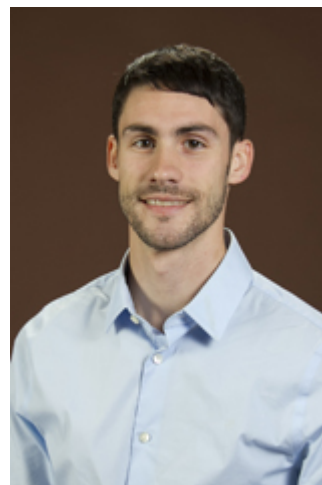
I know there have been a lot of questions about how this year will look, and I wanted to update you briefly on where the Division of Agriculture is currently. **As of now, we will remain in Stage II until administration evaluates our status in March.** What does this mean for you and projects?

Well, nothing has changed really since the COVID-19 policies went into effect last Spring. Groups of 10 or less may still volunteer at projects as long as those policies are maintained (sign-in sheets with phone numbers, social distancing, face masks). We do recommend, if possible, to communicate with project leaders and stagger work times to be able to work in small, well-spaced groups.

As discussed with the Executive Board, it is too early to say how hours will be required this year. We will re-evaluate that question after we have received direction from the state. In the meantime, if you are already logging hours for 2021, be sure to keep track of them and log them into the Master Gardener section of the website.

While completing end-of-year reports back in October, I was amazed at your efforts in 2020 despite the restrictions. A lot of great work continued at sanctioned projects, and the Washington County Staff is so grateful and proud of that work. I remain hopeful that we may see at least a gradual lessening of restrictions on outdoor projects this year.

In the meantime, I hope you will continue to join our monthly meetings virtually. I also hope that you will check out Extension's efforts to provide more garden education state-



wide. I have been working with a group of agents to continue the Grow Your Own Groceries webinar series this year. There are a number of great topics coming up, and I'll be presenting on cucumbers in May. There is a new webpage on our site where you can see the schedule and register to join: <https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/vegetables/grow-groceries-presentations.aspx>

As always, you know how to reach me if I can help you with anything. Thank you all again for what you do for Washington County. Stay safe, stay healthy, and I hope to see you soon.

2020 WCMG Award Winners

COUNTY AGENT OF THE YEAR: COLIN MASSEY

Nomination written by Kathryn Birkhead



Washington County Master Gardeners hit the jackpot when Colin Massey was named as our Extension Agent for Horticulture in the summer of 2019. He has been a joy to work with and is extraordinarily engaged with us. Colin had been in his new role for less than a year when COVID hit, and we were left scrambling, trying to find ways to keep our members engaged while we navigated this new landscape. He has stayed alongside us at every moment, and he has never missed a beat as we continue to grow in this unprecedented time.

It's not just what Colin does; it's how he does it. That's evident in many ways, but one of the most visible is his patience and good humor in working with us on our Zoom meetings. With the Extension Office closed, the Ask a Master phone-in program fell on his shoulders this year, and he fielded all the home gardening questions with extraordinary grace. It was all the more challenging this year since many people were planting home gardens for the first time.

Colin's influence extends beyond Washington County. He has a real interest in the natural world and easily finds ways to engage with the community, building bridges everywhere he goes. In addition to addressing myriad horticultural concerns, Colin shows a willingness, and even eagerness, to help the Master Gardeners achieve our goals, as can be seen

through his approach to an issue surrounding contributions to our endowment from our checking account. Colin opened Washington County Extension Service Facebook and Instagram pages soon after starting in his new role, and he also began to film demonstration videos that he has posted to YouTube.

Colin is kind, accepting, and open to new ideas for making the program work. Washington County and the State of Arkansas are fortunate to have such a responsible, dedicated and talented individual representing us and disseminating information to the public. We are proud to nominate Colin Massey for the state County Agent of the Year.

MASTER GARDENER OF THE YEAR: TRUMAN STAMPS

Nomination written by Patsy Louk



Truman Stamps has been an active member of the Washington County Master Gardener Program since 2007. He has volunteered 255 hours to the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Headquarters House, and the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks in 2020 alone. When others quit volunteering because of COVID, Truman continued to show up. In non-COVID times, he works hours at the Washington County Fair. He regularly attends monthly WCMG meetings (both live and by Zoom) logging an additional 54 education hours in 2020. Truman is known for his reliability, dependability, and hard work, and is a seasoned gardener with hands-on experience and true gardening wisdom. He is willing to tackle any task—from unloading mulch to tilling soil to repotting plants. He uses his truck, chainsaw, and tiller as needed. Truman has even been known to climb on the roof at Headquarters House to cut some overhanging limbs.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES (Other Work—43.5 hours)

Kiwanis Club. Since 1997, is a member of Springdale Kiwanis. Shares his gardening skills with others and built a garden from scratch with edging, pavers, daylilies and other perennials at the Kiwanis Kamp in Johnson County. Since 2010, spends twice-monthly

with Kiwanis Action Club at the Elizabeth Richardson Center (ERC) in Springdale. Helped form the Kiwanis Club for developmentally challenged adults. Forty-two adults, ages 24-76, learn life skills, public service, leadership, and perform community projects. During Covid-19, ERC group made cards for “Meals on Wheels” recipients. Member of the Spring Meadows Board, a Kiwanis Senior Housing Development (HUD) in Springdale, with 82 residents. Board meets twice-monthly to provide for the residents. He is on-call to deliver groceries and medications during COVID-19.

Springdale Elementary Schools. Since 2011, participates in “Terrific Kids” for grades 1-3. Kids are recognized for practicing good/improved character traits. Monitors at an elementary school twice-weekly. Developed and maintains four garden areas with perennials, shrubs, herbs that attract pollinators.

Razorback Regional Greenway. Since 2014, involved in Greenway activities. Secured unused land along the Greenway near Bluff Cemetery. Planted monarch-attracting shrubs, flowers, and weeds. Hauls water to the area from a nearby water supply. It is a highlight on the bike trail.

Little Free Libraries. Built seven containers in public spaces near parks, the trail or elementary schools. Helps purchase and/or donate about 200 books a month to keep the libraries supplied.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: ANNIE MOORE

Nomination written by Chris Bell



Annie Moore has worked a total of 270 sanctioned hours and surpassed education requirements by 17 hours in her first year as a Master Gardener. During the start of the pandemic, Annie rose to the occasion and continued to work at the VA garden. She took the initiative to determine what equipment, tools, and plants were needed. In addition, she

contacted VA procurement office staff and accompanied them to obtain the needed supplies. The VA garden produced 500 pounds of produce and delivered to food insecure veterans. A big success! Annie participated in the VA free farmers market for veterans. A total of 800 pounds of food was given away at this event. Her other activities include responding to an appeal for help at the Drake Field project in preparation for the upcoming Air Show, attending planning meetings for the VA garden, growing plants from seeds and gifting to neighbors and veterans and then sharing her knowledge on how to plant and care for them.

MENTOR OF THE YEAR: GLENDANN ROBILLARD

Nomination written by Annie Moore (Glendann's mentee); submitted by Chris Bell



Glendann Robillard is my great, caring, hardworking, always-there-for-me mentor. This was a challenging year and Glen stepped up big time. I was able to call her, send photos, or text her with my questions. The VA garden had a good start until it was hit with insects and disease. Glen taught me so many things about organic solutions to control them. Even though it was the two of us working at the VA garden, she knew of a need and also did some work at Headquarters House, the Arkansas Air Museum, and at the compost site. Glen is so enthusiastic about gardening and helping others. She drives me to think for myself and find answers on my own. If I can't, I know she will be there to help. She is an outstanding mentor, and thankfully, she is mine.

CHALLENGE AWARD: SUSAN GARDNER

Nomination written by Chris Bell



Note from Joyce Mendenhall: *The 2020 Challenge Award recognizes a Master Gardener, a County Extension Agent, or a sanctioned county project for outstanding achievements and uncommon accomplishments to overcome the unusual challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that helped sustain the Master Gardener program and/or a sanctioned project, within the confines of the Cooperative Extension Service protocols.*

Susan Gardner became a Washington County Master Gardener in 2013 and in spite of COVID-19 she volunteered 419 hours along with 162 education hours in 2020. She has volunteered at the Extension Office grounds for several years and currently serves as project chair. The Extension Office grounds are quite large with multiple beds and focal points and visitors to the office always comment on how pretty the grounds look. In late February, this project, as with all the rest in Arkansas, shut down due to the pandemic; however, in April, as soon as allowed by state guidelines and University of Arkansas requirements, Susan encouraged her volunteers to return if they felt comfortable doing so. She made sure they followed the state protocol of wearing masks and social distancing and recorded their names and phone numbers for contact tracing. She asked that they bring their own tools and not share with others and each work alone within designated areas. On average four to six people volunteered, which is under the ten-limit requirement.

I truly believe that by Susan's encouraging us to still volunteer, we all benefited from being outside and having something to do in these difficult days. We got to see each other, wave, and talk from across the parking lot or flower beds. Emails were sent by Susan, almost weekly, to keep members up to date on what work had been accomplished and what areas still needed some TLC. Volunteers were at the grounds every Wednesday from April through mid-November, except when it was raining.

In addition to caring for the Extension Office grounds, Susan made sure that cut flowers were donated to the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks and Apple Seeds for their fundraising events, pumpkins first used as décor on the grounds were then donated to the Marshallese Food Bank and vegetables raised on the grounds were donated to the Homeless Shelter and area Food Banks. Also, because Master Gardeners were unable to host their annual Christmas dinner where everyone brings potluck dishes, Susan took it upon herself to collect recipes for those missed dishes and create a cookbook for everyone to enjoy. Susan was a great leader through difficult times and that is why we believe she should be the recipient of the 2020 Master Gardener Challenge Award.

YES I CAN AWARD: LINDA MORROW

Nomination written by Joyce Mendenhall



Linda Morrow is the kind of team member any project would love. She is often the first to arrive at Mock Park and has noticed and begun what needs to be done by the time others arrive. She arrives with the tools needed, and is always willing to help anyone. She has not missed a Monday all season, always has a pleasant attitude, and has been very good at adhering to COVID precautions with mask and distancing. She frequently brings wonderful homemade goodies in individual containers for the other volunteers, and not just a little cookie or two, but six big dudes with some frosting! Linda contributed 87 volunteer hours and 31 educational hours this year. Linda shares her talents with the larger organization by serving on the board and by being a mentor. There's really nothing Linda won't do, and always with a smile!

YES I CAN AWARD ROOKIE: ELIZABETH HALE

Nomination written by Patsy Louk



Elizabeth Hale moved to West Fork from Texas and immediately began participating in Friends of the West Fork Library while volunteering with the Northwest Arkansas chapter of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Soon Elizabeth joined the planning commission for the city council. She looks for ways and places to serve her community. Once settled, she began her training in MG and recorded 69 volunteer hours and 67 educational hours in her first year. Elizabeth contributed to the early planning meeting in January. She was flexible in choosing an alternative work schedule when she had conflicts with her CASA responsibilities. She would let them know when she worked alone at various sites on Saturday mornings or evenings. Once the library rain garden was finished she took the initiative to make identification signs for the garden. They draw attention to the garden, while being colorful and complete with all salient information, as well as brand the West Fork Group of the Washington County Master Gardeners as the garden sponsors and maintenance crew.

NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR: *GARDEN THYME*

Nomination written by Joyce Mendenhall

Garden Thyme team members for 2020 were Judy Smith, managing editor/submissions and "Just Us" column; Mary McCully, editor/submissions, videos, and project spotlights; Susan Young, production assistant; Pam Butler, garden events reporter; Lynette Terrell, "Meet Our Trainees" reporter; Mel Zabecki, "Natural State Natives" column; Kathryn Birkhead, "From Your President" column; Steve Brizzi, monthly programs reporter; Dolores Stamps, "Book Review" column; Mike Standrod, "Uncle Mike's Veggie Garden Tips" column; Kitty Sanders, "Photo of the Month" feature; Carter Carrigan, original poetry; Ruthanne Hill, endowment campaign news; Colin Massey, Chandana Becker, and Jim Sposato, contributors.

TROWEL, WATERING CAN, AND WHEELBARROW AWARDS

Trowel (200 or more hours in a year): Kathryn Birkhead, Doris Cassidy, Annie Moore

Watering Can (200 or more hours for five years or more): Chris Bell, Susan Gardner, Patsy Louk, Jim Sposato

Wheelbarrow (200 or more hours for ten years or more): Kitty Sanders, Truman Stamps

WCMG to Host Advanced Training Zoom Class

PATSY LOUK

President, County 76



Photo by [TS Sergey](#) on [Unsplash](#)

On March 12 and 13, Washington County will host the first Zoom Advanced Training MG class of 2021. March 2020 was the last time an Advanced Training MG class was held in Arkansas. It was hosted by White County MGs and held in Searcy. Shortly after that class, Extension shut down having any in-person meetings with more than ten people. Who would have thought that almost a year later we would still be in the same situation?

So many of our events and meetings this past year have either been cancelled or converted to virtual. The Advanced Training Project members of County 76 have made the leap to convert some Advanced Training classes to virtual, as well. With Colin Massey's approval, Joyce Mendenhall and I volunteered Washington County to be the first to host an Advanced Training by Zoom. With any Advanced Training class, it is important to have the support of the extension agent and, in this case, have one who is familiar with Zoom and willing to be the Zoom host for the class. Without hesitation, Colin said "yes."

As with anything that is the first, there is a learning curve. We are working diligently trying to smooth out all those curves so that we have a successful "first" Zoom Advanced Training.

Our class topic is "Pollinators: An In-Depth Look at One of Life's Most Important Resources." Participants will learn about well-known and lesser known pollinators, their habitats, and their importance in pollinating certain plants.

The Advanced Master Gardener program is a product of County 76. Advanced Master Gardener classes are open to Master Gardeners who have been in good standing in their county for at least three (3) years.

If the topic interests you and you have been an MG for at least three years, head over to the MG only portion of the Arkansas Extension service website to get more information: <https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/>.

Space is limited; the registration deadline is February 21. For more information, please contact Patsy Louk: pjlouk@gmail.com or 479-841-9865.

Uncle Mike's Veggie Garden Tips

MIKE STANDROD

Welcome new MGs! These tips are for the novice vegetable gardener. If you are new at growing vegetables, you'll discover food you grow yourself will taste better, and you get added satisfaction. If you've never raised veggies, scatter a few in your ornamental beds. Then be amazed. Then eat.



The next cold winter night get a warm drink and curl up with some seed catalogues. (OK millennials, you may surf the internet garden sites.) Plan your garden: what you'll plant, when, and where. If you start your own seeds, calculate when to start seeds for transplanting. Work backwards from late March for cold weather veggies; for most other veggies, April 15, which is our average last frost date in Northwest Arkansas.

January–February To-Dos for the Veggie Garden

- **Care for your tools.** If you haven't already, now is the time to care for your tools. Inspect, sharpen, oil, organize your tools. Clean and prepare seed trays, transplant pots.
- **Order seeds.** By early January, you should have received seed catalogues galore. Even though you can buy seeds at the box stores, ordering from specialized catalogues is more fun, and offers a much wider variety if you like to experiment a bit.
- **Start your seedlings.** All you need is a sunny southern window to start a seed tray or two and get a jump with your transplants. Lettuce, kale, chard, can be started indoors in January/early February. These are great in the early spring garden. Let the box store plants be your "Plan B" just in case your seed starting endeavor doesn't

pan out.

- **Get your soil tested.** Now is a great time to get your soil tested. Amend as needed. Most veggies like a pH between 5.5 and 7.0; potatoes/berries on the low (acid) side, 5.0 – 6.0; most other veggies 6.0–7.0(alkaline). Most Northwest Arkansas clay soils are a bit on the acid side. RAISE your pH with lime, (crushed dolomite limestone). LOWER your pH with leaf mold (oak leaf is best), pine needles or agricultural sulfur.
- **Place new birdhouses.** Birdhouses? One of the best organic defenses against unwanted garden pests are BIRDS. Wrens, in particular are pest eating machines. Scouting is being done in February for nesting spots. Put the bird rentals out NOW and you'll likely have tenants by March.
- **Plant.** In late February–early March (generally) DIRECT SOW winter peas, snow peas, sugar snap peas, radishes, carrots, spinach, and other greens. TRANSPLANT Swiss chard, kales, mustard, cauliflower, and brussels sprouts. TIP: Plant half your transplants, wait two weeks, then plant the other half. (Same with direct sowing radishes and lettuces. This accomplishes two things: if a hard freeze kills, you still have half to plant. Otherwise, planting half two weeks later will extend your harvest.



Uncle Mike's transplant starts

Fall 2020 Trainees: A New Crop of MGs!

Alfie Anderson, Diane Back, Nancy Ballard, Kelly Bassemeir, Sarah Bryan, Wanda Carlin, Judy Cohea, Christy Erwin, Nena Evans, Linda Hall, Olivia Harrington, DeLee Holbert, Katie Laird, Terry McElroy, Diana Oliver, Joseph Osborn, Lynn Patterson, Susan Shelton, Vicki Spencer, Marion Stevens, Kathryn Sampson Stinson, Ashley Sutterfield, Karen Takemoto, Adriana Treadway, Janice Walker

Celebrating WCMG: Thirty Years in April!



Photo by [Phinehas Adams](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The April issue of *Garden Thyme* and our April 6 Zoom meeting will focus on the 30th birthday of our Washington County Master Gardener organization. We came into being in April 1991 with thirteen members when the Extension Office was in an annex at the old Court House. Projects were landscaping the office and Richardson Center homes in Springdale, creating gardening videos, and offering a class to the public. We've grown a bit since then. We now have around 250 members and nineteen projects around the county.

We'll have some special guests at the April 6 meeting. For the April *Garden Thyme*, we'd like to feature news from our members. Please send us scanned photos of projects, state award winners, conference groups, garden tours or other special memories from the past thirty years. We'd also like written memories, so think about your years as a WCMG and send us a short note about your favorite parts of being a Master Gardener. Please send your photos and memories to *Garden Thyme*, wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com.

Endowment Campaign Update

RUTHANNE HILL

Endowment Committee

I'm so excited my fingers can hardly type! Just a few short weeks ago, at our October 6 meeting to be exact, we came to you with a challenge . . . something never attempted by

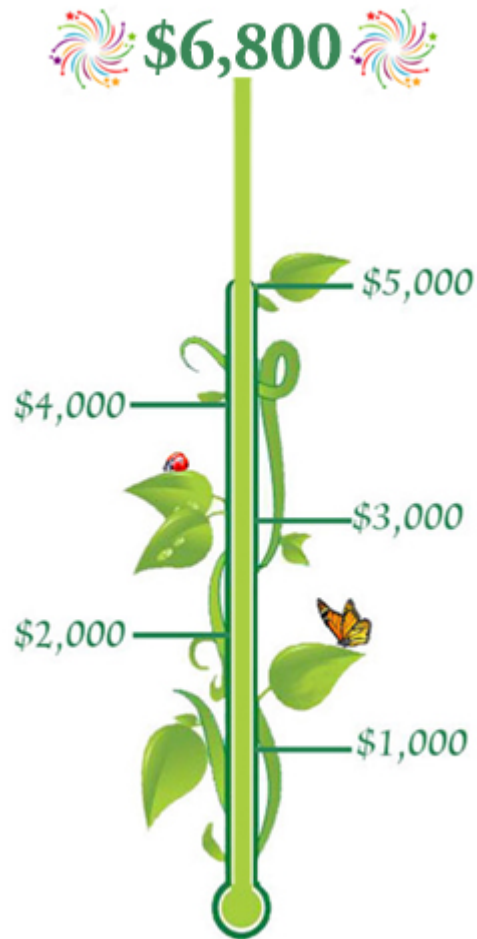
Washington County Master Gardeners before . . . the ambitious task of raising \$5,000 in only 10 short weeks. If we succeeded in reaching that goal, a generous Washington County Master Gardener would double the funds and we'd add \$10,000 to our WCMG Endowment for future scholarships. However, we had to do it or not by December 15. Hard stop.

Well friends, that deadline is here and I'm proud to say not only did you do it, you **SURPASSED THE GOAL!** And not just by a little bit either. You blew the roof off! You cracked it wide open! You (speaking in a holiday spirit) made mincemeat of that goal! And we did it by working together, each giving what you could, during a pandemic no less.

The Endowment Match Challenge Campaign currently stands at \$6,800 with more gifts possibly still to arrive in the mail. Coupled with the match, at this point we will add at least \$11,800 to our Endowment—placing us well over halfway to our short-range goal of \$20,000 in only one year!

The fact that we worked together to make this happen is a huge thing to celebrate. And then when we look ahead and imagine the young people we will help through the scholarships we provide, well, I hope you have goosebumps like I do right now. This is the kind of thing that can help a student stay in school when they might otherwise have to drop out. We could help students who make important advances or new discoveries in the field of Horticulture. And it all started with YOU and your compassionate heart, stepping up to meet a challenge. Thank you.

I hope to hear a rising chorus of cheers and applause as all of you Master Gardeners read this email and we collectively celebrate this fantastic accomplishment. And so that you know how the Endowment Committee and the WCMG Executive Committee feel about you right now, well this about sums it up:





Meet the Trainees

LYNETTE TERRELL

DeLee Holbert

I grew up in Northwest Arkansas. My family is from Eureka Springs, where I grew up watching my grandmother and great-grandmother coax vegetables and flowers from the rocky soil by their sheer determination and hard work. I remember my grandmother handing us a basket and saying, “Go pick a salad to have with dinner.” Whatever we picked is what she somehow turned into a salad! I have always loved gardens of all sorts, and I’ve usually had some sort of garden wherever I have lived. And my idea of a salad is still whatever is ready to be picked that day!



I am a chemistry technical support specialist by trade, but I spend my spare time working in my art journal, hooking rugs, playing with my dogs, reading, cooking, doing needlework, and, of course, gardening. I’ve recently moved to Springdale and my goal is to combine vegetables, flowers, and herbs in the same garden spaces in a manner that is both productive and beautiful. I also adore irises since they remind me of my grandmother. I have put in a bed of irises and alliums and am hoping to learn more about both.

My husband, Jon, is my biggest cheerleader. He wholeheartedly enjoys the food from the garden. My three dogs (Louie, Maybelle, and Hyllo) love to help out in the garden.

Terry McElroy

My love of gardening sprang from my father's green thumb. Helping my dad in his annual vegetable garden is one of my oldest and fondest memories. I have continued that family tradition over the years, although primarily through the development of home ornamental gardens.



I received my nursing degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1985 and have worked primarily in the fields of cardiology and home health. I currently work as a registered nurse at the Walker Heart Institute in Fayetteville, assisting the busiest cardiologist in Northwest Arkansas.

My husband, Lawrence, and I moved from Little Rock to Cane Hill in 2015 to be closer to two of our three daughters who were enrolled in graduate school at the University of Arkansas. We live in a house which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, situated in an idyllic Ozark setting. The surrounding gardens occupy most of my attention during the growing season.

Joseph Osborn

I'm Joseph Osborn, age 34, born in Calico Rock (Izard County) and raised outside Harrison. Most evenings and summers were spent with my grandfather taking care of chickens, goats, pigs, and rabbits. We worked in the woodshop or garden and played down by the creek.



When I was around twelve years old we moved to the Fayetteville area. As an adult, my fiancée, Shana, and I always tend a little garden. Never quite replicating Grandpa's success, but we enjoy the fruits of our labor. I also enjoy hunting, fishing, foraging, and cultivating mushrooms.

A friend of mine passed away in late August 2020. Jack had done many things in his life, but I was shocked to hear how much the MG program had shaped his life. So I looked into the program. I hope it not only makes me a better gardener, but helps me be active in my community as well.

2020 Project Summary

Thank you for keeping our projects going in 2020!

Committee Work: 1703

Air Museum: 101

Ask A Master: 19

Headquarters House: 466

Junior Master Gardeners: 70

Lincoln Community Center: 276

Apple Seeds: 98

Botanical Garden of the Ozarks: 2226

Compost: 147

Community Outreach: 310

Elkins Community Center: 365

Extension Grounds: 576

Garden Explorers: 84

Mock Park: 278

Shiloh Museum: 605

V. A. Hospital Garden: 403

Washington County Fair: 122

West Fork Gardens: 286

Winslow Beautification: 60

Total sanctioned work hours: 8195

November Photo of the Month: "Water in the Garden"



FIRST PLACE

"Through the Garden Gate" by Ruth Cohoon



SECOND PLACE

"Fall Water Trough" by Mary McCully

December Photo of the Month: "Holiday in the Garden"



FIRST PLACE

"Repose in the Fall" by Martha Haguwood



SECOND PLACE

"Herald of Ferns and Evergreens" by Mary McCully

Natural State Natives

MEL ZABECKI



Gourds

Cucurbitaceae is a family of vegetables that includes the gourd. The most familiar gourds belong to the genus *Lagenaria*, and have served as important resources for many cultures over the millennia. While they're actually native to Africa, they have been in the Americas since the earliest people arrived, so I thought it was okay to include them in this column. They come in an amazing variety of shapes and sizes and can be manipulated through their growing cycle for shape and surface texture. My favorite fact about gourds is that they influenced the shapes of American Indian pottery vessels, for gourds have been here since humans arrived 15,000 years ago and served as the original containers— pottery was not invented until 2,000 years ago!

While the only edible part of *Lagenaria* gourds are the seeds, they were grown for their many uses for storage, serving, eating, drinking, and cooking. Cooking sounds like a weird

thing to do with a gourd, since it would burn up if placed in or over a fire, but here's how it worked: hot rocks or heated balls of fired clay (referred to by archeologists as "Poverty Point objects") would be dropped into the gourd with soup ingredients. The stones/clay balls would be repeatedly replaced with hot ones until the food was done. It would be incredibly time consuming and I've always been tempted to try it out, but I don't have the patience for that!

A use for gourds outside of the kitchen was rattles for music, and we have an example from very close to home. In south Washington County, a crushed gourd rattle was found at Brown Bluff in the 1930s along with many other well-preserved organic artifacts. The rattle was filled with stones and had a wooden handle. Very neat.

Nowadays we use gourds for all kinds of crafts and while they can be a challenge to grow (seeds are slow to germinate, they spread out all over, they smell bad, they take a long time to mature, they are not cold hardy), it's worth it if you are the experimental gardener type. Try it out this year! If you do and if you plan on trying to use your gourds for crafts, be warned that they can take many months to dry out after they've matured, so don't plan your craft projects until the Summer of 2022—something to look forward to!



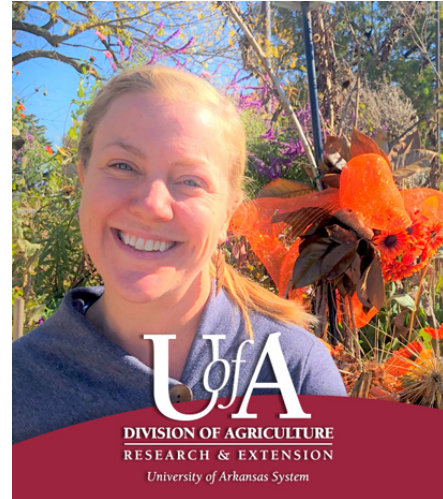
Gourdcraft

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Do you have water drainage issues on your property?

Meghan Post, Water Quality Extension Agent in Washington County, is offering free consultations to landowners on best management practices for water pollution prevention. Landowners often seek assistance from the Extension Office regarding drainage issues, erosion control, and lawn/land management. These one-on-one consultations are an opportunity to educate the landowners and managers on simple BMPs to prevent NPS pollution. Upon initial consultation, clientele will be offered technical assistance on BMP installation or improvements. Emphasis will be placed on streamside landowners, known high-risk sites such as urban or eroding streams, or new development.



For more information, contact Meghan: mpost@uaex.edu or 479-444-1755.

Just Us

JUDY SMITH

Book Review

Dolores Stamps

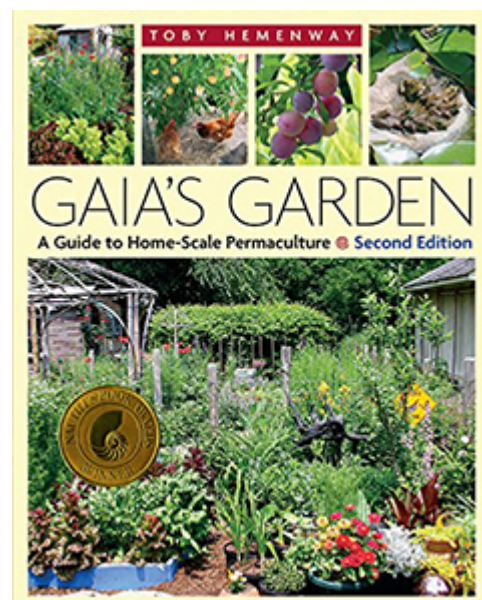
GAIA'S GARDEN: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture

by Toby Hemenway

Winner of a Nautilus Book Award

Hemenway introduces us to “permaculture” on page 5. This term is a combination of the words "permanent" and "agriculture." Permaculture uses a set of principles to design sustainable human interaction with the Earth around us. The main goal is productive landscapes. Using many principles of organic gardening, natural building, it is really a design approach. Hemenway wants to help us create or re-create gardens that work with Nature.

Quite often this book offers photos and drawings of a fruit tree surrounded by food-creating plants that work together for both nature and people. Features to work toward are deep rich soil, plants



that draw fertility from deep in the earth, the air and rainwater, and eventually a closed cycle. That is, over time, the garden should rely less and less on outside supplies like fertilizer, mulch, seeds, new plants and so on.

One intriguing chart is Table 3.1: A Designer's Checklist. It is applicable to your garden whether in the design stage or established for a few years. Find it on page 51.

Permaculture gardens are here to stay and flourish. This volume is "required reading for all who desire to make their home's landscape healthy, sustainable and healing," says Robert Kourik, author of *Designing your Edible Landscape*.

Find a garden book and get started on your 2021 "Education hours" now! This one is good for sensible ideas and at least three intriguing hours.



Submitted by Jim Sposato

Contact Information

The *Garden Thyme* email address is wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com. You may use this address for submissions and for questions and comments that are specific to the newsletter. For other needs, please contact the appropriate officer or chairperson as listed in your WCMG workbook.

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