



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • June 2020



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**June Zoom Meeting**

Our June 2 monthly meeting will be held 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.

### **"Without Soil, There is No Garden"**

Dr. Larry West was born and reared on cotton/cattle farm in south Arkansas near Arkadelphia. Larry received a BSA and MS from the University of Arkansas and a PhD. in soil science from Texas A&M University. His professional career included 20 years on the faculty at the University of Georgia and research positions with the USDA Agricultural Research Service and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



After retirement in 2013, Larry and his wife, Marsha, returned to Fayetteville where they enjoy gardening, pottery, and sewing. Larry is a Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America and currently serves as a member of the Arkansas Professional Soil Classifiers Licensing Board. For our June 2 program, he will provide a refresher/primer on the basic concepts of managing the soil in your garden and the environmental consequences of improper soil management.

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## **Taking Care of Business**

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

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May 2020 Meeting Minutes

April 2020 Treasurer's Report

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## **From Your President**

**KATHRYN BIRKHEAD**

*WCMG 2017*

Frequently what I read in one book reminds me of something I read in another. "Come tell us what is saving your life right now." In her book *An Altar in the World*, that's what Barbara

Brown Taylor said she was asked to do when she was invited to address a congregation. Her phrase came to me yesterday when I read in another book that "creation heals." Those phrases fit really well together to me. What's saving my life right now is creation. It is indeed healing.

I'm looking forward to reading what you all have shared in this month's *Garden Thyme* about what's saving your life right now, about how you've been spending your days while our time outside our homes and with others has been limited. I wonder how many of us have started sourdough (mine is not doing what it should), how many books we've read (nothing that is worthy of mention, in my case), how much binge-watching or woodworking or crocheting we've done (why can't I count those stitches right?), and, of course, what we've done in our yards (yay!). We are nothing if not creative and hard-working.



One thing I've unexpectedly enjoyed is the technology we're using now. At first I was not terribly comfortable interacting in a large group on Zoom, but the longer I'm alone, the more grateful I am to get to see my friends and colleagues and hear your voices. Thanks to Colin Massey's wrangling of the technology, we got to see Mel Zabecki's excellent presentation on corn for our May meeting. Outstanding jobs, both of you. Now I'm looking forward to learning about soils from Dr. Larry West (husband of our Marsha West) on June 2. Our meeting through technology is feeling less foreign all the time, and I am grateful that we can still continue to learn and grow together.

Our board is exploring ways for us to be sure we're taking care of each other during these unusual times. We're all in this together.

May we all be well.

Kathryn

*From "The Invocation to Kali"*

*Help us to be the always-hopeful  
gardeners of the spirit  
who know that without darkness  
nothing comes to birth,  
as without light nothing flourishes.*

*—May Sarton*

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## April Photo of the Month: "Spring Madness"



**FIRST PLACE**  
"Gorgeous Peony" by Chris Bell (WCMG 2015)

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## Project Highlight: Mock Park

**LADEANA MULLINIX**

*WCMG 1997*



This azalea has been here for thirty years!



Yellow baptisia in their happy place.

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## 2022 Conference Update

MEL ZABECKI

*WCMG 2019*



Things are moving along! Chairpeople have been working to reschedule speakers, tours, special events, etc. The sponsorship/fundraising folks have been given cost estimates for

the banquet, speakers, special events, etc., so they can focus their efforts on asking for specific sponsorships from businesses and/or individuals. The numbers provided to the sponsorship folks were also provided to WCMG assistant treasurer Wanda Gore so she can start putting some numbers in the estimated budget. The newsletter/publicity committee is working on a trifold brochure that features the WCMG sanctioned projects as a resource for the fundraising efforts. The new contract with Holiday Inn has been completed and signed by the necessary parties. The correction was made on the promotional conference logo and conference co-chair Patsy Louk is preparing to share it with the newsletter, sponsorships, and garden market committees so they can continue their planning.

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## Meet Our Trainees

### LYNETTE TERRELL

*WCMG 2020*

#### **Janine Parry**

I am ecstatic to be joining this group, and deeply appreciate the knowledge, resources, and warm welcome I already have received.

Although I am a native of Spokane, Washington, several degrees in political science brought me to the University of Arkansas in 1998. It has been a fine career, but I am made for the outdoors. Thus, when my teens finish school, my husband and I will relocate to the Pacific Northwest to spend time with my family, and to work in the state and federal parks until we fully retire.



In the meantime, we continue to make good use of Arkansas's gorgeous rivers and hiking trails. I also am learning all I can about this area's native plants so we can leave our historic Fayetteville home in good shape for its next family.

I am new to the gardening world, but plant identification feeds my soul, as does moving a languishing plant to a spot where it can flourish. So far, I have introduced kale, blueberries, rhubarb, hellebore, and milkweed plus seven new trees into our landscape. Thanks to the city, my awesome neighbors, and the occasional hard rain on an untended space, most of what is growing in my yard didn't introduce another plastic pot into the world!

I look forward to learning from all y'all and to sharing that knowledge, and my plants, with others.

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#### **Elizabeth Hale**

I returned to Northwest Arkansas after living in Little Rock for twelve years and Dallas for four decades. When I was planning my move, some of the first people I met were Berni Kurz, who provided me with soil samples and listened patiently while I rambled on about

wanting to try to grow quinoa on my hilly slopes; West Fork Master Gardener Carolyn Griffith, who spent hours with me on planning native plantings; and Jane Bryant, who is now my MG mentor. Everyone has been so welcoming!

I live 3/5ths of the way up Bloyed Mountain in West Fork, which provides a fantastic vista of Fayetteville, Devil's Den, and Hogeye. My special interests are rain gardens, native plants, hydroponic gardening and enclosed raised vegetable beds. Numerous wildlife, rocks and winds challenge my gardening strategies and skills and keep things interesting.



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## Natural State Natives

**MEL ZABECKI**

*WCMG 2019*



**Blackberry brambles in bloom.**

I recently watched a really fantastic talk by Dr. Ian Thompson, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, on native foods: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1103397196691902>. He mentioned that June is “Blackberry Month” for the Choctaws, so I decided June would also be “Blackberry Month” for this column! As it turns out, blackberries are not only native to our state but Arkansas is known for blackberries in the agricultural world: <https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/fruits-nuts/berries.aspx>

Blackberries are all over in bloom right now and they will ripen soon and into July. If you drive by them too fast right now, you'll mistake them for some native rose and vice versa. What is that rose?

Archeologically, blackberry seeds have been found at sites all across the region but are sometimes reported as blackberry/raspberry/dewberry (*Rubus* spp.) because the charred seeds (remember my paleoethnobotany spiel last month?) of the three plants are practically indistinguishable. They were important enough to the Native Americans that the Spanish explorers on the Hernando de Soto expedition observed them during their whirlwind disturbance of this region. They were eaten fresh or pounded down into fruit leather or mashed into pemmican. The most fun example of physical evidence of blackberry consumption in the archeological record is not from here but from Salts Cave, part of the Mammoth Cave system in Kentucky. Paleofeces (look it up if you are confused) have been found in pretty awesome quantities in the cave systems there and paleoethnobotanists have identified loads (pun intended) of different kinds of plant seeds that have shed incredible light on the diets and seasonality of diets in the past. Now I know you would not be proud to admit that your child completed their PhD dissertation studying ancient poop, but it happens and it's really important to the archeological story! Historical accounts tell that blackberry roots, stems, and leaves have been used in teas and prepared as washes to treat ailments from diarrhea to eye infections and lung problems. Take note of where you see them flowering now and go back and pick the berries when they ripen!

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## Just Us

**JUDY SMITH**

*WCMG 2011*

### **Survival Tactics in the Time of a Virus**

*Joyce Mendenhall*

Ask me what I spent my stimulus check on and the answer is plants. Since I am one of those "at risk" people (age and cancer) I have had to depend on my yard and garden for exercise, meditation, and joy. We decided to remove the Leyland cypress trees that made an evergreen hedge around our front yard after they slowly started dying from the dreaded dieback and replace them with nine Blue Princess hollies and three Blue Prince hollies (got to have those males!). Now I am working on redoing my front flower beds that got totally uprooted when we had to have a backhoe dig out the water line from the house to the road. They basically turned the soil over, leaving clay on top and all my good soil along with my shade plants buried. If anyone has any shade plants they want to get rid of let me know as I want to fill up the front yard. Other things that I have added to my landscape recently are a yellow lilac, smoke tree, snowball bush, 200 summer blooming bulbs, Blue Moon wisteria, 100 fragrant peacock gladiolus, two Shooting Star hydrangeas, Pretty Woman giant lily, a number of native plants from the Northwest Arkansas Master Naturalists and Botanical Garden of the Ozarks plant sales, and this morning I stopped at Westwood Nursery and got the evergreen Armand clematis.



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*Kathryn Birkhead*

One of the things I've been attempting unsuccessfully to do while we're all confined (sourdough starter).



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*Anita Bukey*

I've gotten topsoil from Nitron to fill in the erosion in the lawn. Need help spreading, anyone? I'm planting tomatoes in the front yard and flowers for the deer.

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*Jim Sposato*

Wow, it's been a busy few months, building a new house, getting the Lincoln Community Garden tomatoes going with good help from Mel, and growing my own raised bed garden.



I love garlic. It needs to be planted in September, so I planted my cloves last September in a portable raise bed to be harvested very soon at my new house. They are doing very well.



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*Dolores Stamps*

Sunday afternoon I cooked a rich, thick chicken noodle soup to deliver to Jan Judy. She was seated at the dining table, walker nearby. She asked me to stay and visit a while. Her attitude is wonderful; Jan is uncomfortable having others wait on her, she has always been a caregiver. In case you don't know, she fell from a ladder and had multiple breaks to bones, followed by repair surgeries and much therapy. Just want to report Jan has a long recovery, she will be back. She gives thanks all who are taking care of her pet Master Gardener projects!

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*Gayle Howard*

I have been walking the new trails near me and have put some painted rocks on the wall next to our Crossover Trail.



Thankfully, I have a big yard and gardens that need lots of care but also provide cheap therapy and time for me to smell the roses.



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*Gail Pianalto*

We are moving our garden of twenty-five years to our new home, including our ten-foot Japanese maple (pictured here with my husband, Virgil). So far we've moved over fifty shrubs and trees, and lots of roses, perennials, and vines, with many more yet to move. We've only had three losses so far.



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*Judy Smith*

- Taking an online course in Nature Journaling—drawing, writing, painting—lots of fun.
- Zooming Sunday School and streaming church services.
- Buying plants from BGO and Master Naturalists plant sales.
- Doing lots of gardening, when it isn't raining. Favorite new plants: gro-low sumac, deciduous azaleas, and tandoori viburnum



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*Annette Pianalto*

I have been working in the gardens, reading books, Zooming with the kids, and discovering how much we enjoy a Sunday drive.

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*Susan Young*

This pandemic has reminded me that there are plenty of nature's wonders to behold right in my own back yard. For example, this cedar waxwing was one of a large flock that stopped by to visit the mulberry tree in my fencerow this week.



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*Teresa Youngblood*

Lucked into a windfall of rivercane about to be bulldozed, so cut dozens of stakes and built a couple of simple trellises. These are now in service in the backyard garden, ready to support the cucumbers, green beans, tomatoes, and lots and lots (and lots) of dahlias! Pictured is comfrey being visited by one of our backyard honeybees.



*Susan Dawson*

Tending to my roses!



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*Patsy Louk*

I am catching up on lots of projects around the house, inside and out. I am so happy that the weather has warmed up because working outside makes me so happy! Dave and I are

working on our fourth 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle (some have been in the closet, never opened for several years). I've read several books and I'm looking forward to the Botanical Garden reopening to the public on June 1.

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*Steve Brizzi*

Since the VA closed the campus to all but essential staff and a few "special" vets, the rest of us MGs haven't been allowed to work at the garden. These photos were taken by MGs who are also veterans—Glendann Robillard (top photo below) and trainee Annie Moore (bottom photo). VA staff Jean Nelson and Mindy Littleton are also helping to keep the garden alive and well.





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*Steve Skattebo*

Here's a link to my two new gardening videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZKvIkYvRCFvCb79CT29EMA>

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## July Meeting Preview



Have you ever wondered how you can get more of your favorite plants without spending much money? Come join Botanical Garden of the Ozarks horticulture supervisor Megan Lankford to learn how! Plants are amazing and can be propagated in many ways that don't include seed. In this class on asexual propagation you will learn the basics of stem, leaf, and root cuttings, layering, grafting, as well as division.

Megan Lankford graduated summa cum laude from the University of Arkansas in 2015 with a BS in horticulture and a minor in sustainability. Her love of plants comes from a lifetime spent outdoors enjoying all that nature has to offer. She currently resides in Fayetteville with her husband, two dogs, ten chickens, and hundreds of plants. Megan loves to garden not only at work, but at home as well. She has several garden spaces including a pollinator garden, a large vegetable garden, a zen garden, and an unheated greenhouse. Other than gardening she enjoys hiking, reading, and spending time with friends and family.

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# Contact Information

The *Garden Thyme* email address is [wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto: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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[Judy Smith](#), managing editor/submissions; [Mary McCully](#), editor/submissions and videos; [Pam Butler](#), reporter; [Lynette Terrell](#), reporter; [Susan Young](#), production assistant; [Mel Zabecki](#), reporter.

Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith or Mary McCully.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Kathryn Birkhead](#), president; [Steve Brizzi](#), vice president; [Ruthanne Hill](#), secretary/parliamentarian; [Chris Bell](#), treasurer; [Wanda Gore](#), assistant treasurer; [Susan Young](#), past president. Members at large: [Linda Morrow](#), [Diane Standefer](#), [Mel Zabecki](#).



WCMG Facebook Group (private)



WCMG Facebook Page (public)



WCMG Website



UA Extension Service Website

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