



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • June 2021



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June Program: Why Should We Care about

Invasives?

Our June 1 guest speaker is our good friend, Dr. Don Steinkraus, UA professor of entomology (a position he has held for 32 years). He has a B.A. from Cornell University, an M.S. from the University of Connecticut, and a Ph.D. from Cornell. His research focuses on biological control of insect pests in row crops and also honey bee pests. For the past ten years Dr. Steinkraus has been active in educating the public about invasive species and removing them. His talk will include a look at the most important invasive plants in Arkansas, what we can do to fight invasives, good native plants to replace invasives, and how all this fits in to web of nature.

Colin will send out the Zoom link a day or so in advance of the meeting.



Taking Care of Business

We will vote on the following at our June 1 Zoom meeting.

[April 2021 Treasurer's Report](#)

[May 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)

From Your President

KATHRYN BIRKHEAD

Dear Friends,

There are many things that I put on a calendar—the projects I work on, classes I attend, meetings, the theater or church or dinner with friends. Yard work is not one of those things. This afternoon as I was trying to figure out what I was going to tackle, it occurred to me that the haphazard way I work in the yard is neither efficient nor orderly and that it may not be the best way of going about things. It also struck me that perhaps it is not the norm. I had never really thought about it before, and it made me wonder how other people go about yard work. How do you all approach it? I



typically just go to the place that's bothering me the most and try to get it to where it's less annoying. What does an organized person do? Please let me know.

A few months ago, I wrote about the dog formerly known as Bear who has joined my family, and I thought you might enjoy an update. Her name is now Sunny, and although we've had some serious hiccups, she's training me pretty well, and I enjoy her company. It's a good thing that an immaculate lawn is not important to me, because she's good at digging for moles, which has led to lots of random holes in the yard. I'm trying to figure out how to use her prowess at digging to my advantage, but nothing has occurred to me yet.

I'd love to hear from you about your work—what you enjoy about your work in nature, what you've learned, what you hope to learn and how you go about your work. Please write and let me know at kathrynbirkhead@gmail.com.

And here's a brief poem that strikes me as applicable to gardeners. We're all about possibility, aren't we?

I Dwell in Possibility

I dwell in Possibility –
A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior – for Doors –

Of Chambers as the Cedars –
Impregnable of eye –
And for an everlasting Roof –
The Gambrels of the Sky –

Of Visitors – the fairest –
For Occupation – This –
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise –

Emily Dickinson

County 76 Virtual Silent Auction

PATSY LOUK

County 76 President



County 76, the statewide Master Gardener advisor group, normally has a silent auction at the state conference. Funds raised from the auction go toward the Janet B. Carson Scholarships, the PNG Leadership conference, and other projects that County 76 provides for Master Gardeners statewide. Since this year's state conference is virtual, County 76 is also taking their silent auction virtual.

A team of County 76 members have been working for several months, with Extension Finance, IT, and the Greater Giving virtual auction software company to make this virtual auction a reality. We have been asking businesses and Master Gardeners to donate items. We now have over 200 auction items from Master Gardeners and businesses across the state.

Each auction item will have one to four photos and a description of the item, including whether the item is located in Fayetteville, Jonesboro, or Little Rock. Each location has a different pick-up date. Fayetteville items will be at the Washington County Extension Office on Wednesday, June 16, 3:00–7:00 p.m.

Constant Contact will provide the link to the auction site from noon on June 4 through noon on June 11. When you click on the link you will need to register in order to bid on items. You will be asked for your name, address, cell phone number, email address, and credit card information. You can visit the auction site as many times as you wish during the "live" time. If you bid on an item and you are outbid, you will be notified by email and text message that you have been outbid. If you choose, you may increase your bid. When the auction closes at noon on June 11, the winning bidders will be notified by email and your credit card will be charged with the winning bid amount.

Virtual auctions are a lot of fun and can be done from home, school, or work, on your phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop. The auction is not limited to Master Gardeners. Share the link with your family and friends so they can get in on the fun and support the Master Gardener program.

So watch for the Constant Contact email from the state office and join the fun.

Thank you for supporting County 76 and the Master Gardener program.

Happy bidding!

Uncle Mike's Veggie Garden Tips

MIKE STANDROD

Learn from MY mistakes, not yours. . . . A couple of columns ago I suggested that you should not waste any time trying to grow “Iceberg” lettuce here in Northwest Arkansas. Well, Mother Nature proved me wrong. While setting out some transplants I discovered that I accidentally bought a couple of iceberg lettuces in a batch of seedlings. So, I decided to go ahead and plant. Sure enough, I had two-for-two plants make lettuce heads. So, I stand corrected. You CAN grow Iceberg lettuce successfully here!



Use Companion Planting. (Yes, I wrote on this recently, but now I have some photos to better demonstrate.) It will

- Make your plants happier and healthier.
- Confuse and deter some pests.
- If mixing with ornamentals, makes your veggie garden more attractive.
- Make succession planting easier—replacing in spots within one bed.

Simple Tips for June

- Continue walking your garden daily. You’ll catch insect or disease problems early. Insect populations multiply in a geometric progression. Stopping the first generation makes a big difference later.
- Plant hot-weather plants: cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, field peas, squash, okra, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, melons

Tomatoes

Remember, when the daytime temperature gets above 90 degrees or does not drop below 75 degrees or so at night, most blossoms will not make fruit. However, the vines of indeterminate varieties will re-bloom and produce again when temps moderate. Just keep them evenly watered.

Poppies

Scatter a packet of poppy seeds in the fall and you’ll have a never-ending show every year. Save and dry the seed heads and scatter seeds anywhere you want poppies next spring. We’ve found you can plant in the spring, but harvested seeds do much better if they stratify over the winter. Poppies are sun-lovers.

Scenes from Uncle Mike's 1/3-Acre Urban Garden



Companion plantings. Left: Swiss chard, cucumbers, and onions. Right: Dill, onions, marigolds, and tomatoes.



Left: Iceberg lettuce CAN grow in Northwest Arkansas! Right: Poppies.

Meet the Trainees

OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL

Vicki Spencer

Gardening was such an integral part of growing up in Colorado that I didn't think it was

something I needed to study. The flowers in our yard were abundant, and I could distinguish roses from peonies and marigolds from zinnias at an early age. My mother grew more vegetables than I desired, but I was thrilled when she'd ask me to pick some fresh lettuce for dinner. My grandmother's yard was filled with apple, peach, and cherry trees. Looking for a chance to climb, I always offered to pick fruit and was rewarded with applesauce, pies jelly, and more. Because of a childhood spent outdoors, I thought I learned gardening by osmosis.



As I grew up, I learned there was more to gardening than meets the eye. Fresh from college, my husband and I bought an old Victorian house buried in waist-high weeds and overgrown trees. On a limited budget, we created a small cottage garden through hard work and free transplants from family and neighbors. Denver's mayor started a community garden program around the same time, and I embraced the opportunity to save money and grow organic vegetables. I soon discovered my 75-square-foot plot was overly ambitious. Fortunately, the best gardeners I knew offered to help. My engineer father developed an irrigation system that served all twenty members of our cooperative. My mother and aunt (who introduced me to kohlrabi) helped sow seeds, weed, harvest, can, and freeze vegetables. Cooperative members shared their knowledge of organic gardening essentials. We started with good soil and practiced companion and succession planting in raised beds that accommodated weekly irrigation. The need for pest management led me to read my first gardening book. Ever since, I have continued to expand my knowledge of gardening by consulting various resources. In turn, I share what I've learned in a monthly column published in *Colorado Country Life* magazine.

My career path was as diverse as my interests. After completing a Master's in International Studies, I was privileged to teach in China soon after it opened to the West. I knew Chinese, but my daughter had the unique opportunity of starting first grade in a school where no one spoke English. Back in the states, I advised foreign students and taught university courses before taking a position with the University of Colorado. Experience administering contracts, grants, and overseeing technology transfer led to a law degree. Interest in the environment led to founding the University of Denver's Water Law Review and establishing Audubon's presence in Wyoming with numerous conservation sites and nature education centers. Later, Colorado Supreme Court Justice Hobbs invited me to clerk for two years before practicing water law in Gunnison where I fulfilled my dream of living in mountains. Then I took a position with Gunnison County Electric Association where I developed energy efficiency and renewable energy projects while completing a PhD dissertation on US-China energy policy. I returned to academia before retiring from Michigan State University.

Throughout my career, I have served on many nonprofit boards and committees and written dozens of successful grant proposals. One of my most heartfelt accomplishments

was becoming a Master Gardener in Michigan. This experience is why I immediately enrolled in the Washington County Master Gardeners course when I moved to Arkansas to be near my daughter's family. I look forward to making new friends here and learning how to garden in a completely new environment.

Karen Takemoto

I am a transplant from Hawaii. Moving to Arkansas in the mid-1980s with actual seasons, totally different trees, flowers, and birds, not to mention diet and people, took a bit of acclimation. But with some nurturing from friends, I managed to take root and even thrive.



I'm a very good grunt. Point where to dig the hole, move the mulch, pull that honeysuckle—and I do pretty well. I'm much better at digging and weeding than actually growing and nurturing plants—I forget to water, and even forget where I planted that bulb or this plant. But I'm trying to get better and hence my motivation to be a "master gardener."

I'm also dedicated to promoting native plants. Having seen the destruction that invasive, non-native plants do in Hawaii and here (honeysuckle and privet amongst many others), I try to promote and plant natives as much as I can. Pulling invasives and planting native trees, wildflowers, and grasses to feed the native birds, butterflies, and critters gives me great satisfaction. And hopefully those hardy natives won't have to rely on my poor memory to water and care for them for too long.

I have been part of the Mock Park crew for a few years. I was just their lackey until finally taking the Master Gardener classes. So now I'm a certified Mock Park grunt.

April Photo of the Month: "Flowering Shrubs"



FIRST PLACE

"Don't Worry—Be Happy!" by Pam Butler



SECOND PLACE

"Delight for the Eyes" by Kitty Sanders



THIRD PLACE
"Leatherleaf Viburnum" by Talya Boerner

Recording Your 2021 Hours

ANNETTE PIANALTO

The UA Extension Service has a new web address. To access the Master Gardener page (where you log in your hours), go to <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/default.aspx>. Please use this address when accessing the online recording site. The old web address will stop working sometime this year. The new site looks and works just like the old one!

Volunteer hours requirements for 2021 will be 20 work hours plus 20 education hours for members and trainees. **Trainee hours must be completed and recorded by November 1 and member hours are due on December 15.**

If you have any questions about recording your hours please contact me at annettepianalto@gmail.com.

Natural State Natives

MEL ZABECKI



Mulberry fruit in various stages of ripening.

The mulberry, *Morus rubra*, is a fruit that will soon be coming ripe. Do you sometimes notice trees or other plants that you get excited about and then remember to look for them each time you're in that area? I'm like that with mulberry trees. Perhaps part of my lizard brain is circuited to harken back to my ancient foraging ancestors (did humans ever forage in Poland?) and lately I'm looking up at those mulberry trees and waiting for the berries to fall.

Mulberry trees give a plethora of riches. The berries are nutritious and were mentioned as important foodstuffs for American Indians by early explorers, including some from the Hernando de Soto expedition in Arkansas. The berries can also be used as a dye, but the result is not as eye catching as you might assume, as the colors are very muted. The leaves were used as medicine to treat gut problems, including worms—yes, before food sterilization and other measures to make food safe for us, dogs weren't the only creatures to get worms. The inner bark of young trees can be processed into yarn for weaving, and the wood itself has been found in postholes at archeological sites. This means that there were posts from house architecture sunk into the ground and fragments of wood preserved enough to be identified to the species level!

In searching my files, I also found reports of pollen and phytolith analysis identifying the presence of mulberry. While I've mentioned paleoethnobotany before, I've focused mostly on archeologists using charred botanical remains for identification. Pollen grains and phytoliths survive long after a plant has rotted away, even when it wasn't burnt. You've probably heard of pollen (achoo!) but phytoliths are little structures made of silica that had been absorbed from the soil by the plant during life. Each plant creates different shapes of silica structures and those structures are easily identified by archeologists (with microscopes of course). The grains of pollen and structures of phytoliths are quite beautiful. Search for images of them on the internet!

Mulberry has been a useful resource for all indigenous people in this region. The Choctaw have an entire month (around this time) named after the mulberry (see https://www.choctawnation.com/sites/default/files/Iti%20Fabvssa_May2019.pdf) and that's a testament to its importance through history!

Thank You, 2021 Mentors!



Photo by Nick Youngson/picpedia.org

Geri Alvis,* Leslie Bailey, Chris Bell, Kathryn Birkhead, Talya Boerner, Wilma Bonds,* Steve Brizzi,* Karla Caraway, Paula Dutton, Nena Evans, Susan Gardner,* Karen Hanna-Towne, Lorraine Heartfeld, Darielle James, Kathy Launder, Steve Lisle,* Linda Morrow, Lisa Owen, Annette Pianalto, Marty Powers,* Caite Ramos,* Glen Robillard, Nancy Sanders, Nancy Sloan, Linda Smith,* Jim Sposato,* Karen Takemoto, Lynette Terrell, Neta Winston, Susan Young,* Mel Zabecki.

*mentored two trainees

Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

June 1, 5:00–8:00 p.m. every Tuesday night through August 31. TERRIFIC TUESDAY NIGHTS. [Botanical Garden of the Ozarks](#). Free admission. Volunteers needed!

June 2. MASTER NATURALISTS PLANT SALE. Details with an order form will be available in May.

June 3, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: SWEET

POTATOES. Zoom program hosted by Krista Quinn, Faulkner County Extension Agent. [Meeting Registration](#)

June 10–11. STATE MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE. Virtual; hosted by Craighead County Master Gardeners. (Registration closed.)

June 17, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: GREEN BEANS. Zoom program hosted by Krista Quinn, Faulkner County Extension Agent. [Meeting Registration](#)

June 19, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. GARDEN TOURS AND MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE. 100 Main Street, Harrison, AR. Free admission. Hosted by [Boone County Master Gardeners](#).

June 21, 12:00–1:00 p.m. MASTER GARDENER MONDAY. Zoom program hosted by Bernie Kurz.

June 26, 1:00 p.m. BOOK EVENT: TREES, SHRUBS, AND WOODY VINES OF ARKANSAS. J. B. and Johnelle Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center, 3400 N. 40th Street, Springdale. Free admission. Hosted by [Ozark Society-Sugar Creek Chapter](#).

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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