

Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • March 2021



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Welcome to the 2021 Speaker Series

KAREN HANNA-TOWNE

WCMG Vice President

Let me begin by saying how thrilled I am to be your vice president and program chair this year. You may recall that last fall I sent a message to everyone asking for your input on this year's speaker topics. I received many great suggestions and we now have eight qualified speakers who have agreed to speak on the topics you recommended. Madeline Samec from Compton Gardens will be our first speaker on March 2, and I'll share her details below. Upcoming topics include healing gardens, removal of invasive species, koi carp, the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, growing natives from seed, botanical gardens and the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust. I've also kept a list of additional recommended topics which I'll pass on to next year's VP.

Elizabeth Hale recommended that we have a session of poetry reading. This suggestion warmed my heart as I am a great fan of poetry, and I know several of you are, also. Rather than devoting a session to poetry I've decided to read a poem just before each speaker begins his or her program. Our president, another devotee of poetry, gave me the thumb's up!

I'm looking forward to hearing from a very diverse group of speakers over the coming months.

March 2 Speaker: Madeline Samec, Compton Gardens and Arboretum Site Manager

Madeline grew up an Army brat and has been gardening from the moment her parents let her play in the dirt. While her family was stationed in Europe her parents took her to every garden, castle and park. She was once lost by her parents in a castle garden and was later found asleep under some rose bushes. "Flowers bring happiness and magic to life," as she says and she just can't get enough.



When her father retired, Madeline's family settled in north Florida and this is where most of her gardening education took place. After college she volunteered in several local gardens as well as her parents' and her own garden, learning by doing. As her passion for gardening grew, she wanted to do more. Madeline went to work for the St. Johns County (Florida) Cooperative Extension Service in the horticulture department and studied everything she could get her hands on about flowers and vegetables. Madeline became a Master Gardener and soon was teaching the Master Gardener Program. When her son went off to college in Arkansas she fell in love with the Ozarks! It was time for a change of landscape and new gardening challenges to learn/master. Madeline joined the team as the Compton Gardens site manager and is loving every minute of this Ozark native flower garden.

March 2 Speaker's Topic: "Learning to Love Moss"

Madeline will talk about the beauty and practicality of moss as a garden feature. She'll give us step-by-step instructions for planting moss, as well as an overview of the types of moss. Many Ozark sites are perfect for moss; many already have lots of moss! Please tune in to the March Zoom meeting at 6:30 p.m. to "Learn to Love Moss"!

Taking Care of Business

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

January 2021 Treasurer's
Report

February 2021 Meeting
Minutes

From Your President

KATHRYN BIRKHEAD

Dear friends,

Earlier in February, I got my second COVID vaccination, and while I realize that this doesn't mean I can go back to doing everything that I did before the pandemic, it's one step in the journey back to a more normal time. I'm grateful for the people who have worked long hours to develop vaccines, have handled the logistics of getting it here, have developed a system that made it available and let me sign up for it, and finally have put it into me. Plus I'm grateful that I was able to go before this horrendous weather hit.



Your board and committee members have not stopped working during the extreme cold we're experiencing. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to make our organization work for all of us. Some are working on setting us up with a more reliable website; some are interviewing prospective trainees, learning more about them and connecting them with mentors; others are developing a plan for continuity to make sure nothing is lost in transitions; some are gathering information and planning a virtual 30th anniversary party; and much, much more.

We don't yet know what will be required this year for volunteer hours. The board and project chairs will probably recommend requirements in two different time frames: one to take us from March to June 30, and another from July 1 to the end of the growing season. That's because the Cooperative Extension Service may move us from Phase II to Phase III, which doesn't carry as many restrictions, some time after its March 31 meeting. Stay

tuned!

And may you stay warm and healthy!

WCMG Turns Thirty in April!



Photo by James Petts, [Wikimedia Commons](#)

We're gearing up for a birthday celebration at our April 6 meeting. Be sure to join by Zoom at 6:30 p.m. We are expecting several special guests as well as messages from others and a slide show featuring our organization by its three decades of projects and activities. It's not too late to send us photos and memories to wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com.

Be looking for a Mailchimp message that will contain an order form for some special 30th birthday WCMG items that you can purchase.

Also look for the March issue of *CitiScapes* when you're at the grocery story. WCMG will be in there with an article and photos.

Uncle Mike's Veggie Garden Tips

MIKE STANDROD

When venturing out from the recent long freeze and 10+ inches of snow, you'll find a veggie plethora at your local nursery, farm store, and big-box stores: seed potatoes, onion sets/plants, bulbs, berry plants, and of course, seeds. By now you should be planning,

along with starting seed (if you haven't already) or buying cold weather transplants, to baby, harden off, and plant when the weather warms.

MID to LATE MARCH. Prepare your garden (work compost into the soil) and plant cold weather veggies, especially greens and lettuces. If you have extra protection such as cold frames or row covers, you can plant a bit earlier.



Below are **cool weather plants** (generally in planting order) to consider for your garden. Sow lettuces, spinach, and most greens directly. You can “cheat” and get a head start by setting out a few transplants.

- **LETTUCES.** Consider Oakleaf, Black-Seeded Simpson, Butterhead Bibb, Buttercrunch, Little Gem Romaine and prepackaged mesclun mixes. Avoid Iceberg varieties. They do not like Northwest Arkansas.
- **SPINACH.** Consider Bloomsdale Long Standing, Indian Summer Hybrid, and Persius Hybrid. Avoid Malabar spinach. It is not really spinach but a fast-growing ornamental vine with a funky taste to most.
- **SWISS CHARD.** Consider Fordhook, or for bursting color in your veggies, plant Bright Lights.
- **KALES.** Consider Prizm, Dwarf Blue Curled-leaf, Red Winter, Red Russian. Don't eat the ornamental kales you bought from the nursery/big box stores last fall; you'll be sorely disappointed. The key word is “ornamental.”
- **CARROTS, RADISHES.** You can direct sow.
- **POTATOES.** In this area Yukon Gold, Kennebec, and Pontiac Red are the most popular and easiest to grow. However there are many exotic varieties available by mail order. Be bold and try a few.
- **CABBAGE, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, BEETS.** You can set transplants out in late March.

I prefer raised beds three to four feet wide. But if you plant rows, here's a tip: Run rows east and west. Plant short crops to the south and tallest crops to the North. This maximizes the southern sun exposure and avoids plants shading others.



Scenes from Uncle Mike's Garden. Top row, left: Fall kale survived! Right: Hellebore (Lenten rose). Bottom row: Frozen fountain.

BGO Volunteer Training



Botanical Gardens of the Ozarks (BGO), 4703 N. Crossover Rd., Fayetteville
Volunteer Recruitment in the BGO Event Hall

Tuesday, March 16, 11:00 a.m.–Noon

Saturday, March 20, 11:00 a.m.–Noon

Come learn about all of the volunteer opportunities at BGO. Due to limited space, we ask that if you are currently a BGO volunteer, please do not attend. COVID guidelines will be in place: wear a mask and observe social distancing

Thank you!

Patsy Louk and Gayle Howard
BGO WCMG project chairs

Meet the Trainees

LYNETTE TERRELL

Nancy Workman Ballard

I appreciate this opportunity to become a Master Gardener—thank you to those of you who have shared your time, advice, and love of gardening with me.

Although many of you know me, you may not know that I am a born and bred Fayetteville native. I have lived here most of my life with the exception of living a few years in Jonesboro where my dad's job took us. I graduated with my bachelor's degree in early childhood/elementary education from ASU, but, make no doubt about it, I am a Razorback through and through. After graduation, I came back to Fayetteville to teach at Asbell Elementary School. I went on to complete my



Masters degree in education and a reading specialist certification from the UA. When our boys were young, I was the director of Community Preschool, and later taught at Vandergriff Elementary School. Just a few weeks ago, I spent a beautiful sunny afternoon on Senior Walk at the UA with old friends as we looked up our names and degrees.

My gardening interest was inspired by my Workman grandparents— they grew mostly vegetables but also fields of beautiful flowers, and I have wonderful old photos of these. From her garden, my grandmother canned lots of vegetables. As newlyweds, my husband and I lived in the country near Hogeye where we had a big garden. Hoping to be like my Workman grandmother, I was excited to try my hand at canning. But, sadly, I quickly found that it wasn't for me—my canned green beans were absolutely inedible!

What I absolutely love about gardening is getting my hands in the dirt. Forget the gloves! I am especially interested in growing cut flowers to put in vases in my home. Most recently, I am interested in using native plants and shrubs around our house.

Aside from gardening, my other interests include working with children of all ages, Fayetteville Mardi Gras, hiking, reading, and crafts. In fact, my passion during COVID has been rock painting. I've painted over thirty in about nine months. Many of my neighbors, friends, and family now have a special rock in their yard.

I am excited about becoming a Master Gardener, and I look forward to learning more about plants and meeting those of you whom I don't know already. Thank you!

Nena Evans

I currently live in Fayetteville. I was born in Rogers but spent most of my childhood in Bergman, Arkansas. After graduating from Bergman High, I obtained my B.S. in environmental studies from the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville.



My love of gardening and organic agriculture began at a young age, as we always had a family garden growing up. I have fond memories of picking green beans, snap peas, tomatoes, strawberries, and many other yummy fruits and veggies throughout my childhood. I always treasured the time spent in the garden and then later in the kitchen with my mother preserving our harvests. To this day, I firmly believe that my mother makes the BEST blueberry jam.

This love of good food, nature, and hard work continued through college as I began my service with the Arkansas GardenCorps. I helped develop a half-acre organic teaching garden at the University of the Ozarks' garden and served there for two years with GardenCorps. During this time, I tended the crops, managed volunteers and work study students in the garden, sold produce at the local farmers' market, and led "Cooking Matters" programs for local elementary students. After I completed my second year of

service at this site, I moved to Northwest Arkansas to further pursue my love of organic agriculture. I secured a job as a farm hand at Cobblestone Farms in Fayetteville, where I participated in every aspect of small-scale organic vegetable farming and sales. During this time, I also worked as a cashier at Ozark Natural Foods (ONF). After working at Cobblestone/ONF for a year, I transitioned to a job at Feed Communities (also in Fayetteville) as the gardening specialist and later transitioned into a program manager role. In these roles, I managed two community gardens and worked with the Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese in gardening and nutrition outreach. In the fall of 2019, Feed Communities merged with the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, transitioning my role one more time. Currently, I am the program coordinator for gardening and nutrition education at the food bank. I manage a quarter-acre organic teaching garden at our warehouse in Springdale, a community garden at our office in Fayetteville, work with partner organizations who are interested in starting their own gardens, and oversee all of our nutrition programming.

Through all of my life experiences, my love of good food, nature, and hard work has continued to grow. My favorite thing to grow in the garden is sugar snap peas (so tasty and delicious)! I love sharing my passion for gardening with others and watching their own love and appreciation develop and grow. It is amazing to see the joy and pride on a person's face when they are able to harvest and prepare food they have grown themselves.

In my free time, I enjoy hiking, mountain biking, reading, and doing puzzles. I have one cat, Shadow, and am engaged to an amazing man who also shares my love of organic gardening. We are working towards having our own farm with a vegetable-forward farm-to-table food truck/restaurant.

Linda Hall

Thank you for letting me join the Master Gardener Group. I grew up in Wyoming and Montana on a ranch. My mom always had a garden and put up a lot of produce for the winter. If we were punished in the summer, we had to pull weeds in the garden. Therefore, when I had my own house, I didn't like yard work.

John and I moved to our home in Arkansas in February of 1988. We have five acres and raise some cows. Now I love to garden and have several flower beds. I spend as much time outside as possible. The growing season is a lot longer in Arkansas.

Since I retired, I have joined the Farmington Garden Club. I have helped plant a new butterfly garden and help water it and water flowers at one of the schools in Farmington. I am looking forward to helping with the Mock Park project and whatever else.

I love to walk, watch sunrises and sunsets, birds, and nature. Since I retired, we have spent



part of the summer in the mountains in Wyoming and Colorado. I also have been participating in the Extension Get Fit program (a community-based strength training program targeted to midlife and older Arkansans) for several years. I am a certified trainer.

I also belong to the Savoy EHC (Extension Homemakers Club), and one of our projects is helping enter the entries into the computer and paying the exhibitors. I belong to the Prairie Grove American Legion Auxiliary. I helped put the flags out on Veterans Day on the veterans' graves in the Prairie Grove Cemetery. Then in December we made Christmas wreaths and put them on the veterans' graves.

January Photo of the Month: "Potpourri"

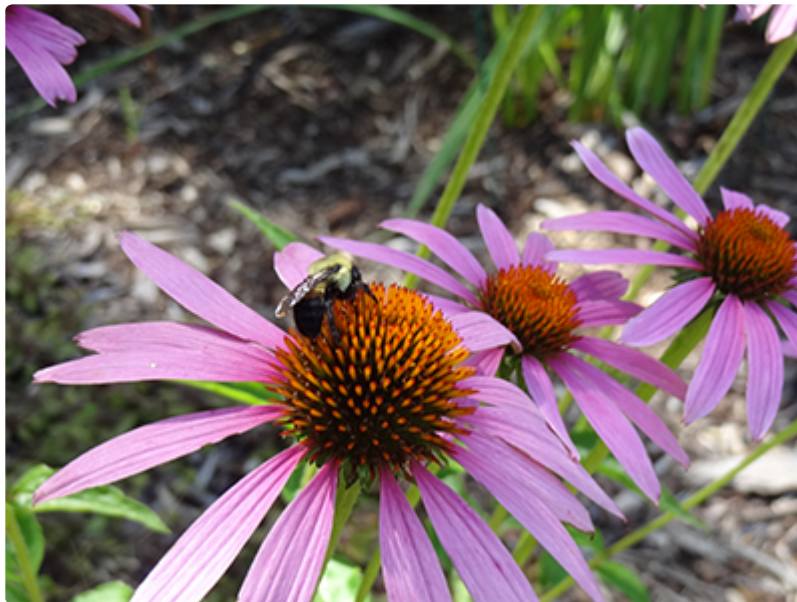


FIRST PLACE

"Remembering Summer" by DeLee Holbert



SECOND PLACE
"Frosted Echinacea" by Talya Boerner



THIRD PLACE
"Bee Hoping for Spring" by Kathy Launder

Natural State Natives

MEL ZABECKI



Coralberry

Symphoricarpos orbiculatus, a Latin name I didn't know until today, is coralberry or buckbrush. If you are a hiker, coralberry is about the only color in the woods by the end of winter. In the fall, it could be confused with beautyberry, but once you see the two together, you'll see that beautyberry has more berries per cluster. Beautyberries also don't persist on the plants through the winter like coralberry. It's also called Indian currant but the berries are not good for humans to eat because of the toxic compound saponin found in the entire plant. American Indians somehow figured out that this toxin could be used to stun fish in small ponds or streams for easy gathering. Saponin has antifungal and antimicrobial properties, which explains why the American Indians were and are known to use the inner bark as an eye medicine for sore or inflamed eyes.

[The Morton Arboretum website](#) says that this plant "thrives on neglect"! I got one at Pine Ridge Gardens in London, AR, last year and threw it in my terrible front yard landscaping with clay and rocks, forgot to water it for months, and sure enough, it has beautiful berries on it! So, it indeed thrives on neglect. While looking for info on this plant, I came across a new resource that looks simple but has lots of info: [Native American Ethnobotany](#). Check it out!



In Memory

Betty Swope - WCMG 1998

Lois Slusarek - WCMG 2003

Reuben Blood - WCMG 2009

Just Us

JUDY SMITH

Book Review

Anita Bukey

FOUNDING GARDENERS: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation

by Andrea Wulf

Sitting by the fireplace these long winter nights, hot cocoa and gardening books at hand, I was motivated to share a favorite gardening book with Master Gardeners.

In *Founding Gardeners*, author Andrea Wulf leads readers on a most engaging and educational romp through the landscape designs of four of our most beloved founding fathers—George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. She asks how their political opinions influenced the layout of their properties. What did they learn from their carriage rides together visiting gardens and estates in England? And for history buffs, Wulf throws in a large dollop of American history.



George Washington's Mount Vernon

George Washington insisted that only native American plants (conifers, ash, tulip poplars, honeysuckle) should be put into his serpentine-designed landscape. His home faced the west as he felt that was the future of the country. He discontinued planting tobacco and experimented with various forms of fertilizer. He used seeds from England while favoring neat hedgerows and scythed lawns with hidden “necessaries.” Ironically and sadly, Washington’s love of daily inspections of his property led to a chill after riding through a torrent of rain and snow and to his death the next day.



Home of John Adams

John Adams, the crusty, eccentric, frugal New England Yankee inherited forty acres, eschewed the formal elegance of his predecessor and opted for practical kitchen gardens of vegetables and fruits. He was happiest when mucking in the spring Massachusetts muddy soil. Manure was one of his favorite subjects. Like Thomas Jefferson, Adams ordered exotic vegetables from Europe and experimented with grafting fruit trees, especially pear trees. Upon moving from Philadelphia to Washington, DC, he saw that the leaky White

House was nearly uninhabitable. There was no time during his one term to design landscapes. He did, however, insist that trees be planted and the ground leveled.



Thomas Jefferson's Monticello

In 1809, after twelve years as vice president and president, Jefferson rushed home to the red clay of Monticello. Eager to fulfill his elaborate, extensive (and expensive) landscaping plans for his home, he began by hauling in tons of soil to alter the topography. Ms. Wulf includes diagrams of landscapes with roundabouts encircling large trees (aspens, oaks, maples, dogwoods among many other species), shrubs (lilac, honeysuckle, allspice, rhododendron), scores of experimental vegetables (every type of bean), and over 125 varieties of fruits (peaches, gooseberries, currants). Jefferson ordered hundreds of seeds and plants from Europe and Asia, keeping meticulous records of his successes and failures.



James Madison's Montpelier

As James Madison's presidency was beset with serious problems—the War of 1812 and the burning of the White House by the British—Ms. Wulf turns to discussing trees (tulip

poplar, chestnut, walnut, beech and oak) and life at Montpelier, the Madison home in Virginia. Jasmine, chinaberry, ever-blooming roses, gardenias, and sweetbriar scented the air. A thick forest enclosed the lawn. Madison hired a French gardener and completely overhauled the landscape. Interestingly, slave quarters were built in the middle of the small, elegant lawn so the Madisons and the slaves could be near each other. As Dolly Madison was jolly and outgoing, this was probably due to her influence.

When the time came, these founding fathers retired from politics and returned to their greatest joy—being farmers and gardeners.

Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

March 3, 6:00–7:00 p.m. SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). Virtual, register at [Shiitake Mushrooms | Botanical Garden of the Ozarks](#). Cost is \$10 members/\$15 non-members.

March 7, 1:00 or 3:00 p.m. SUCCULENT 101 MAKE AND TAKE CLASS. BGO. In-person, register at [Succulent 101 Make and Take Class | Botanical Garden of the Ozarks](#). Cost is \$35 members/\$50 non-members.

March 5, 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. BLOOMING SPRING IN THE OZARKS. Mount Magazine State Park. In-person, register at <https://olli.uark.edu/>. Cost is \$25 members/\$40 non-members.

March 13, 10:00–11:00 a.m. BEYOND MILKWEED: A NATIVE PLANT CLASS FOR POLLINATORS. BGO. Virtual, register at [Beyond Milkweed: A Native Plant Class for Pollinators | Botanical Garden of the Ozarks](#). Cost is \$10 members/\$15 non-members.

March 17, 6:00–7:30 p.m. DIGGING DEEPER: LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVES. BGO. Virtual, register at [Digging Deeper: Landscaping with Natives | Botanical Garden of the Ozarks](#). Cost is \$15 members/\$20 non-members.

March 29–April 3, by appointment only, Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m.–Noon. 2021 NATIVE TREE AND PLANT SALE. Compton Gardens, Bentonville. In-person, book your 30 minute shopping appointment at [Native Tree and Plant Sale | The Peel Compton Foundation](#)

March 31, 6:00–7:00 p.m. COMPANION PLANTING: USING NATIVE PLANTS IN VEGETABLE GARDENS. BGO. Virtual, register at [Companion Planting: Using Native Plants in Vegetable Gardens | Botanical Garden of the Ozarks](#). Cost is \$10 members/\$15 non-members.

April 1, 1:00–4:00 p.m. OZARK WILDFLOWER HIKE. Ozark Natural Science Center. In-person, register at <https://olli.uark.edu/>. Cost is \$39 members/\$54 non-members.

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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WCMG Facebook Group (private)



WCMG Facebook Page (public)



WCMG Website



UA Extension Service Website

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information or any other legally protected status and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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