



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • April 2022



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## April Meeting

**Mark your calendars for our next monthly meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, April 5, at 6:30 p.m.** Our guest speaker is Jenifer Royer, lead horticulturist for the City of Fayetteville. She will present a slide program on the Fayetteville Square Gardens.

What goes into creating the Square Gardens? Jenifer will discuss the planning process as well as growing, planting, and maintenance of the Square and other city gardens.



If there are specific items you'd like for Jenifer to cover in the presentation, email her at [jroyer@fayetteville-ar.gov](mailto:jroyer@fayetteville-ar.gov).

Colin will send the Zoom link a couple of days before the meeting.

*Photo courtesy Jenifer Royer*

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## Taking Care of Business

We will vote on the following at our March 1 business meeting.

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March 2022 Meeting Minutes

February 2022 Treasurer's Report

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## From Your President

**KAREN HANNA-TOWNE**

### **Increasing Your Sunshine**

One of my gardening struggles is with sunshine: I don't have enough of it. Like most of the Ozarks, our property is covered with mature members of the oak-hickory forest that provides varying degrees of shade, and not so many sunny spots. We have a small sunny area for a veggie garden and I've made the most of that, but a full third of my fenced garden is committed to long-term crops including asparagus and blackberries.

So, I was very excited when I watched a video produced by Joe Lamp'l, with Craig LeHoullier as his guest. It was about gardening in straw bales—the old-fashioned

rectangular ones. It looks easy enough. You just prepare the bales with either a chemical or organic fertilizer, then plant seeds or transplants in a soil/compost mixture in holes on top of the bale. Since the drainage is very high, daily watering is recommended, but you can't overwater with this method. All that water does wash away nutrients, so ongoing fertilizing is recommended.



What's the beauty of this? You can place the bales anywhere you like—including that nice sunny area on many of our driveways! Mr. LeHoullier says he has had up to 200 bales on his driveway. The same can be done with veggies in pots or grow bags and for perennials these can be moved indoors over the winter. The Center for Arkansas Farms and Food has been growing blackberries in grow bags for several years. Unfortunately, straw bales usually deteriorate by the end of the season. Containers are definitely a trend as there are now varieties of vegetables specifically bred for them! It seems like a great solution to a locally widespread problem.

What are the downsides? Well, your neighbors might not like to look of the straw bales, but pots and grow bags would be a little tidier. It's unlikely that your driveway is fenced so the deer will have easier access to your plants and produce, although deer sprays can be effective. If you're used to an irrigation system, that will be a little more difficult to rig up with bales, pots or grow bags—but not impossible. And, some perennial crops, such as strawberries, might not yield for as many years as they would if they were in the ground. However, if you're desperate for access to sun this could be the answer! By the way, Craig LeHoullier has a book on the topic.

On another topic, we are trying a new format for our meetings. Traditionally we have conducted our business meeting prior to our speaker. We did this to ensure that we would have a quorum when voting on the minutes and treasurer's reports. Last month our speaker asked to present first and we accommodated him. When we transitioned to the business meeting, we only lost a few members and we had plenty of people left online for a quorum. The Executive Committee discussed this at our March meeting and we're going to keep the new format for a while and see how it works. So, if you want to hear the speaker, please log in early.

The board has also been talking about the glorious possibility of being able to meet in person. In fact, we want to be able to offer both options, with some members attending in person and some at home on Zoom. We're working on the details now and hope that this becomes a serious option sometime soon! Stay tuned!

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## Natives Naturally

KITTY SANDERS



**Purple coneflower.** Photo by Kitty Sanders

### **Gardening for Critters**

As you plan your spring garden, consider planting for monarchs and other butterflies and you will be planting for many pollinators. Almost all the nectar plants that support monarchs will attract bees, wasps, flies, hummingbirds, beetles, and other creatures. Many of the bees and wasps that will be drawn to your garden are solitary. Happy news for gardeners and children; that means few, if any, of these sting.

Monarch favorites are certain varieties of agastache, liatris, and cardinal flower. At the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, we have found Agastache 'Black Adder' to be a real magnet for butterflies. This plant is covered in small insects all summer. (When purchasing an agastache, do your research. Those with the longer tubes are better suited for hummingbirds.) Liatris, or blazing star, is a lovely, spiked plant that is a favorite of butterflies and bees. Two varieties native to Arkansas are button blazing star (*L. aspera*), and scaly blazing star (*L. squarrosa*). Both add visual interest to the garden. Cardinal flowers (*Lobelia cardinalis*) provide nectar for both butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds.

One of the best native plants for monarchs is the purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). It is important to select the native as several of the hybrids seem to have had the nectar bred out of them. Also, flowers that are doubles are often arranged in such a way that pollinators cannot reach any nectar that might be there.



**Cliff goldenrod.** Photo by Kitty Sanders

Other important monarch plants include the native thistle, goldenrod species, and asters. The native thistle behaves better than the invasive thistle. The native blooms later in the summer and can be distinguished from the others by the white coating on the underside of the leaf. People also shy away from goldenrod, but there are many that are suitable for backyard gardens. Gray goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*), which isn't gray at all, is an upright plant that reaches two to three feet. Cliff goldenrod (*S. drummondii*) has a lovely arching habit and grows between two and three feet tall. According to Doug Tallamy, goldenrods provide food and shelter for 115 species of butterflies and moths in the mid-Atlantic region and in his area 11 species of bees feed solely on goldenrod. Remember, this is not what sets off our fall allergies.

Especially important in the fall are the asters, some of which bloom into November. In our area, the New England aster and aromatic aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) provide important sustenance for monarchs and other pollinators. There are beautiful asters that don't provide much for insects, so it is safer to plant native. Natives also bloom at the time the native insects need them. So, using them in your garden provides more benefit for the declining pollinator populations.



*Aromatic aster. Photo by Kitty Sanders*

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## WCMG News

**A new hours reporting website is being created** by the Little Rock office and will not be available until later this spring. Until further notice, keep track of your hours on paper or [download and fill in this hours log from days gone by](#). Watch your email for further information about the new hours reporting website and for further instructions on how to use it.

**Watch your email for the next state conference newsletter.** It will contain information about the in-person silent auction, the virtual auction, and the garden market. The auctions and market are great ways to pick up something new for your house or garden while supporting Master Gardeners and local craftspeople.

**By now you should have received an email from WCMG website committee chair Kitty Sanders** announcing the birth of the snazzy new WCMG website. [Click here to check it out!](#) Reminder—the "Member Portal" password is Zinnia2022.

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## Sanctioned Project Highlight: BGO

MARY McCULLY



Perhaps inspired by the Oscars (minus fisticuffs), Mary McCully created a short video of volunteers—one WCMG and one potential WCMG—working at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks recently. Click on the image above to open the video in YouTube.

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## Meet the Trainees

**OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL**

### **Keri Fultz**

I am Keri Fultz, married to a wonderful husband of nineteen years, with three daughters and five dogs. I have been an LPN for twenty years. I work full time at UAMS Family Medicine where I am a care coordinator. I love nursing and helping people. Geriatrics is my specialty. I have worked with geriatrics most of my nursing career.

My faith is a BIG part of who I am. I am an active member of Pathway Baptist Church, where I am the pre-K coordinator. I love teaching the little ones. They can absorb so much. I try to incorporate plants into our lessons whenever I am able.

I come from a long line of women who love plants. I am told my great grandmother could make anything grow. My grandmothers on both sides love plants and gardening and I always helped them when I could. My mother was a wonderful gardener. I always helped her in her yard, so I guess that's how my love of plants became. I love working in the dirt. It's very calming and relaxing. My favorite plants to grow are herbs and vegetables. I work a lot in my vegetable garden in the summer. I like to see things grow from seed and watch them flourish. As a nurse, I believe food is medicine—so plants are a big part of your health!



**Valerie McClendon**

Hi, I'm Valerie McClendon and a beginner Master Gardener. I'm originally from west Texas but love living and gardening here in the Natural State. While I originally came to Fayetteville for law school, I've settled in and made this area my home; I married my husband (a fellow classmate), joined Master Gardeners, and recently volunteered for the City of Fayetteville Environmental Action Committee as a committee member.

I love being a Master Gardener. I enjoy new adventures in gardening, from tackling projects like an indoor tea garden to learning about butterfly management from Kitty Sanders at BGO. In the future, I hope to establish a wellness garden and guide forest bathing walks.

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## February Photo of the Month

### *Potpourri*



**FIRST PLACE**

**"Reminder of Sunshine" by DeLee Holbert**

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**SECOND PLACE**

**"Pay Attention to See Me" by Sarah Teague**

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**THIRD PLACE**

**"Logs at Shiloh" by Kathryn Birkhead**

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## Meet Our New *Garden Thyme* Columnist



**Editor's note:** Meet Sarah Shell Teague, a recent transfer from Union County. A former magazine editor, Sarah has volunteered to write a native plant column for the *Garden Thyme*. Sarah wants to personalize her column by interviewing members who have native plant gardens or are just getting started using natives. If you'd like to talk to Sarah about natives, please contact her at [cloud9associate@gmail.com](mailto:cloud9associate@gmail.com).

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I joined Union County MGs in 2017 then looked up WCMGs even before my husband, Jeff, and I moved to Fayetteville last fall. I'm a retired magazine editor and adjunct college professor, Crystal Bridges volunteer, and serve on several statewide art and education boards. We have three grown sons. I also enjoy reading, water sports, outdoors/hiking (#boymom), learning about art, and travel.

I'm an obsessive recycler. In fact, I have scads of saved bubble wrap from our move if anyone needs some. Our NWA home has a dozen walnut trees, but my zeal for using them all was dampened by the complications of walnut harvesting. Happy to share bags to bushels next fall with anyone who contacts me.

From my father, a vegetable/fruit grower, I inherited an abiding love and respect for trees. Both my grandmothers cultivated noteworthy yard gardens. I loved being able to bring in natural arrangements year-round in my El Dorado beds, where I tended pollinators, pass-alongs, natives, and family hand-downs, all deer-resistant! I look forward to seeing what will sprout in our current yard as the seasons progress.

I have found MGs to be the most efficient, effective, and helpful group in any category and am excited to continue learning, growing, and making new "dirt friends."

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# "Garden Gate" Tour Highlight

**BELVALEE JURKOVICH**

*This is the third in a series of articles about the local gardens that will be featured in the "Garden Gate" tour on June 4. Washington County Master Gardeners have taken on the tour as a sanctioned project and this will be our first effort.*



**At Belvadere, the garden of Belvalee Jurkovich.** *Photo courtesy Belvalee Jurkovich*

A place from which one can gaze upon a beautiful view.

We started working on the view before building our retreat house. Looking out the glass wall of the studio one will see the bridal berm. This berm has a seven-foot arch that we designed and built hoping that it would cover some beautiful couples as they exchange their vows.

The swallowtail, common buckeye, eastern tiger swallowtail, great spangled fritillary, mourning cloak, and red-spotted purple admiral are some of the butterflies that grace the flower berm.

Looking further down the path, this view ends at the waterfall berm. With all the rocks from our land strategically placed to enhance the pond, the dragonflies, tadpoles, and various birds flit about in total bliss.



**The bridal berm at Belvadere.** *Photo courtesy Belvalee Jurkovich*

Looking further down the path, this view ends at the waterfall berm. With all the rocks from our land strategically placed to enhance the pond, the dragonflies, tadpoles, and various birds flit about in total bliss.

Looking toward the barn is a vegetable and flower garden full of peonies, dahlias, blueberries, and blackberries. We designed and built tuteurs to place here and there in this combo garden and enjoy the morning glories scrambling over and covered with butterflies!

The iris beds in their rock gardens must not be forgotten!

What about the shade garden lending charm to the repurposed "she shed"?

Do come. Create a memory and be inspired to dig in the dirt.



At Belvadere. Photo courtesy Belvalee Jurkovich

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## Gardening and Community Events

**PAM BUTLER**

**REGISTRATION FOR ARKANSAS MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE CONTINUES THROUGH APRIL 18.**

**APRIL 1–3. MOREL HUNTING WORKSHOPS.** Ozark Natural Science Center, Huntsville. Ticket prices vary. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 2, 6:00 p.m. BASICS OF BOTANY. PART 1, PLANT IDENTIFICATION TERMINOLOGY.** Arkansas Native Plant Society. Held via Zoom. Free. Register by emailing [ANPS.Programs@gmail.com](mailto:ANPS.Programs@gmail.com).

**APRIL 3, 10:00 a.m. COMPOSTING WITH THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE.** Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). Free for BGO members and Fayetteville residents/\$10 for others. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 4, 10:30–11:30 a.m. THE BIG SWITCH TO SUSTAINABLE GARDENING.** Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) program. Drake Field, Fayetteville. \$19 OLLI member \$34 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 7, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. HERP-FRIENDLY LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.** Wild Ones Ozark Chapter. Springdale Public Library. Free. No registration required.

**APRIL 7, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: BEETS.** Zoom program by UADA Extension Service staff. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 7, 4:30 or 6:00 p.m. RAIN BARREL MAKE AND TAKE WORKSHOP.** BGO. \$35 members/\$45 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 9, 10:00–11 a.m. BOTANY OF THE GRASSLANDS AND WETLANDS.** Peel Compton Foundation. Osage Park, Bentonville. \$10. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 9, 10:00–11:00 a.m. SAVING MONARCH BUTTERFLIES.** Eureka Springs Community Center. Eureka Springs. Free. No registration needed. [More information.](#)

**APRIL 10, 1:00–2:30 p.m. FIGGING 101.** BGO. \$15 members/\$25 non-members. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 11, 12:00–1:00 p.m. SELECTION OF NATIVE WOODY PLANTS FOR ARKANSAS LANDSCAPES.** Urban Forestry Council Spring Seminar. Held via Zoom. Free. [Registration information](#)

**APRIL 14, 6:00–7:00 p.m. VIRTUAL BUTTERFLY GARDENING.** Program by WCMG and BGO Butterfly House mentor Kitty Sanders. BGO. Free for BGO members/\$10 non-members. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 16, 9:00–10:00 a.m. BUSY BEAVERS.** Peel-Compton Foundation. Osage Park, Bentonville. \$10. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 23, 10:00–11:00 a.m. BIRDS OF THE GRASSLANDS AND WETLANDS.** Peel-Compton Foundation. Osage Park, Bentonville. \$10. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 24, 1:00–5:00 p.m. EARTH DAY FESTIVAL.** BGO. Free for BGO members/nonmembers: \$10 adults, \$5 kids. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 28, 8:00–11:00 a.m. SPRING MIGRANT BIRD WALKS.** OLLI program. Location TBD. \$25 OLLI member/\$40 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 29–30. SPRING PLANT SALE.** April 29, 5:00–8:00 p.m. members only. April 30, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. for the public. BGO. Free admission.

**APRIL 29 and MAY 6, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. NATIVE PLANT ECOLOGY.** \$25 OLLI program. \$25 OLLI member/\$40 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

**APRIL 29–MAY 1. NWA HOME SHOW.** NWA Convention Center, Springdale. \$6. [Registration information.](#)

## LOOKING AHEAD . . .

### MAY 18–21. ARKANSAS MASTER GARDENER STATE

**CONFERENCE.** Springdale Holiday Inn and Convention Center. It's an "Ozark Adventure" hosted by the WCMGs!

**JUNE 4. WCMG "GARDEN GATE" TOUR.** A fundraiser for Washington County Master Gardeners featuring tours of local gardens.

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## Contact Information

The *Garden Thyme* email address is [wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com). Please use this address for submissions and for questions and comments specific to the newsletter. For other needs, please contact the appropriate officer or chairperson as listed in your WCMG Member Resource Guide.

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

[Judy Smith](#), managing editor/submissions; [Mary McCully](#), editor/submissions and videos; [Pam Butler](#), reporter; [Olivia Harrington](#), reporter; [Diana Oliver](#), reporter; [Lynette Terrell](#), reporter; [Susan Young](#), production assistant.

Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith or Mary McCully.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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*Banner photo of thyme courtesy [Lucy Meskill/flickr.com](#)*

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WCMG Facebook Group (private)



WCMG Facebook Page (public)



WCMG Website



UA Cooperative Extension Service Website

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