



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • May 2022



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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."**

May Meeting: Back at the Extension Office!

Our May 3 meeting will be IN PERSON at the Washington County Extension Office at 6:30 p.m.!

From WCMG president Karen Hanna-Towne: "The State office has told us it's OK to meet in person again. Wearing masks and socially distancing is optional. If you want to wear a mask, feel free to do so, but it's not required. We will also be broadcasting via Zoom and everyone will receive the link before the meeting. The Zoom meeting will be recorded and available for viewing after the fact. So, you have several options for participating in this meeting."

Karen adds, "It's been so long since we last met in person that we may have to reintroduce ourselves to each other! And then there are new members/trainees who have never met in person. Well, the 2020 class met twice before COVID set in, but the 2021 and 2022 classes have only met a few of the WCMGs face-to-face. It's a momentous occasion and we look forward to seeing many of our friends once again!"



Our guest speakers will be Susan Koehler, farmland preservation manager for the [NWA Land Trust](#), and Marson Nance, NWA Land Trust's director of land stewardship and research. Together they will present a program on the Woolsey Working Farm Lease and Westside Prairie projects.

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

Taking Care of Business

We will vote on the following at our May 3 business meeting.

April 2022 Meeting Minutes

March 2022 Treasurer's Report

From Your President

KAREN HANNA-TOWNE

Maybe May Magic

This is that time of year when the magic of life bursts forth from every nook, cranny and field in the Ozarks.

From Claytonias to Chaenomeles, beauty abounds. And the magic can be found indoors also!

Several years ago, I learned about the fun of starting seeds in trays under grow lights and it has made all the difference in my gardening success—such as it is. As is my habit, I'm always looking around for ways to try and improve things. This year I purchased a new two-shelf light frame so I could experiment with more varieties of veggies, herbs, and flowers. I debated over whether it was worth it to spend the extra money for a frame with LED grow lights instead of the fluorescent ones I've used in the past. What a difference the LEDs make.



The LED lights are much cooler, but with a full light spectrum. The seedlings just popped up and were ready to be potted up much more quickly. There's another big difference with the LED lights—I don't have to water as often. Because they're cooler I only have to water once a day (or twice in the early stage). In the past I would use a narrow-spouted watering can or a spray bottle to water. Both were messy and didn't get the right amount of water to the right place—the roots. I had damping off and withering up. After a bit of meditation, I went to the kitchen and found my turkey baster. It's the perfect tool to get under the leaves without damaging them and applying just the right amount of water exactly on the surface of the growing medium. It makes me smile every time.

Then, looking through catalogs I found another improvement. I'm at that age where my arthritis makes precise hand movements that also require strength a real challenge. My technique for removing seedlings from their trays has been with two table knives held between my thumb and middle finger, with the index finger holding them apart. I would carefully slide one on each side of the seedling, squeeze gently and slowly pull up until the seedling was free. Emptying a tray with 72 cells would lead to several days of agony in my right hand. Now, trying to avoid what "Click and Clack" (Ray and Tom Magliozzi, hosts of the *Car Talk* radio show) used to call their "Shameless Commerce Division," I won't name the catalog, but I'm sure you can find these wonderful seed trays. Each tray includes only four cells and they open up like a clamshell from the bottom. Eight of these clamshells fit in a frame, which in turn sits in a deep plastic tray. Two sets of these fit on a shelf, so I have a total of 64 cells per shelf. The clamshells have vertical grooves in the sides, which encourage the roots to grow straight down, and they are quite a bit deeper. Each cell is nearly 5" deep, compared with the 2¼" for the cells on my old tray. Coupled with the LED lights and turkey baster watering, I'm getting much more robust seedlings in much less time—and my hands are ever so grateful.

There are many weeks to go before any harvesting begins. I know I can't rest on any laurels just yet, but step one is going much better this year than usual!

WCMG in the Spotlight

KAREN HANNA-TOWNE



Photo by [Andrew Haha Lee](#) on [Unsplash](#)

As I write this, we are less than one month away from the Arkansas Statewide Master Gardener Conference, hosted by Washington County— that's us! It's so exciting that all the months of planning, estimating, designing, envisioning, and staging, as well as the many, many hours committed will soon come to a glorious culmination.

Before I thank everyone who has been at the forefront, or working behind the scenes, I need to make one more request. A large part of the attraction of the conference is the tours. We will have tours of private gardens and Shiloh Museum will be part of the special event on Thursday afternoon, May 19, and Headquarters House will be included on one of the Friday tours. For the most part these sites are moving through their normal spring maintenance routines and they all should soon be at a peak of seasonal bloom and manicured perfection. However, we've had a lot of rain lately and some of the gardens will need a little extra help in the last few weeks prior to the conference. **Will each of you consider helping out with these last-minute chores so we can bring all the tour gardens to their full glory? Please watch your email for a MailChimp notice listing the days, times and locations of those sites that need extra help before the conference.** So many elements will make the conference memorable. Let's make sure the tours will be favorably discussed for years to come!

My gratitude to those who have worked tirelessly to make this conference not just a reality, but a celebration, can barely be expressed. So many people have used their numerous skills to be innovative, to aim for excellence and to guarantee that each day's activities happen flawlessly. A well-executed event seems to just occur seamlessly, but it takes many hours of anticipating what can go wrong, deciding how best to move people safely and smoothly from one place to another, selecting the most relevant and engaging speakers, and designing the environment to bring a sterile conference center alive. In short, we hope to provide an experience that enriches each attendee with new knowledge, new acquaintances and a memorable few days. Thanks again to everyone who has worked on the Steering Committee and/or by volunteering before, during, or after the conference. And, is there not a special place in heaven for Patsy Louk? Her skills and dedication have been an inspiration for the rest of us and we are so thankful to have her at the helm! She is not alone, of course, but she has definitely been an inspiration for us all. Thanks to Patsy, thanks to everyone!

Natives Naturally

SARAH SHELL TEAGUE



Baptisia trial. *Photo courtesy Mt. Cuba Center*

One Gardener's Wildflower...False Indigo (*Baptisia*) is a True Native Performer

I first admired *Baptisia* on the side of an Arkansas highway. Such a presence proves that this plant, like all Arkansas natives, is easy to grow. Deer don't eat it, it thrives in full sun, and can tolerate dry soil. Mine grew to two-three feet tall, in a bed at the foot of a slope that tended to stay moist, in Union County.

The asparagus-looking sprouts burst through in spring, then colorful long-lasting blooms arrive in May. Next come seed pods which darken and provide structural interest. Both the foliage and stems continue to show out by turning gray, or even bluish, as the season progresses. The blue false indigo's leaves may turn silvery. The stems are quite sturdy. Although I cannot attest to this plant's use as a cut flower, because I never tried to cut the flowers for an inside bouquet, one source cites the foliage as a great filler in arrangements. Pods may also be shaken for a unique rattle (not to be confused with its Fabaceae cousin, rattle weed, *Astragalus canadensis*).



Baptisia leaves and seed pods. Photo courtesy Sid Vogelpohl, [ANPS](#)

Baptisia provides nourishment for queen bumblebees in spring. Many butterflies turn to it as a host, including eastern-tailed blue, hoary edge, silver spotted skipper, and wild indigo duskywing. The seeds are toxic and induce vomiting, but roots have been used for frontier medicinal purposes, including for toothache, gastrointestinal complaints, and as an anti-inflammatory remedy.

Baptisia derives its name from *bapto*, the Greek word “to dip,” because early settlers and Native Americans used it for dye. Its poor qualities as a dye (many leaves and flowers produce little dye) led to its common name, false indigo, similar to the true indigo *Indigofera tinctoria*. Native Baptisia species in Arkansas feature different-colored blooms: yellow (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*), white (*B. leucantha*, a type of *B. alba*), cream (*B. leucophaea*), whose flowers extend more horizontally than others, and blue (*B. australis*). Many varieties may reach four-five feet, earning them a spot at the back of the garden bed.



Blue Baptisia. *Photo courtesy Gerald Klingaman, [UADA](#)*

The only maintenance this plant requires is late winter stem removal. My baptisia were planted farther away from my house, receiving less attention and practically no fertilizer, but that didn't faze this reliable plant at all. As a legume, it establishes a stout, deep root system and helps fix nitrogen in the soil. Several sources related a slow development period, but my baptisia were happy from the moment I planted them and returned bigger and bushier every spring.

Sources: *Wildflowers of Arkansas*, Carl Hunter; [Mt. Cuba Center](#); [Arkansas Native Plant Society](#).

Sarah Shell Teague is delighted to share Arkansas natives with WCMGs. She welcomes suggestions for favorites and looks forward to reporting on one gardener's weed, which is another's wildflower, from fellow gardeners' yards and memories. [Email Sarah Shell Teague.](#)

Sow Intentionally: Vegetable Garden Edition

DIANA OLIVER



A little friend. Photo courtesy Diana Oliver

“I grow plants for many reasons: to please my soul, to challenge the elements, or to challenge my patience, for novelty, or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow.” — David Hobson

The last of our frosty mornings are upon us. The dreaded daylight savings time has passed, and the ground is now warm enough for us to transplant our vegetable starters into their permanent growing spot for the upcoming gardening season.

Depending on where you choose to transplant or plant your seeds/starts will help you decide how you will approach watering your vegetables. There are also other variables to consider like accessibility and soil quality. Here are some tips for watering your vegetables this gardening season.

1. Ways to Water. There are so many ways to water our gardens! The size of your vegetable garden can help determine the best and most effective way to water. For smaller gardens, a simple watering can, or hose with a watering wand or sprayer will do the job. For larger gardens, high tunnels or long garden beds, gardeners may want to invest in drip irrigation. Drip irrigation can be helpful if your garden is not close to a water spigot or if it is too large to water by hand.

2. Do not water every day. Watering every day in most cases is excessive and can actually do more damage than good. It is important to check your soil and make sure that we are not oversaturating the root system of our plants. Keeping an eye out for the local weather reports for possible rain showers will also help determine how often you really need to water.



Morning dew in the garden. *Photo courtesy Diana Oliver*

3. Water in the morning? We should consider the best time of the day to water our vegetables so as not to scald them. Many gardeners will say that the morning is the best time while the morning dew is still on the leaves. For me personally, I prefer evenings. That way there is no chance of water loss to evaporation or chance of burning the leaves. It also cools the plants during the hot nights of summer.

4. How to water? I have heard and seen many people be rather strict about how to water, ultimately the rain waters from overhead. But when we water, it is best to water below the foliage at soil level. Watering overhead can lead to mildew and various leaf diseases that can spread and kill your plants prematurely.



Mulched cabbage plants. *Photo courtesy Diana Oliver*

Watering is an important part of growing a healthy and productive vegetable garden. In order to get the most out of your watering, do not forget to add a nice layer of mulch over your soil. Not only will it keep it cool, but it will also reduce water evaporation, and in turn will require less watering.

Happy gardening!

4-H Clubs for Kids and Teens



If you have children, grandchildren, neighbors or friends between the ages of 5-19 that have an interest in gardening, encourage them to check out the Garden Explorers or the Jr. Master Gardeners 1.0 4-H Clubs! Both clubs offer hands-on gardening activities as well as educational field trips.

Garden Explorers 4-H Club

First Saturday of every month

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Washington Co. Extension Office (2536 N McConnell Ave., Fayetteville)

Main Leader: [Gail Pianalto](#)

Jr. Master Gardeners 1.0 4-H Club

Third Saturday of every month

10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Arena (1335 W Knapp Dr., Fayetteville)

Main Leader: [Mary Crumley](#)

On Saturday, April 2, the sun was shining and the temperature was perfect for the Garden Explorers to enjoy a field trip to the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. Master Gardeners Gail Pianalto, Elizabeth Woods, and Trudy Carrigan led the activity. The group paused their exploration of the museum grounds momentarily to pose for the two photos below.





Meet the Trainees

OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL

Carol Van Scyoc

Fayetteville has been my home base since the 1950s, when my dad took a position at the English Department at the UA. I may have a genetic attachment to the soil as my mother's folks grew wheat on a family farm in Kansas. Over the years I have always tried to make some kind of garden, with varying success.

I began my optometric career in Del Rio, Texas, after graduating from New England College of Optometry in Boston. One August, we moved from a dry, parched yard in Texas to a big yard with a beautiful flower garden in Waukesha, Wisconsin. It was like moving to gardening heaven, but I didn't realize that snow would be the winter mulch up north!



We moved back to Fayetteville in 1986, and our yard had more shade than sun. The ice storm of 2009 took care of that problem—we lost a dozen trees. A bed of colorful impatiens

graced my front porch for years. Then the deer came. My garden planning began to revolve around what deer didn't like. I finally gave in and put a vegetable garden behind a deer fence.

I recently retired from many years with the Henry Eye Clinic. Grandkids and gardening are on my schedule now. My favorite quote from last year's trainee education was the answer for any question (gardening or not): "Get a soil test!"

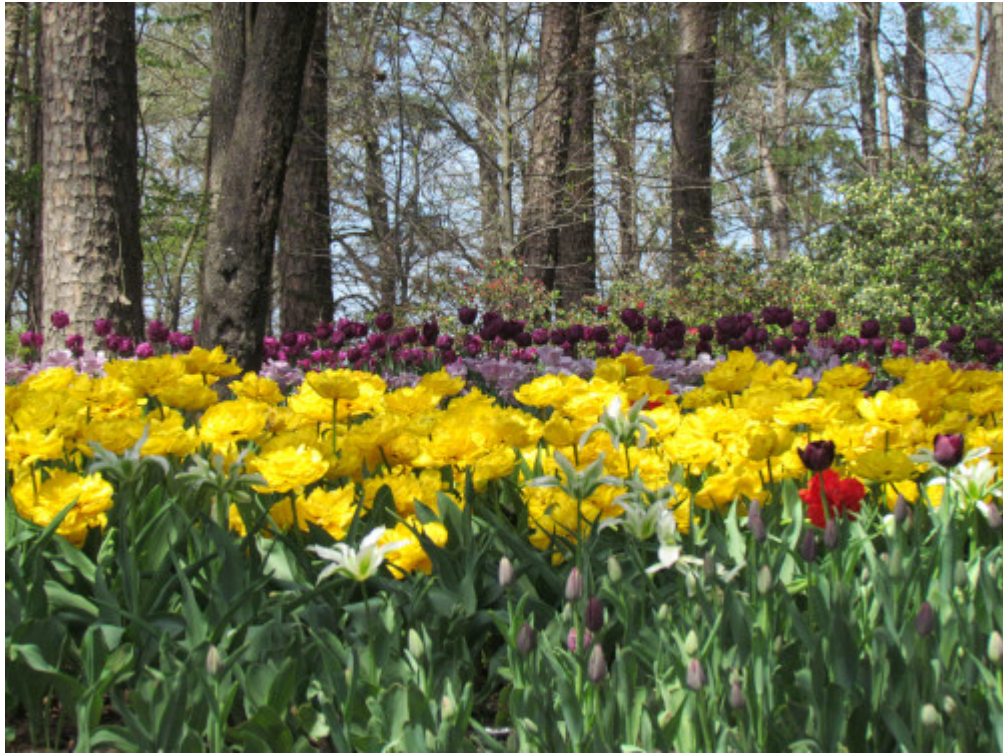
March Photo of the Month

Early Spring Bloomers



FIRST PLACE

"Crocus Explosion" by Talya Boerner



SECOND PLACE
"A Tulip Delight" by Nancy Sloan



THIRD PLACE

"Red Horse Chestnut" by Joyce Mendenhall

Welcome to Our Spring 2022 Trainees!

TRAINEE/MENTOR

Marisol Alcaraz/Kathryn Birkhead
Bob Alexander/Talya Boerner
Linda Bennett-Smith/Mary McCully
Sara Cain Bartlett/Jane Scroggs
Kristi Campbell/Tayla Boerner
Sharon Daniel/Teri Kinsey
Pam Delaney/Darielle James
Sherri Logsdon/Liz Hale
Michael Maulden/Gail Pianalto
Thu Maulden/Gail Pianalto

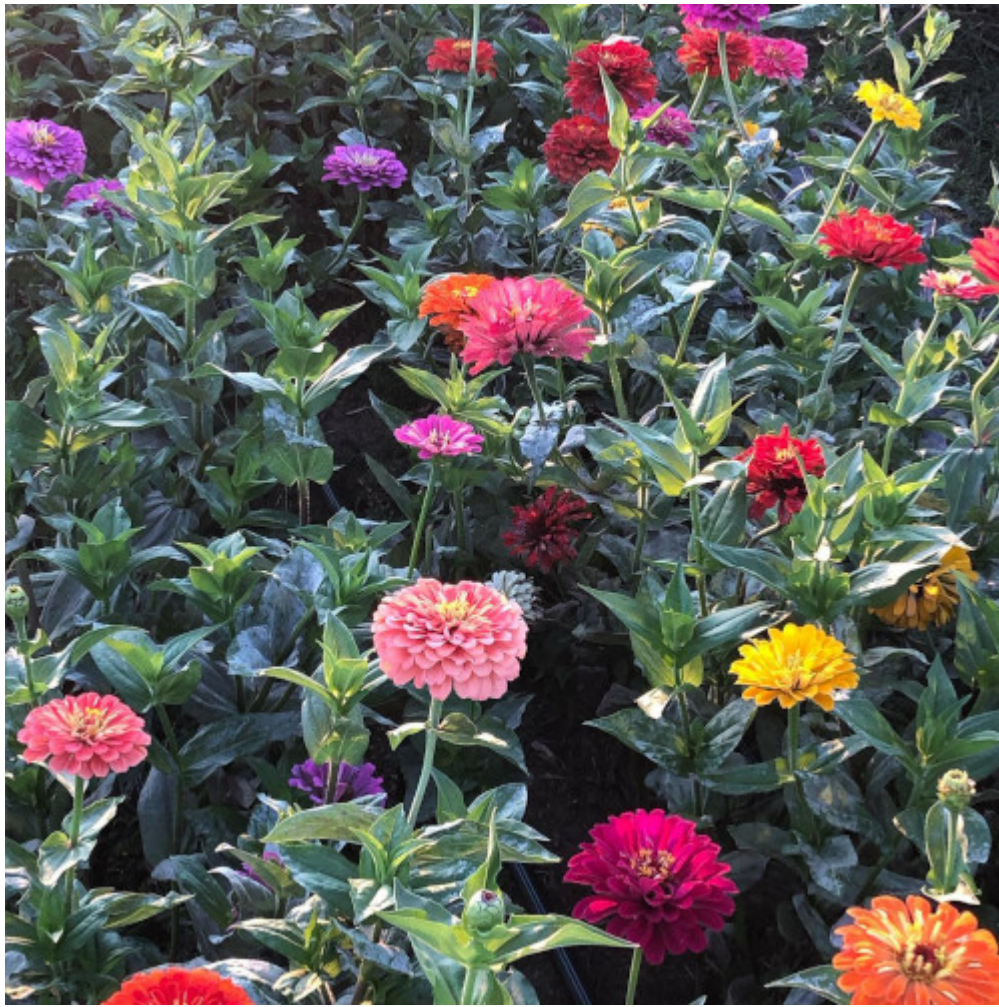
TRAINEE/MENTOR

Lindsay Neely/Patsy Louk
Aimee Payne/Pam Johnson
Seth Rahmoeller/Kathryn Birkhead
Judith Reighter/Chris Bell
Jacki Riffey/Jayne Laster
Nicholas Sammer/Pam Johnson
Mo Shamseldin/Jim Sposato
Karen Smenner/Elizabeth Woods
Susan Snell/LaDeana Mullinix
Aileen Wilson/Jane Bryant

"Garden Gate" Tour Highlight

BRENDA EMBRY

This is the fourth 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. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for volunteers working that day) and can be purchased at Sharum's Garden Center in Springdale, Westwood Gardens in Fayetteville (both locations), and White River Nursery in Fayetteville, as well as at each garden on June 4, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Zinnias at Natural State Flower Farm. Photo courtesy Brenda Embry

Brenda Embry is the owner of Natural State Flower Farm. She achieved her lifetime Washington County Master Gardener status in 2018.

The numerous flower beds on my property began as a prelude for my empty nest syndrome. As my boys grew to be more independent, the number of flower beds began to increase. Since most of my family are gardeners, they were generous to supply me with a plethora of pass-along plants to get me started. One of my backyard beds contains a very old hydrangea from my great aunt. It has grown to about four feet in diameter. The peonies on the property came from my great-grandmother as a wedding gift and have moved with me from house to house and we figure they are close to eighty years old. The fragrant climbing roses along my trellis were also a gift from a friend's garden. I treasure them all.

In 2008 I became interested in the connection between native plants, pollinators, and beneficial insects after reading Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*. It was then that I began my journey and dedication to add as many native plants as possible. I'm a well-known seed hoarder in these parts so most of my plants were started from seed obtained here at the farm and from other native plant enthusiasts. In 2021 I was excited to receive a grant from the Beaver Watershed Alliance to construct a hoop house to grow native plants for their numerous restoration projects.

One of my favorite shrubs is *Amsonia hubrichtii* and I have them planted in almost every bed. I have an enormous *Aristolochia tomentosa* (Dutchman's pipevine) that is winding up a couple of trees. You will also find my stand of *Lindera benzoin* (spicebush) paired with Annabelle hydrangeas in the shade garden. *Asclepias tuberosa*, *A. incarnata*, and *A. syriaca* grow in several different flower beds. My farm became one of the first Monarch Waystations registered and, as more monarchs found my farm, I began tagging them to track migration patterns for the University of Kansas.

In my opinion, it's not a farm unless you have a few chickens. I designed my coop to include a living roof which is filled with a variety of sedums. It was nominated for Best Chicken Coop in *Backyard Poultry* magazine in 2020 and made it into the top ten.



The barn at Natural State Flower Farm. Photo courtesy Brenda Embry

The Flower Farm began in 2017 as an outlet for my passion of flowers. I grow hundreds of specialty cut-flowers for wedding designers, event planners, grocery stores, and a farmers market. I also plant many flowers that I don't harvest so the birds, bees, and butterflies will have plenty of food available. The population of monarchs, swallowtails, and hummingbirds swell in late summer making the flower field truly a magical place.

Fair Time is Coming!



The Washington County Fair is scheduled for August 22–27. Clean up/set up date for the Horticulture Building is August 13. The fair is a great way to obtain sanctioned MG hours. Save the dates.

It is also time to gather treasures that you no longer want for the Gardener's Shop Sale. This money is used to supplement fair premiums, provide lunch for volunteer workers, and plants for the outside pots.

Donations may be left at the Extension Office. Doris Cassidy will transport them to the fair.

Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

MAY 1, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. GROWING MUSHROOMS. Eureka Springs Community Center. Free; no registration needed. [More information.](#)

MAY 5, 11:30 a.m.– 1:00 p.m. FIELD TRIP: COMPTON GARDENS. With Meagan Love-Lipscomb. Free. Hosted by [Wild Ones Ozark Chapter.](#)

MAY 5, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: ASPARAGUS. Zoom program by UADA Extension Service staff. Free. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 5, 6:00– 7:30 p.m. SOAK IT UP, BREAK IT DOWN: USING NATIVE PLANTS TO IMPROVE STORMWATER. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). \$15 members/\$25 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 8, 2:00– 3:30 p.m. FLOWER POUNDING MAKE AND TAKE. BGO. \$45 members/ \$55 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 10, 6:00–7:30 p.m. FOOD FORESTRY WORKSHOP. BGO. \$15 members/\$25 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 13– 14. BENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE AND GARDEN EXPO. 201 NW 2nd Street, Bentonville. [More information.](#)

MAY 15, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. FOREST THERAPY WALK. BGO. \$20 members/\$30 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 18–21. ARKANSAS MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE. Hosted by Washington County Master Gardeners. Springdale Holiday Inn and NWA Convention Center.

MAY 19, 5:30–6:30 p.m. PURPLE MARTINS 101. Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center, Fort Smith. No registration needed. [More information.](#)

MAY 21, 6:00 p.m. BASICS OF BOTANY, PART 2: PLANT REPRODUCTIVE TERMINOLOGY. Arkansas Native Plant Society. Held via Zoom. Free. Register by emailing ANPS.Programs@gmail.com.

MAY 23, 12:00–1:00 p.m. MASTER GARDENER MONDAY. Held via Zoom.

MAY 24, 5:00–8:00 p.m. CHEFS IN THE GARDEN. BGO. \$70 members/\$85 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 28, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. NATIVE PLANT HIKE. With Eric Fuselier of the Arkansas Native Plant Society. Osage Park, Bentonville. \$10. [Registration information.](#)

LOOKING AHEAD . . .

JUNE 4. WCMG "GARDEN GATE" TOUR. A fundraiser for Washington County Master Gardeners featuring tours of local gardens. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for volunteers working that day) and can be purchased at Sharum's Garden Center in Springdale, Westwood Gardens in Fayetteville (both locations), and White River Nursery in Fayetteville, as well as at each garden on June 4, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact Information

The *Garden Thyme* email address is 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

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Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith or Mary McCully.

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



WCMG Facebook Group (private)



WCMG Facebook Page (public)



WCMG Website



UA Cooperative 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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