

[View this email in your browser](#)



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • May 2023



Please note! Your email provider may show an abbreviated version of this newsletter, so if you see the words "[Message clipped] View entire message" or something similar at the end of this email, be sure to click on "View entire message" so you don't miss a thing!

Having said all that, the *Garden Thyme* may be 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 your newsletter committee as we work so hard to provide you with a newsletter lovely to behold. So, to view the *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."

Taking Care of Business

We will vote on the following items at our May 2 meeting.

April 2023 Minutes

March 2023 Treasurer's Report

MAY MEETING

A Butterfly's Perspective: Flower Preferences, Wing Patterns, and Development of the World's

Most Colorful Pollinators



See you on Tuesday, May 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington County Extension Office for our monthly meeting.

Dr. Erica Westerman, associate professor of biological sciences at the University of Arkansas (UA), is our guest speaker. As an integrative animal behaviorist, Dr. Westerman's research is driven by a desire to understand how developmental environment influences adult behavior, social interactions, and community composition. She joined the UA seven years ago and is the manager of the [Westerman Lab](#) on the UA campus. In 2020, she received a five-year \$1.35 million award from the National Science Foundation to support her research on the role of genetics and ambient light in shaping the visual sensitivity and behavior of butterflies.

Since 2017, Dr. Westerman has managed the [NWA Citizen Science Butterfly Project](#) located at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks.

Go Ahead and Mark Your Calendar!

Our June 6 meeting is a potluck picnic at Agri Park, located in Fayetteville at the corner of Garland Avenue and W. Knapp Drive, just a stone's throw east of the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center. (The physical address of Agri Park is 1167 W. Knapp Drive, Fayetteville. [Here's a Google Map showing the location .](#))

- We are asking WCMGs to bring a dish or two to share (with serving pieces like large spoons, etc.), as well as their own plates, cutlery and non-alcoholic beverages.
- We will be following the City of Fayetteville composting regulations to minimize our

footprint.

- During the picnic, we will have a Master Gardener Swag Swap (shirts, jackets, aprons, coffee mugs, etc.) led by Karen Hanna-Towne. Donate as much clean swag as you desire at the Swag Swap table, sorted by size. MGs will be limited to one piece of swag. Our MG Class of 2023 will be allowed first pick, then it will open to MG members. (Our policies state that only MGs may wear MG gear—no donations to non-MGs.)
-

From Your President

JOANNE OLSZEWSKI

How stunning April has been. The dogwood, full and flush intermixed with the redbud, painted such bright colors. In other parts of our Ozark forests white flowers of the serviceberries were so vibrant against our dark and barren wooded hills. Trout lily, trillium, bleeding heart, and Jack-in-the-pulpit—just to name a few of the vast array of spring wildflowers that rose up from the earth each day—made us realize how grateful we are to live in such a verdant and alive ecosystem, these Boston mountains. Now I am looking toward May, the busiest garden month to get our vegetable seeds and plants in the ground. Hoping for April showers to bring May flowers.



I am appreciative of so many of you Master Gardeners, working hard at different sites to get ready for the incredible harvest to come. Digging, lifting, composting, shoveling, hoeing, spreading manures—all hard, good work leaving us smelly, sweaty, and happy.

My goal this gardening year is to make more notes about the varieties and kinds of vegetables and plants that produced well and survived the roller-coaster ride going from hot drought and freezing temps, sometimes in the same week. We planted Dark Red Lolla Rosa lettuce and Allstar Gourmet lettuce mix early last fall which did very little, so we stopped covering it. What a surprise this spring when it sprang up and produced abundant sweet lettuces which keep on giving. The same thing occurred with plain old Bloomsdale spinach. I threw all my seeds on the ground and left it, also early fall. What a crop we have this spring.

For the first time in forty years, I had no green beans to can or freeze. As many of you know, the night temperatures last year were too hot to set bloom, so no beans. A neighbor replanted early fall and got a good crop, so I will experiment a little with timing and succession planting.

I am happy to announce that our stainless steel, dishwasher safe water bottles with the Washington County Master Gardeners logo will arrive Tuesday, May 2, just in time for our meeting. If you signed up for one, bring \$5—cash, check, or use Zelle. Thank you all for moving us toward our goal of sustainability.

Don't forget to purchase tickets for the Garden Gate Tour. Details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

“Gardening is learning, learning, learning. That’s the fun of it. You’re always learning.”
—HELEN MIRREN

Garden Gate Tour Highlights

JUDY SMITH

The second annual Garden Gate Tour is just around the corner on Saturday, June 3.

The tour includes seven local gardens—three owned by WCMGs—focusing on native plants, water features, pollinator gardens, vegetable gardening, rock work, and composting at our own Compost Demonstration Site at the Extension Office. We will need volunteers on the day of the tour.

Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased on the [WCMG website](#).

[View a Google Map of the garden locations.](#)

This month, the *Garden Thyme* features the gardens of Eva Eldridge, Rodney Kestner, and Kathy Launder.



***Our Garden Gate Tour logo, created by
WCMG Diane Standefer!***



GARDEN OF EVA

The garden of Eva Eldridge

Soon after moving into our new home, we knew we wanted to add trees and a garden to our backyard. However, it wasn't until we met Mary Smith that we learned about the importance of planting all things native. She not only taught us how to create a native habitat, she also shared many other useful resources. In the spring of 2021, my husband and I planted river birches, swamp oaks, elms, eastern redbuds, buttonbush, a tulip poplar, and a bald cypress. In the garden we planted milkweeds, bee balm, goldenrods, asters, phloxes, sensitive fern, coreopsis, little flower alumroot, roundleaf groundsel, little bluestem, black-eyed Susan, Joe Pye weed, harlequin blue flag, Arkansas blue star, Dutchman's pipevine, Indian pink, St. John's wort, blue wild indigo, and dwarf crested iris. We enjoy watching a large variety of birds and other pollinators benefitting from the plantings.

We decided to incorporate native plants in the front of our house, so we pulled out most of the non-native plants and replaced them with native ones. We are most excited about the trellis we installed for the coral honeysuckle vine.

We live in a neighborhood with covenants and our neighbors have been very supportive of our new landscape. Several have started their own native gardens. I am currently co-leading an effort to turn some of our common areas into wildflower meadows. This journey has not only transformed our yard to benefit the pollinators, but also our own thoughts and connection to nature.



MISSION BELL GARDEN

The garden of Rodney Kestner

The Mission Bell Garden initially started right after 1986. The backyard sloped downward, causing water to collect at the back of the house whenever we received a heavy rain. As I worked on that issue through the years, I terraced the backyard into three sections while building a small waterfall on each section to slow the water down before running into our front yard. The rock fireplace, beds, walkways, and water feature were added along the way.

We have changed our mindset on the planting of the beds as we wanted to minimize our workload. We are now using different shrubs and perennials to help with that as we search for different colors and textures that complement each other. Annuals are used to fill in the gaps as they change with the seasons. Since the trees are getting taller and we have less sun in the backyard, we are mindful of that when buying new plants. For the last few years we have been saving and dating the tags from the shrubs and perennials, then adding those names to our backyard map. Our plans are to continue that process for the sides and front of the house.

As we age, so does our garden, which is still a work in progress.



HYDRANGEAS, PERENNIALS, AND STEPPING STONES

The garden of Kathy Launder

The garden is starting its fifth summer this year. Trees and native shrubs were planted in December 2018. The first summer was spent determining how much sun and shade was available. Each spring I move many plantings looking for the best spot to make them shine. I've added my favorites such as clematis, perennial hibiscus, and native perennials. During the cold months of January and February I plan what additional plants should be added to beautify my yard and decide whether to plan a new bed. Over the years new beds have been added in order to pursue my passion.

There are stepping stones throughout my garden; these are handprints of my grandchildren we do together every summer. Each stone has their first name initial and year. We also plant the vegetable garden around the same time. I have a milk cart from my family farm in Nebraska which holds an old tub with flowers.

My happy place is in my garden.

An Easy Way to Start Tomatoes

JIM SPOSATO



Ripened tomato slices atop potting soil, ready to be covered with more soil and sprout forth seedlings. *Photo by Jim Sposato.*

There is an easy way to start heirloom tomato seeds. Choose the best heirloom tomato that you have in your garden. Let a few ripen until ready to eat. Put them in a ziplock bag. Place the bag in your refrigerator in the freezer section or on a shelf out of the way. Six to eight weeks before the last frost, take them out of the refrigerator and slice the whole tomatoes into 1/4" slices.

Fill a seed tray with one inch of potting soil. Lay the tomato slices on top of the potting soil. Cover the slices with one inch of potting soil. Place the seed tray under a grow light.



Time to transfer seedlings to individual pots. *Photo by Jim Sposato.*

When the tomato plants get their true leaves and are two to three inches high, use a fork to

carefully separate the plants from the potting soil. Transfer each plant to its own pot: partially fill a pot with potting soil, take a pencil with an eraser on it, lay each plant on its side in the pot with the roots in the middle of the pot, and add more potting soil until the whole stem is covered to its top leaves. Water the plants thoroughly.

When all danger of frost is gone, transplant the tomato plants into your garden.

March Photo of the Month "Spring Bulbs"



FIRST PLACE

"After a Spring Rain" by Nancy Sloan



SECOND PLACE

"Worth the trip" by Teri Kinsey



THIRD PLACE

"Eye on Spring" by Aileen Wilson

April Photo of the Month "Flowering Trees and Shrubs"



FIRST PLACE

"Quite Taken with Quince" by Sarah Teague



SECOND PLACE

"Early bloomer" by Kathryn Birkhead



THIRD PLACE

"Clouds of Fragrance" by Judy Smith

Meet the Trainees

OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL

Matt Cooper

Gardening has always been a part of my life, as my parents and grandparents all have had green thumbs! In 2017, my wife, Melissa, and I bought our first home and started our first vegetable garden together. It's since grown to thirteen raised beds, fruit trees, and berry patches. I love vegetable gardening, eating and cooking what I grow, and giving the rest away to friends and family. I was drawn to the WCMG program to dive deeper into learning, and I look forward to volunteering with everyone at different projects.



Outside of gardening, I graduated from the UA in 2015 and work as a financial advisor helping manage investments and other finances as a small business owner. I have more help in the garden this season, as my wife and I have begun to introduce our baby, Benny, to the joys of gardening. Melissa is an elementary teacher and together we are both passionate about teaching kids to explore and enjoy nature. We wrote and published a children's gardening

book for our son and hope to inspire young readers to grow their own fruits and veggies! I'm usually very friendly (except when the Hogs lose) so say hello if you see me. I'm thrilled to be a part of this organization, and I hope to meet all of you out in the gardens!

James Fraley

I've been interested in gardening and horticulture since I was a young child. Some of my earliest and fondest memories are of helping my granny weed her garden and of helping my dad plant his. As I got older, I began taking more of an active role in planning and managing my family's garden. This led me to dive into the literature surrounding home gardening, which furthered my love of working with plants and trees.



My favorite parts of gardening are planning for and planting the garden in the spring, as well as harvesting and sharing fruits and vegetables with my family and friends. Many of the cultivars of fruits and vegetables I grow are the same that my grandfather and grandmother grew in their gardens, and growing the same plants that they did gives me a sense of communion with them.

I first heard of the Master Gardeners when I was a kid, and I remember my mom and dad telling me that the Master Gardeners were experts in the field and knew more than almost anyone else about horticulture and gardening practices. This piqued my interest, and I always thought it would be really interesting and rewarding to become one someday.

I finally had the opportunity to join the program following a job change that led to me starting my own small business and having the flexibility to participate in the program during the week. Since becoming a trainee, I have already learned so much and have met many wonderful people in the program. I can't wait until spring fully arrives and we all have the opportunity to work together more often in the field!

Bob Pate

I am married with four children and seven grandchildren. Growing up, my dad always had a garden and encouraged me to take part in it. I must admit I wanted to do anything else, but always loved fresh veggies. Then, when I got married, I realized a garden was a way I could provide organic veggies for my family. I have been hooked ever since and can't wait to learn all I can and in the process help others realize the joy of gardening. I have children who garden and hope to pass the interest on to my grandkids as well. Being a Master Gardener is a way I can both learn and help others. I look forward to meeting other Master Gardeners.



More from the "Cabbage Tribe," the Brassicas

SARAH BARTLETT



A lovely head of cabbage along with the usual chewed-on places. [Photo by Judi/flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/judi/10000000000/).

Harvesting cabbage and making sauerkraut is one of my most vivid childhood memories. The cabbage plants were so perfect and beautiful when the outer leaves were removed. We picked several heads at a time, sliced the cabbage heads into fine ribbons, then pounded the cabbage until a liquid brine was produced to cover the cabbage. Our kitchen was lined with stone crocks, varying in size from two to five gallons. The cabbage was salted, then set to ferment with a heavy stone lid. Homemade sauerkraut tastes NOTHING like the store bought canned kraut! The sauerkraut was stored in our cool root cellar with the potatoes, turnips, onions, and rutabaga for the winter.

We grew most of the Brassicaceae family (genus *Brassica*) of vegetables: cabbages, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnips, and radishes. I was raised in central Missouri so we had a long cool spring and an early fall. We had ideal soil and plenty of organic materials from our chickens. Cabbage likes plenty of water, a rich soil and mulch to keep the soil cool and moist. Cabbage is a heavy feeder, too, needing plenty of nitrogen. Use high nitrogen manure like blood meal, cottonseed meal, or chicken or rabbit manure.

In Arkansas, we need to start cabbage plants early and harvest before the heat. In the fall, plant six to eight weeks before the first frost. Cabbage plants can tolerate temperatures as low as 20 degrees. Cabbage needs six to eight hours of full sun.

What are the negatives about cabbage and all the *Brassica* tribe? There are plenty of pests and diseases. The home gardener has to keep a close watch on all the plants in this family as they grow. Cabbage worms can do a surprising amount of damage if not caught immediately. Flea beetles, the cabbage moth, the cabbage white butterfly, cabbage root fly, cutworms—be familiar with all the signs of a cabbage plant in distress and make sure you take care of the

problem before the crop is lost. I create collars for each plant by cutting cardboard tubes (such as those found in a roll of paper towels or toilet tissue" into four-inch lengths, then place a tube around the cabbage stem and press slightly into the soil. This prevents cutworms. I handpick cabbage worms. Also, a very effective product to use is Bt, *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

The cabbage tribe is not the easiest family of vegetables to grow, but watching them develop and enjoying their harvest is well worth the time and trouble.

Editor's note: [Email Sara](#) with your questions and comments, or just to let her know you're reading her columns and learning something new about vegetables.

The What and Why of Native Plants

LINDA MACLEAN



Echinacea, or purple coneflower. Photo by Linda MacLean.

Springtime is a time of renewal and we most often think of flora and fauna in nature as we contemplate this renewal. Everyone yearns to be outside in the nice weather getting ready for the beginning of spring gardening.

As we begin to consider what we will grow, it's important to think about our environment and what is best for it. Growing native plants is what is best. Native plants are indigenous plants that have evolved naturally in our region prior to European settlement and occur naturally in

regions where they have evolved. All lives depend on native plants.

The word "native" might make people think of invasive, unruly, or unsightly plants. They are not. Think of the mighty oak tree, the beautiful purple coneflowers, the lovely oakleaf hydrangea, or the popular flowering dogwood tree. All native!

Native plants

- are naturally healthier, hardier, and stronger;
- establish quickly and grow in harmony with the environment, soil, and water supply
- enrich the soil;
- have stems and leaves that can handle harsh weather;
- create natural wildlife habitats;
- provide sources of nectar, pollen, and host plants;
- have natural defenses to local diseases and insects;
- can prevent water runoff and improve air quality;
- pull and store excess carbon and increases the soil's ability to store water;
- are low maintenance; and
- can provide a stunning display of plants in your landscape.

Doug Tallamy, entomologist at the University of Delaware, is a huge proponent of planting natives and has done a lot of research in this area. In his book, *Bringing Nature Home*, (which I strongly recommend), he states that insects do not use non-native plants for growth and reproduction because they just don't appeal to them. He calls these non-native plants "alien plants." We need insects in our gardens to carry out their life cycles. Tallamy says that the insect population only eat the plants on which they share an evolutionary history. He also reports that 90% of our native insects are considered "specialists" because they have evolved from just a few plants in their lineage. He suggests that non-native plants may go uneaten in a new ecosystem.

We need insects and other pollinators. Our flowering plants and food crops depend on animal pollinators like birds, bees, butterflies, beneficial insects, and moths to increase our crop yields. We need them to have access to native plants to do so.

Lissa Morrison, a local expert on native plants, has compiled a list of ["Well Behaved Natives for Landscaping–Northwest Arkansas."](#) It's an excellent list, to which I refer often, with scientific names included. Scientific names help growers get the exact plant that they intend to have.

Here are a few of my favorite well-behaved native plants from Lissa's list:

White Oak (host to more butterflies and moths than any other tree in Arkansas)

Flowering Dogwood (birds, several bees)

Fall Witch Hazel (many butterflies, caterpillars, chickadees, titmice)

Downy Serviceberry (birds, butterflies, moths)

Cardinal Flower (hummingbirds, butterflies, bees,)

Purple Coneflower (especially butterflies, but all pollinators)

American Beautyberry (many birds)

Black-Eyed Susan (butterflies)

Oakleaf Hydrangea (bees, butterflies)

Ninebark (many pollinators)
Swamp Milkweed (host to monarch butterflies)
Rattlesnake Master (bees, butterflies, beneficial insects)
Joe Pye Weed (pollinators, especially butterflies)
Blue Lobelia (host to four species of Lepidoptera)
Wild Bergamot Beebalm (hummingbirds, bees, butterflies)
Foxglove Beardtongue Penstemon (bees, butterflies, hummingbirds)
New England Aster (important late nectar source for pollinators)
Celandine Poppy (bees)
Coral Honeysuckle (hummingbirds)
Pink Muhly Grass (beneficial insects)
Anise Hyssop (bees, hummingbirds, butterflies)
Wild Blue Indigo Baptisia (host to 19 butterflies)
Solomon's Seal (bees, hummingbirds)
American Holly (supports 18 species of birds and hosts 39 butterflies and moths)
Buttonbush (birds, bees, beetles, butterflies, moths)
Spicebush (butterflies, moths, migrating birds)

We can support and protect native plants and their food webs by advocating for stronger laws, planting native species (make at least 70% of the plants in your yard native), AND educating our children!

Happy spring planting with natives!

Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

MAY 3, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. SPRING WATERCOLOR: TULIPS. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Beth Woessner at Beth Woessner Art Studio. \$59 OLLI member/\$74 nonmember. Call 479-575-4545 to register or for more information.

MAY 3, 6:00–7:00 p.m. URBAN AGRICULTURE: NATIVE PLANTS FOR SOIL MANAGEMENT. Bentonville Public Library, 405 South Main Street, Bentonville. Hosted by Wild Ones Ozark Chapter and Pollinator Partnership. Free. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 4, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: SWEET CORN. Free. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 4, 6:00–8:00 p.m. FULL MOON FOREST THERAPY ADVENTURE. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). \$20 members/\$30 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 6. OSAGE PARK AFTER DARK. Osage Park, Bentonville. \$50. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 11–13. HANGING BASKET SALE. Compton Gardens, Bentonville. \$25. [Pre-purchase information.](#)

MAY 13, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. COMPTON GARDENS AND ARBORETUM TOUR. Bentonville. Hosted by Wild Ones Ozarks Chapter. Free. No registration required.

MAY 14, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. MOTHER'S DAY AT THE GARDEN. BGO. Free for members, members' mothers, or mother figures./\$5–\$10 nonmembers.

MAY 18, 12:00–1:00 p.m. HAZARDOUS TREE IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT. Arkansas Urban Forestry Council with Krista Quinn, UADA agent. Zoom. Free. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 19, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and MAY 20, 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. BENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS PLANT SALE AND EXPO. First United Methodist Church, 201 NW 2nd Street, Bentonville. Free.

MAY 19–21. ARKANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SPRING MEETING. Evening sessions in Cave Springs; day hikes throughout the area. \$10, no pre-registration. [More information.](#)

MAY 20, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. NATIVE PLANT COLLABORATIVE SERIES: HISTORY OF THE STEVEN FOSTER GLADE AT LAKE LEATHERWOOD. Eureka Springs Community Center, 44 Kingshighway, Eureka Springs. Free. No registration.

MAY 23, 5:00–8:00 p.m. CHEFS IN THE GARDEN. BGO. \$75 members/\$90 nonmembers. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 27, 8:00 a.m.–MAY 29, 11:45 p.m. MEMORIAL DAY POPPY FESTIVAL, Pa's Posey Patch, 1501 Farm Road 1120, Cassville, MO. Free, with a donation box.

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 listed in your WCMG Member Resource Guide.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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

Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith or Mary McCully.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Joanne Olszewski](#), president; [Liz Hale](#), vice president; [Kathy Launder](#), secretary, [Darielle James](#), treasurer; [Glenda Patterson](#), assistant treasurer. Members at large: [Nicholas Sammer](#), [Linda Smith](#), [Dale Thomas](#). Ex officio: [Karen Hanna-Towne](#), past president; [Colin Massey](#), Washington County extension agent for agriculture and horticulture.

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



WCMG Facebook Page (public)



WCMG Facebook Group (private)



WCMG website



Washington County Extension Service website

Take heed! If you unsubscribe to emails from Washington County Master Gardeners, you will no longer receive the *Garden Thyme* newsletter and WCMG-related news.

Washington County Master Gardeners | c/o Washington County Cooperative Extension Service,
2536 N. McConnell Avenue, Fayetteville, AR 72703

[Unsubscribe wcmg.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wcmg.newsletter@gmail.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by wcmg.newsletter@gmail.com in collaboration
with



Try email marketing for free today!