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Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • October 2023



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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."**

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## OCTOBER MEETING

**"The Saga of Fayetteville's Famous Giant Lacewing"  
by Dr. Ray Fisher**



**Hope to see everyone at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 3, at 6:30 p.m.** We'll meet as usual at the Extension Office and plan to also offer a Zoom option for attending the meeting.

Our guest speaker is Dr. Ray Fisher, research entomologist at Mississippi State University who works remotely from his home in Northwest Arkansas. He will introduce us to the giant lacewing (*Polystoechotes punctata*), a member of an insect family that predates the dinosaurs. After vanishing in the 1950s, a giant lacewing was found (but misidentified) in 2012 at a Fayetteville Walmart Neighborhood Market by then-UA doctoral student Michael Skvarla, who today serves as director of Penn State's Insect Identification Lab. The discovery of this specimen points to deeper ecological questions.

Much of Dr. Fisher's research is explorative, uncovering the diversity and history of insects, spiders, and their relatives. He has described 93 species—many of which are water mites—and has countless undescribed species sitting on his desk awaiting attention. His specialty is mite diversity and evolution, but he is a generalist with broad training in entomology. Dr. Fisher enjoys teaching university courses, advising graduate students, and leading workshops for state agencies, universities, and international organizations. His current projects involve grasshoppers, parasitic mites, and spiders.

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## Taking Care of Business

**We'll vote on the following items at our October 3 business meeting.**

September 2023 Meeting Minutes

August 2023 Treasurer's Report

2024 Operating Budget

**Also, it's time to pay your annual WCMG dues, which are due no later than December 1. The amount is \$20 through December 1, and \$25 after December 1.**

You can pay your dues by cash, check, money order, or electronically. Make your check or money order payable to Washington County Master Gardeners, or WCMG.

**Folks from our Membership Committee will be on hand at the October 3 meeting to cheerfully accept your cash or check.**

You may also pay your dues

- in person at the Extension Office during regular business hours (Mon–Fri, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)
- by mail to Washington County Extension Office, 2536 N. McConnell Avenue, Fayetteville, AR 72704-5521
- electronically via Zelle. Direct your payment to [dues@wcmgar.org](mailto:dues@wcmgar.org). **Do not use this email address to ask questions concerning your dues.** Please email your questions to WCMG treasurer [Darielle James](#). Note that we cannot accept electronic payments made via Venmo, PayPal, or by credit or debit card.

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## From Your President

**JOANNE OLSZEWSKI**

Finally, the summer's heat has lifted and the cool breezes of autumn and rain have arrived. We are harvesting the last of our eggplant, pepper, and butternut squash and are putting the garden to bed. And as much as I am ready to be finished in the garden, now is the time to plant greens for the winter: kale, lettuce, mustard greens, and turnips, and of course get the garlic ready to go in the ground.

Each year I dream of lying in the hammock during the summer but I am too busy to do that. I dream of sitting by the fire in the winter reading a book but instead read seed catalogs. Speaking of these catalogs, Jim Sposato is bringing his catalogs to give away to others at our October meeting. Feel free to bring yours to share and pass along.



I read in the newspaper that the Arkansas Rice Federation is donating 240,000 pounds of rice to Arkansas food banks. Research shows that 1 in 6 Arkansans are food insufficient. I am proud of WCMG's practice at the Washington County Fair to offer entrants the option of donating their produce to local food banks. The donation amount increases each year.

The 15th annual Climate Week NYC was held in New York recently. Over 75,000 people marched. Going to YouTube, I watched an interview with the former CEO of PepsiCo, a woman named Indra Nooyi. I was very impressed by her talk, although I thought at first she



was greenwashing. But I realized that she is changing the culture of the corporation by looking at diversity, sustainability, and inclusion. We at WCMG are much smaller than PepsiCo but we are also changing our culture of sustainability.

Lastly, if you have Netflix, look up *Down to Earth with Zac Efron*. Now in its second season, it is a great way to see what is happening around the world to keep our earth healthy. The series is impressive, enlightening, and inspiring. Perhaps we can do the same in our little corner of the world.

Joanne

*"Not only do we change the food we eat . . . we have to educate people about what they can eat appropriately."* —INDRA NOOYI

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## SANCTIONED PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Headquarters House Vegetable Garden

TERRY HEDDEN



**Veggies thrive at Headquarters House. Photo by Terry Hedden.**

For the past three years I've had the pleasure of working with fellow Master Gardeners at the Headquarters House Gardens in Fayetteville. When I first joined this group, they were looking for someone to take over the care of the demonstration vegetable garden. I thought that would be a good fit for me. I figured since you pretty much start over each spring in a vegetable

garden, I couldn't mess up anything too bad in the historic gardens.

Within the Headquarters House Gardens, we have two small plots of land that we use for the vegetable gardens. There we plant vegetables that would have been found in Northwest Arkansas gardens in the mid-1800s when the original owners of Headquarters House, the Tebbetts family, lived there. Whenever possible, we use varieties that date back to the 1800s or at least heirloom varieties.

One of the plots gets plenty of sun so it has been well suited for growing vegetables. The other plot is shadier so we've had to try different plants in this section. We have found that rhubarb and horseradish have done well in our shady garden and have come back multiple years. This year I planted two varieties of potatoes in the shady garden. The plants grew well, flowered in the early summer, and produced a fairly decent potato crop around July 4.

In the summer garden, I have tried several different vegetables over the past three years, some with more success than others. We always have a couple of heirloom tomato plants. Other vegetables that we have tried in this garden include lettuce, peas, squash, zucchini, okra, onions, and several varieties of peppers. One of our more interesting plants is an Egyptian walking onion plant, a transplant from an individual's garden where the original plant had grown for many years. I'm still learning what seems to do better in this location, but it's fun to try new things.

The primary purpose of these demonstration gardens is to show the type of vegetables grown during the time the Tebbetts family lived in Headquarters House. We also try to add some different types of supports and some fun little designs to make it look more interesting than your normal backyard vegetable garden. Any produce received is an added bonus.

The next time you stroll through the Headquarters House Gardens in the late spring, summer, or early fall, make your way to the east side of the house to visit our vegetable gardens.

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## September Photo of the Month

### "Vegetable Gardening (Garden Bounty)"





**FIRST PLACE**

**"Vegetables of Our Labor" by Mariette Spidel**

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**SECOND PLACE**

**"Growing a Mess of Okra" by Talya Boerner**

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**THIRD PLACE**

**"From Bounty to Bottle" by Delcina Cunico**

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## **Master(ing) Gardener**

**JUDY SMITH**



Photo by [Mike Erskine](#) on [Unsplash](#)

If you're looking for new ways to get those MG education hours, to learn something new, or just to reinforce what you're doing in your own gardens, you might be interested in these gardening resources. Each organization offers virtual classes that you can watch live or later, some for several months.

### **American Horticulture Society (AHS) Lifelong Learning**

AHS is offering fall classes from September 27 through November 15 and winter classes from December 1 through March 11 on a variety of topics. Classes are \$10 for members and \$15 for nonmembers. Here's a sample of topics: Designing with Nature; Enhanced Sustainability; Around the World in 80 Plants; Three Ways to Fight Invasive Plants; and Gardening for Well-Being.

### **Perennially Yours with Kerry Mendez**

Kerry is offering winter webinars on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. EST. Dates and links will be in her November newsletter. Her classes are \$13.95 or three for \$35.50. Topics include plants and design tips for shade, shrubs that outshine perennials and celebrity plants.

### **New Directions in American Landscapes (NDAL)**

Larry Weaner created this organization as a way for science to meet practice. Originally for horticulture professionals, there are now 3 session courses for home gardeners. Sessions are 1:25 hours each; a course costs \$42 but you can keep them and rewatch for about 3 months. Courses are aimed at using native plants, adapting to the environment and artful but sustainable design.

I discovered the AHS Lifelong Learning classes and Kerry Mendez by joining AHS and found out about NDAL through Wild Ones. All three offer solid, practical garden education.

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# My Backyard Vegetable Garden

TERRY HEDDEN



**Veggies also thrive in the Hedden home gardens. *Photo by Terry Hedden.***

Vegetable gardening is something that I had never done until we retired and moved to Northwest Arkansas about seven years ago. I built three raised bed gardens, each approximately 4' x 8', in my backyard in a location that gets full sun. I gathered a lot of advice from reading Janet Carson articles, newspaper articles, Master Gardener pamphlets, and through Master Gardener online programs. But my best source of learning more about vegetable gardening has been through trial and error.

Over the years, I have tried to grow several types of vegetables, some with great success and some not so much. I've had good or mixed results with lettuce, onions, eggplant, cucumbers, okra, peppers, and tomatoes.

Here are some things I've learned from my home garden:

- Lettuce is easy and cheap to grow from seed packets as long as you don't plant too early or too late in the spring. A second crop can also be planted for a fall harvest after some summer vegetables are done.
- Onions do very well in my raised beds. A bundle of onion sets will produce more onions than I have room for in their allotted space.
- Eggplant can take awhile to get going, but it thrives in the late summer heat. My 2 plants provide fruit for us and many friends and neighbors.
- Cucumbers mostly do well in my garden, but this vegetable is still a work in progress. I have had better luck since starting to grow them in a cage or on a trellis instead of on

the ground. Another lesson learned is don't plant too close together or put too many plants in the allotted space.

- Okra is another vegetable that likes the late summer heat. One year I had an issue with a critter nibbling on the young plants. Since then, I've been putting a simple chicken wire fence around my okra and it has done very well in my garden. Each plant only produces a few pods at a time, so several plants are needed to get a good mess of okra to fry. This also provides plenty of okra for your freezer and for your neighbors.
- Peppers are something I seem to be more hit or miss in trying to grow. Some years I get a lot and some years barely enough. Banana peppers do always seem to thrive in my garden. Bell peppers are a little more finicky and is a plant I continue to experiment with to find the best spot and conditions. Then I usually try one other type of pepper each year, just for fun.

No Arkansas vegetable garden would be complete without tomatoes. I'll admit that I've been hit and miss on my tomatoes over the years, but this is something I won't give up on (my wife loves fresh tomatoes from the garden). I usually plant one cherry tomato plant, two "Better Boy" tomato plants (because that is what the wife's Daddy always planted), then I try one new variety each year looking for the one that fits my garden perfectly.

I'm always trying different things to hopefully improve my success with tomatoes. I've built sturdier cages to hold up the weight as the plants get large, staggered the cages to bring in more sunlight and air, and applied mulch to help keep moisture levels more even. Of course, there are things that affect tomatoes that are harder to control like the weather and those ever-present garden pests. But those are things that us gardeners just learn to live with!

One of the keys that I've found to vegetable gardening in raised beds is crop rotation. I keep a record of what I plant in each bed and try to move things around each year. The other key is to have fun and know that there will be failures. Not all vegetables are going to grow well everywhere. I love to grow squash and zucchini but found that the squash bugs love my plants more than I do. Melons are fun to grow but can take up a lot of room.

The bottom line is to plant something, watch it grow, and hopefully you'll get something good to eat as a bonus.

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## Meet the Trainees

**OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL**

### **Sally Schoen**

Having grown up on a dairy farm in upstate New York, it's hard for me to recall a time when I wasn't farming or gardening. Even throughout my corporate career in big cities and suburbs, I always managed to plant at least flowers and herbs in containers on the balcony or patio. The joy of planting seeds or seedlings and watching them mature was imparted to me early from both my parents and grandparents.



On the farm, we raised 99% of our feed for our Holstein herd.



My father regularly worked with the Cooperative Extension agents to test the soil, rotate crops, and increase yields every year. While my father led the farm crops, my mother planned the vegetable and flower gardens. We raised and froze enough vegetables to fill an entire standalone freezer each season. Whatever my mom didn't plant, my grandmother, Oma, likely had in her garden—like rhubarb. It was a family affair to plant, weed, nurture, harvest, and eat everything.

Now in retirement, I have the time to learn and experiment more with vegetables and flowers. It's always been a dream to become a Master Gardener so I'm grateful to be in this program to learn from and share with others. A few years ago, I began harvesting and sharing my own seeds. It's a true labor of love especially for plants like arugula, which have such tiny black seeds. This year, thanks to the MG program, I've prioritized planting more natives and pollinators. I'm also pushing myself to identify the various trees that I have on my property.

While I'm not producing as much food as we did on the farm, I'm thankful that my family instilled the joy of gardening and stewardship in me. It's a constant learning experience and often trial and error. Fortunately, I have the support of the experienced Master Gardeners.

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### **Laura Underwood**

My husband, Craig, and I met at Baylor University, married in 1985, and moved to Fayetteville a few years later. I began my teaching career at Fayetteville High School while Craig joined his family business. During the next few years, we raised our three sons. I taught at FHS for eight years and then began my career in our family business . . . going on 25 years now. During those years, I soaked in every bit of gardening I could, learning from others, trying out new garden ideas, asking LOTS of questions, and reading all I could. I loved getting my hands in the dirt and enjoyed the beauty of my endeavors, and I still do.



Now I'm able to be more flexible with my work schedule, and becoming a Master Gardener was on the top of my bucket list. When I found out I was eligible for the training, I was so excited! I knew I had so much to learn, but I was ready for the challenge. I have so much respect for everyone I've met and worked with in the program. The beauty and service that the Master Gardeners have given and continue to give to our community is to be commended. I have LOVED everything about it.

My #1 goal is to increase my pollinator gardens in both species and quantity. I have changed sod to new pollinator gardens and the bees and butterflies are so happy. The Compost Project is very interesting to me, and I hope to start composting at my house very soon. I have also enjoyed "Ask A Master" at the office on Monday mornings. No, I'm not a "Master" but it is wonderful visiting with Washington County residents with questions and then doing a little (or a lot of) research to share with them. We both learn, so it truly is a "win-win!" The friends I have met during the training have been a true blessing and I'm soaking in all that I am learning. I'm looking forward to many years working with the WCMGs.

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# Just for Fun: Some Flowery Riddles

NANCY SLOAN

1. What flower is what a man did when he proposed?
2. What flower do unmarried men often lose?
3. What flower results from Cupid's arrows?
4. What flower is a pretty girl who has been jilted?
5. What flower is both a dairy product and a dish?
6. What flower is a country with lots of motor vehicles?
7. What flower is a dress-up ferocious animal?
8. What flower is a sweetheart's farewell?
9. What flower is part of an eye?
10. What flower is a man's name and what he writes with?
11. What flower is footwear?
12. What flower is a bird and a riding accessory?
13. What flower is between hills?
14. What flower is a way for a woman to get rich quick?
15. What flower suggests the rising sun?
16. What flower do shepherds watch?
17. What flower is in neat ranks?
18. What flower is what you did when you sat on a sharp tack?
19. What flower is a vegetable which needs no sugar?
20. What flower is an amiable man?

## ANSWERS

1. Aster 2. Bachelor's button 3. Bleeding heart 4. Bluebell 5. Buttercup 6. Carnation  
7. Dandelion 8. Forget-me-not 9. Iris 10. Jonquil 11. Lady's slipper 12. Larkspur 13. Lily of the valley  
14. Marigold 15. Morning glory 16. Phlox (flocks) 17. Rose 18. Johnny-jump-up  
19. Sweet pea 20. Sweet William
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## Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

**OCTOBER 6.** Deadline to register for the Arkansas Master Gardener 35th Birthday Celebration in Little Rock. \$35. [Registration information.](#)

**OCTOBER 6, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. TOUR OF LOGAN SPRINGS PRESERVE .** Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Instructors Kim Dutton and Chas McCoy. Logan Springs Preserve, Siloam Springs. Commuter and transportation-provided registration rates for OLLI members and nonmembers. Call 479-575-4545 for information.

**OCTOBER 6, 1:00–3:00 p.m. CREATE YOUR OWN FLORAL ARRANGEMENT.** OLLI. Instructor Lindsey White. BloomingGayle's, Farmington. \$55 OLLI member/\$70 nonmember. Call 479-575-4545 for information.

**OCTOBER 7, 1:00–2:00 p.m. FLIGHT OF THE MARIPOSA: THE AMAZING**



**MONARCH BUTTERFLY AND ITS MIGRATION.** Hobbs State Park, Rogers. Free.

**OCTOBER 7, 1:00–4:00 p.m. BOTANICAL SHADOW BOXES WITH JOHN FORD.** Ozark Folkways, Winslow. \$50. [Registration information.](#)

**OCTOBER 8, 2:00–2:30 p.m. VENOMOUS SNAKES OF ARKANSAS.** Hobbs State Park, Rogers. Free.

**OCTOBER 13–15. MYCOLOGY WEEKEND WORKSHOP.** Ozark Natural Science Center, Huntsville. Cost varies. [Registration information.](#)

**OCTOBER 14, 1:00–2:30 p.m. NATIVE SEED COLLECTION TECHNIQUES.** Washington County Extension Office. Hosted by Wild Ones Ozark Chapter. Free. [More information.](#)

**OCTOBER 14, 3:00–3:30 p.m. IF BATS COULD SPEAK.** Hobbs State Park, Rogers. Free.

**OCTOBER 15, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. BOTANICAL SKETCHERS OF THE OZARKS.** Fun fact: this sketching group was founded by WCMGs Karla Caraway and Caite Ramos! Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). Free for members/\$5 non-members. [Registration information.](#)

**OCTOBER 15, 11:00–11:45 a.m. THE OZARK CHINQUAPIN TREE.** Hobbs State Park, Rogers. Free.

**OCTOBER 16, 12:00–1:00 p.m. MASTER GARDENER MONDAY .** Zoom. Gardening presentation plus MG event updates with Randy Forst, UADA consumer horticulture/Master Gardener coordinator. Free. Registration link not available at press time. [Email Randy Forst for the link.](#)

**OCTOBER 19, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: HOME HYDROPONICS.** Zoom program with UADA extension agents. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**OCTOBER 21, 10:00–11:00 a.m. T.R.E.E. (TREE RAISING EDUCATION AND EXPLORATION) .** Compton Gardens, Bentonville. \$10. [Registration information.](#)

**OCTOBER 28, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. NATIVE SEED SWAP.** Hosted by the Wild Ones Ozark Chapter. Washington County Extension Office. Free. [Participation guidelines.](#)

**OCTOBER 29, 2:00–2:30 p.m. U.F.O. (UNIDENTIFIED FOREST OBJECT).** Hobbs State Park, Rogers. Free.

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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 listed in your WCMG Member Resource Guide.**

### **NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

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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](#).*



**WCMG Facebook Page (public)**



**WCMG Facebook Group (private)**



**WCMG website**



**Washington County Extension Service website**

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