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Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • March 2025

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Having said all that, the *Garden Thyme* is best viewed in your browser (instead of viewing it within your email). **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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## MARCH MEETING

### Pruning Tools & Soil Sampling Tools, Oh My!



Gloves and pruners photo by [Colin Howley/flickr.com](#). Colin Massey photo courtesy of Washington County Extension Service.

We hope to see you all at our March 4 meeting at 6:30 p.m. at **Thompson Hall on the Washington County Fairgrounds (2537 N. McConnell Avenue, Fayetteville)**. It promises to be another action-packed evening!

- **Our March speaker is Colin Massey**. He'll share tips on selecting the proper tools for pruning and for soil testing.
- **"Tool Time" show and tell** will allow us to share our favorite tools with the group. Do you have a tool that's become your gardening sidekick? A favorite trowel, pruning shears, or maybe that perfectly worn-in shovel? Bring it and show it off. It's fun to talk about the tools we can't live without, and it's also a great way to swap tips and learn about new gadgets that could make your gardening tasks more efficient and enjoyable.
- The annual **Sanctioned Projects and Committees Fair** is a great time to explore the many opportunities to grow your skills, meet other gardening enthusiasts, and contribute to meaningful projects that benefit our community.
- Our Awards Committee co-chair Jan Lefler will present 2024 awards to WCMG of the Year **Liz Hale** and WCMG Rookie of the Year **Pam Salamo**.

**To add to the fun, you're invited to wear your favorite gardening hat to the meeting.** Not only will it add a touch of personality to the evening, it's also a fantastic conversation starter. Who knows, you may even pick up a few new hat-wearing ideas.



Hat and trowel photo courtesy of [SVG Attic](#). Elkins Community Garden display at a past Project Fair photo by Aileen Wilson.

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## Taking Care of Business

**We will vote on this item at our March 4 monthly business meeting.** NOTE: We are still in the process of updating the software used to create the treasurer's reports. Those reports will be presented for approval at a later time.

February 2025 Meeting Minutes

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## From Your President

ALFI ANDERSON

### March Musings: The Promise of Spring

I can't believe I saw my first daffodil on February 5th! It caught me off guard, a bright reminder that spring is just around the corner—even if winter still has a firm grip. Flowers have a way of connecting us to memories, people, and seasons. For me, daffodils will always remind me of my grandmother and the excitement of new beginnings. Have you seen any early blooms in your garden? What flower holds a special memory for you? I hope to instill my

love of flowers in my grandchildren and hope to have a favorite bloom that I can share with them, just as I did with my grandmother. I think that's a huge component of what we do—passing along our passion for gardening. I can't wait until they're old enough to go into the garden with me!

As gardeners, we know that early blooms sometimes get ahead of themselves, much like our own eagerness for warmer days. But nature has a way of adapting, even when the temperatures dip below freezing again. March is a time of transition and preparation. While we may not be out in our gardens just yet, there's still plenty to do.



Looking ahead, our Project Fair will be at a different location this year. Mark your calendar for March 4 at 6:30 p.m. at Thompson Hall at the Washington County Fairgrounds, 2463 N. McConnell Avenue, Fayetteville. Enter through the gates across from the Washington County Extension Office. Thompson Hall will be open at 5:00 p.m. for you to set your tables. Please be set up and ready to go by 6:15 p.m. A Sanctioned Project sign-up sheet will be provided.

We'll also have our annual "Tool Time" event, so bring your favorite gardening implement and wear your favorite gardening hat! It's always fun to see what tools everyone swears by, and you might even pick up a few new ideas.

Most importantly, take the time to reach out and encourage one another. Include new members in your planning and make them feel welcome. Gardening is about growth in more ways than one, and together, we can make this season our best yet.

Spring will be here before we know it—let's be ready to greet it with open arms (and trowels in hand)!

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## 2024 Awards Program Recap

**JAN LEFLER**

**Awards Committee co-chair**

# Washington County Master Gardeners



Click on the image to watch a slideshow of the 2024 award winners. *Photos by Kathryn Birkhead*

It "took a village" to accomplish this year's WCMG Annual Awards recognition. A big thank you goes to all the contributors. Fifteen WCMG members nominated fellow members and trainees in nineteen local and state MG Award categories.

## **Contributors**

- WCMG Awards Committee participants: Geri Alvis, Chris Bell, Jayne Laster, Patsy Louk, Kitty Sanders
- WCMG Membership Committee on-line hours coordinators: Kathryn Birkhead, Annette Pianalto
- WCMG Executive Committee participants: Liz Hale, Alfi Anderson, Pam Butler, Julie Murray
- WCMG volunteers: Jeff McGuire, Stephanie McGuire, Betty Nichols, Terry Smyers, Mariette Spidel, Jim Sposato, Kathy Stinson, Susan Young
- Washington County Extension Service staff: Colin Massey, Debbie Clevenger, Katie Teague

The 2024 Awards honor the outstanding WCMG volunteers, community volunteers, sanctioned projects and committees for significant impact they have on the Washington County Master Gardener Program and our community.

## **2024 Award Recipients**

- Individual Friend of the Year — Jeff McGuire. Total volunteer hours: 100+.
- Organization Friend of the Year — Lee Anne Weiderkehr (Washington County Historical Society). Total volunteer hours: 200+ annually.

- Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can" Award — Kathy Launder. Total volunteer hours: 450.5. Education hours: 42.25.
- Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can" Award — Doris Cassidy. Total volunteer hours: 493.75. Education hours: 64.
- Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can" Award" Rookie — Sheri Bucciferro. Total volunteer hours: 94.75. Education hours: 27.5.
- Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can" Award" Rookie — Stephanie McGuire. Total volunteer hours: 283. Education hours: 29.
- Excellence in Education of the Year Award — BGO's Butterfly House education program. WCMG volunteers: 22 (along with 20+ community volunteers). WCMG volunteer hours: 846. Total audience reached: 6,358+ in 2024.
- Rookie of the Year — Pam Salamo. Total volunteer hours: 219.5. Education hours: 106.
- Mentor of the Year — Jan Lefler. Total volunteer hours: 474. Education hours: 105.
- Project of the Year — Lincoln Community Garden. Project co-chairs: Jim Sposato, Judy Cohea. WCMG volunteers: 12 (along with 2+ community volunteers). WCMG volunteer hours: 684.
- 2024 WCMG Master Gardener of the Year — Elizabeth Hale. Total volunteer hours: 687. Education hours: 263.75.

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## Our 2025 Trainees



**Say hello to our latest crop of trainees!** Front row, from left: Donna McDaniel, Calista Keck, Lulamae Wampler, Swathi Munagala, Terri Speer, Jody Hughes, Kelly Chaney, James Harvey. Middle row, from left: Becca Muenich, Teresa Sullivan, Mari Walters-Ford, Steve Shearman, Mary Sparks, Rhonda Lovell, Lynne Bell, Jessica Guillory, Julie Torseth. Back row, from left: Jeff McGuire, Calinda Green, Kim Coslett, Bill Speer, Roger Faulkner, Caleb Israel. *Photo by Kathy Launder*

Not pictured in the group photo are Debra Broyles and Tim McGinn, so here are their smiling faces as seen in the WCMG photo directory:



Debra Broyles



Tim McGinn

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## 2025 Garden Gate Tour Sneak Peeks

The annual Garden Gate Tour, established by WCMG in 2019, is scheduled for **Saturday, June 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** This year the tour features six home gardens, a WCMG sanctioned project, and an environmental non-profit organization. All are in Elkins or Fayetteville.

The *Garden Thyme* will feature these gardens in four issues from March through June.

*Photos courtesy of the garden owners*

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## **The More Pots, the Merrier Garden**

What started with a few flower pots by a front door quickly turned into a garden hobby when the owners added a pool. More than 50 colorful flower pots now adorn the pool deck, front porch, back patio, and landscaped beds. The philosophy for these gardeners has grown to be “The more pots the merrier.”

The gardeners prefer bright color schemes like vibrant reds, bright purples and pinks, crisp yellows, and various greens. They are not afraid to try new plants each summer while also sticking with tried-and-true basics. Over time, mental notes help to determine what annuals work well in full sun, part sun, and shade. They also have a love for tropical plants like bougainvillea, allamanda, plumbago, mandevilla, and more that thrive in the hot Arkansas summer.



The beauty of pot gardening is knowing that if something does not work, it's a quick fix. Gardeners can pull out the plant, remove it entirely, or try it in a new spot. The cost can add up, but the enjoyment the owners get from the colorful flowers and their time spent outdoors is a splurge they love. Based on the size of the space, pot gardeners can start small, work within a budget, experiment, and determine if pot gardening is for them.

While annual plants fill most of the flowerpots, the landscaped gardens surrounding the home are heavy with ferns, hosta, shasta daisies, lavender, coneflowers, butterfly bushes, lilacs, vitex, and more.



### **Perennial Textures**

Nestled beneath shade trees are textured perennial gardens featuring hydrangeas, ferns, hostas, and pollinator-friendly flowers. The various plants create a blend of lush greenery. At the center, hydrangeas bloom in soft pastels, their flower heads contrasting with the delicate fronds of ferns. The hostas provide rich shades of green. Various textures enhance the garden's tranquil atmosphere. Pollinator-friendly flowers offer bursts of color that attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Low-growing groundcovers like moss soften the space. This garden is a retreat, where every plant adds to the overall beauty and serenity of the space.

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## **Meet the Trainees**

**OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL**

### **Donna McDaniel**

I was born and raised in Irondale, Alabama. I grew up helping my mom in the garden. After high school, we moved to Florida where I met my husband, Steve. We have lived all over the Southeast with the Coast Guard and have gardened everywhere we have been. I have enjoyed learning different growing techniques for the different areas and the different varieties you can grow in different areas. I love to grow roses, fruit, vegetables, and herbs. I love being outside in the warmth. We moved to Arkansas 11 years ago with our three grown sons and our grandkids (we have five now!).



I am a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) at North Hills Gastroenterology Endoscopy Center in Fayetteville, working very part-time, and I run McDaniel Farmhouse

Gifts and More, a shop located in a historic home in the Elkins/Wesley area. We carry all locally made items, and I teach painting classes and embroidery classes. I love to hike and take pictures of nature as well as of my grandkids. I also love to work in my garden and greenhouse, always trying to find the best combo of companion plants to avoid pests. I strive to grow my vegetables without pesticides or herbicides so they are healthy for my family. I learned about the Master Gardener program from Colin Massey and a Master Gardener that stopped in my shop. I have enjoyed learning more about growing in Northwest Arkansas and look forward to working with and getting to know others in the area.

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## How to Repot an Orchid

TALYA TATE BOERNER



Image courtesy of Talya Tate Boerner

It pains me to imagine how many orchids I've killed through the years. When I was a busy banker, I truly thought orchids only bloomed once. After that, they were done. Um, no. Like every living thing—a schnauzer puppy, a milkweed seedling, a carpet of lichen—if you learn what orchids like and treat them with a little TLC, not only will they re-bloom beautifully, but they will grow larger and thrive. Click [HERE](#) for step-by-step instructions. (This link will take you to Talya's blog on her *Grace, Grits, and Gardening* website.)

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## VA Community Garden Project Update

**STEVE BRIZZI**

**Project co-chair**



*Photos by Steve Brizzi*

## **WE'RE BACK IN THE VEGETABLE GARDENING BUSINESS!**

Two years ago we dismantled the old garden to make way for a complete renovation and upgrade. Due to circumstances beyond our control, it has taken until now to place 10 new raised beds and complete paved walkways so we could begin gardening again. Our plan beginning March 4 is to have two activities in process at the same time.

First, we will begin planting our early spring crops. We have approximately 750 square feet of gardening space to plant. Susan Esche, who is a Benton County Master Gardener and also lead volunteer for the vegetable gardens at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, has helped us make a master plan for planting year-round crops. Glenndann Robillard is overseeing the planting process. The planting/gardening crew will meet Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays throughout the year, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. each day.



Second, we will continue with the new garden renovation/construction, installing 15 new steel raised beds, individually irrigated on timers. We have completed 10, so we are two-thirds complete. All the walkways around and between the beds will be paved to be ADA compliant and available for anyone to access. We have installed about 1,000 16"x16" pavers so far and have about 350 more to go. As we complete the rows of walkways we will set and fill the beds. Lisa Harrington will be in charge of getting the last five raised bed kits assembled, so if you can help with that, we could use four or five volunteers on March 8. We will also be building an 8' x12' storage shed after all the pavers are laid. The construction crews will work Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m., until the renovation is completed (sometime around mid-April).

If you want to be involved in this project, please contact Steve Brizzi at [steve.brizzi@att.net](mailto:steve.brizzi@att.net) or 870.350.6606, or Glen Robillard at [ghrdri9@gmail.com](mailto:ghrdri9@gmail.com) or 512.963.1448.

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## COMPOST CORNER

### You Can Recycle That

**ADRIANA TREADWAY**

**Compost Demonstration Site team**



Photo by Kenny Jenkins/[flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennyjenkins/)

### **Recycling Electronics**

At the fast rate that electronics become obsolete, more and more electronic waste is being dumped into the landfills. There is, however, one organization here in Northwest Arkansas that offers some help for individuals and small businesses. The nonprofit organization [Free Geek of Arkansas](https://www.freegeek.org/) accepts most things that use electricity by wall outlet, by battery, or by solar panel, including the cables and cords (working and non-working e-waste). They sort donated electronics for re-use, refurbishment, or recycle. All data is wiped from hard drives.

Common electronic items accepted include laptops, desktop towers, all-in-ones, servers, docking stations, monitors, TVs, printers, keyboards, smartphones, tablets, e-readers, stereos, video systems, gaming consoles, cables, power cords, and lamps.

Free Geek of Arkansas is located at 521 W. Ash Street in Fayetteville. Contact them at 479-966-9512 or [info@freegeekarkansas.org](mailto:info@freegeekarkansas.org).

### **Recycling Lithium-Ion and Other Batteries**

*From the [NWA Recycles](https://www.nwa-recycles.com/) website:*

Used lithium-ion batteries, like the ones in cell phones and laptops, vape pens and power tools, don't belong in the trash can or the recycling bin — in fact, they can start a fire in a recycling center or trash truck. But they can safely go to free drop-off locations throughout Northwest Arkansas, which minimizes the risk and allows valuable lithium and other materials to be reused.

Electronics and office supply stores throughout the region also accept devices and their

batteries for recycling. (Note that while some drop-off locations also take alkaline batteries, like alkaline AAs and AAAs, these generally aren't a hazard in the trash.

Drop-off locations in Northwest Arkansas that accept lithium-ion batteries and other varieties of batteries can be found on the NWA Recycles website.

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Photo by Michael Coghlan/ [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcoghlan/)

### **Recycling Car Seats**

Car seats can be difficult to donate to charitable organizations because of safety concerns: their six-year lifespan may be over, they may be damaged, or they may have been recalled by the manufacturer, among other possible issues.

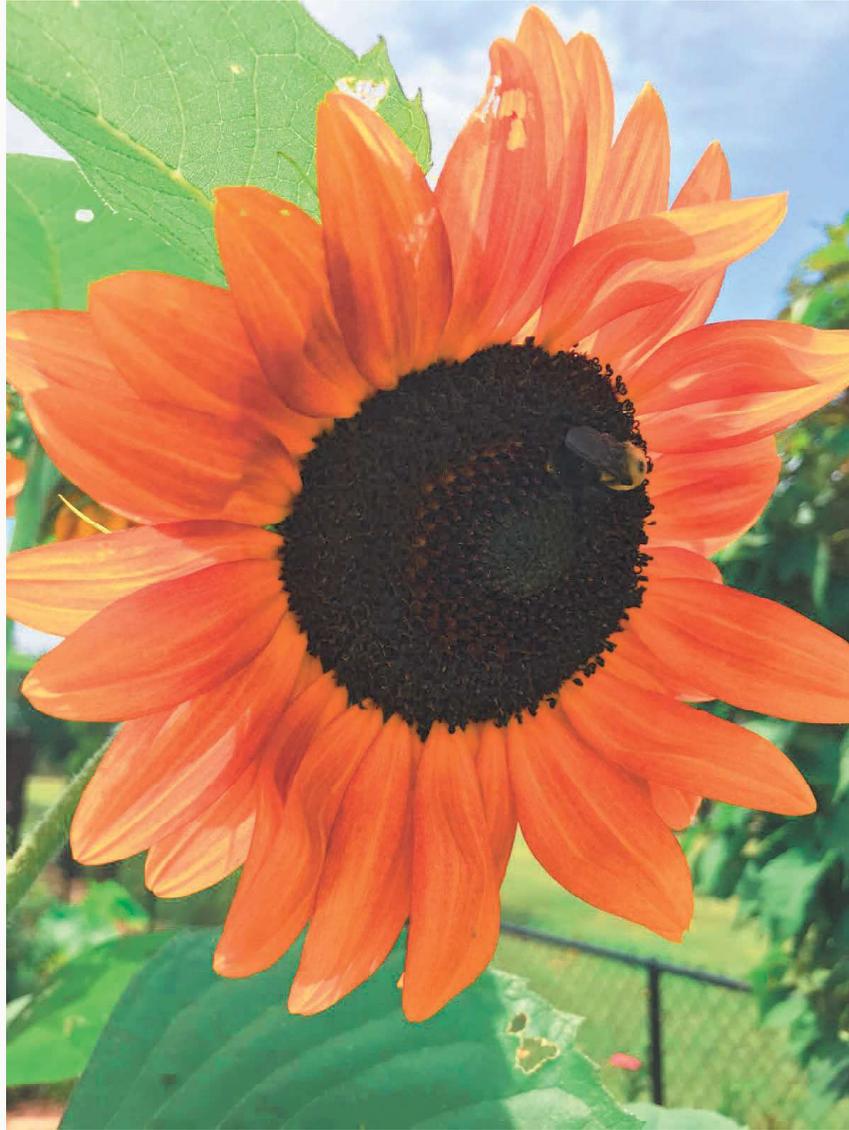
For the last several years, Target has hosted "Car Seat Trade-in" events in the early spring and early fall. This program helps reduce waste and supports the environment. Customers can drop off their old car seats to be recycled to make new products like pallets, plastic buckets, and steel beams. All types of car seats are accepted, including damaged or expired ones. Those who drop off a used car seat will receive a 20% discount on a new car seat, car seat base, stroller, or select baby home gear.

Target's Spring 2025 trade-in event will take place in April, although the exact date has not been released yet.

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**February Photo of the Month Contest:**

# "Flowers, Flowers, Flowers"



**FIRST PLACE**

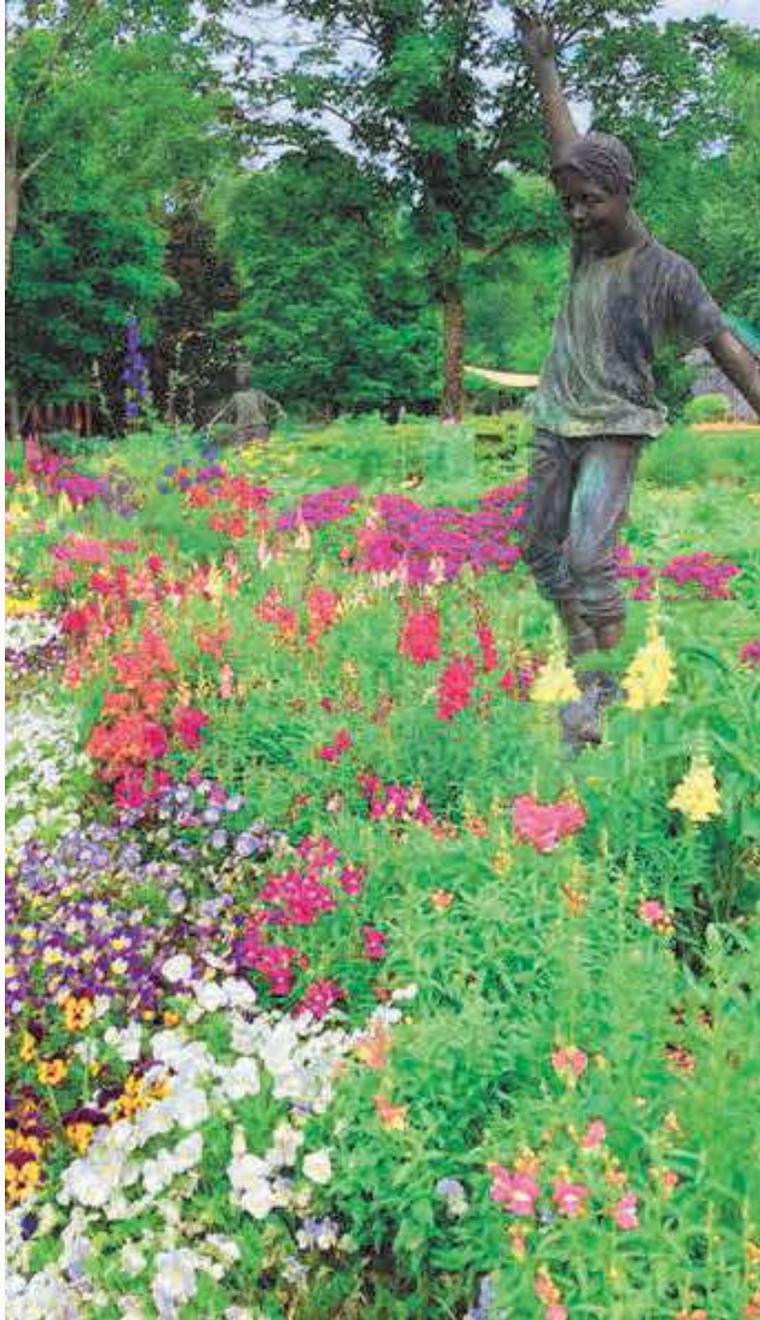
**"Sunny Bee" by Mary Sparks**

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**SECOND PLACE**  
**"Poppy" by Stacy Lake**

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**THIRD PLACE**  
**"Joy" by Roxanne Gallup**

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**The March Photo of the Month contest theme is "Spring Bulbs."** Deadline to enter is March 15. Contest details are available on the [WCMG website](#).

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**Calling All Cornbread Makers**

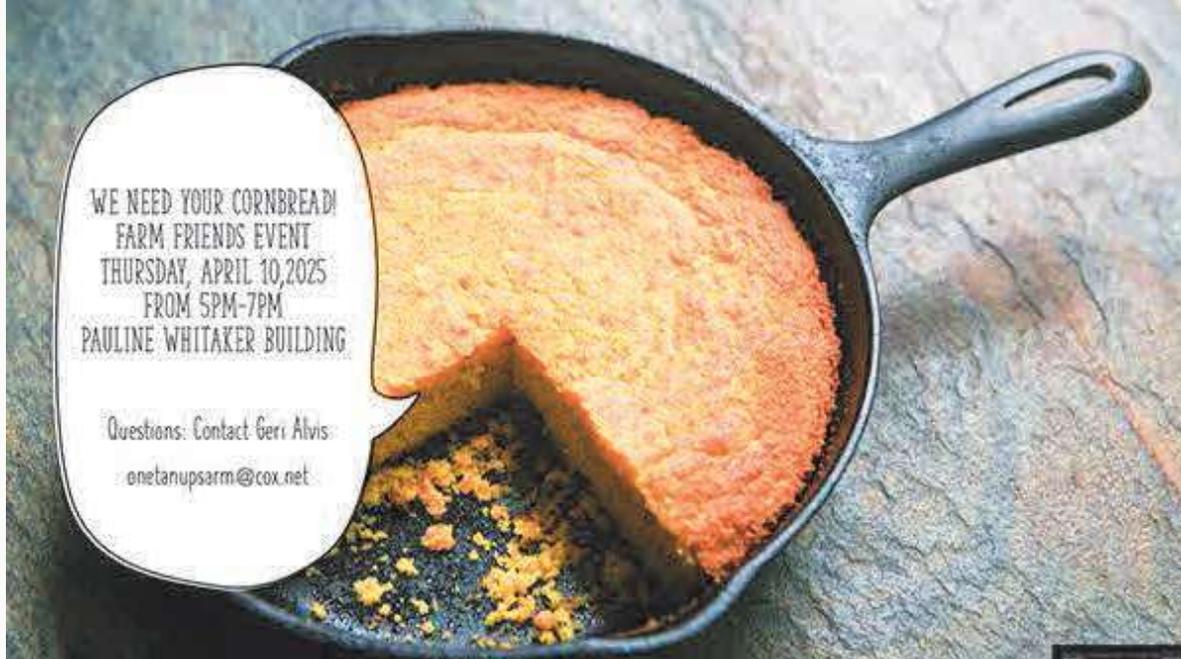


Image courtesy of Alfi Anderson

The Washington County Extension Service's annual Farm Friends event is set for **Thursday, April 10, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.** at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center in Fayetteville. This popular event introduces families and kids of all ages to farm life.

Free beans and cornbread are part of the experience. Yum! Geri Alvis is in charge of rounding up the cornbread, which WCMGs are always kind enough to bake and donate. Geri advises, "We prefer cornbread muffins because they are easier to hand out. If you would rather employ the pan method, please cut your cornbread into squares."

You can help ease Geri's mind by going ahead and letting her know now that you will provide cornbread. (We'll send reminders as the time draws nigh.) **Contact Geri via [email](#) or [call/text her at 479-409-3116](#).**

You'll need to deliver your cornbread on April 10 to either the Extension Office by 4:30 p.m., or directly to the Pauline Whitaker Center, 1335 W. Knapp Drive. [Here's a map showing where the Pauline Whitaker Center is](#). It's right close to the Extension Office.

The time you spend preparing the cornbread can be counted as sanctioned hours. Record your time under "Farm Friends."

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## Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

*This calendar features events close to home. To stay in the know about MG and UADA gardening-related activities across Arkansas, [sign up for the state calendar of events](#) sent by the Extension Service headquarters in Little Rock.*

**FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 2. Times vary. ORCHID SOCIETY OF THE OZARKS**

**SHOW AND SALE.** Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 1, 9:00–11:00 a.m. or 1:00–3:00 p.m. HOBBS HIKING CLUB FOR ADULTS.** Hobbs State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 1, 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. ARKANSAS GARDENING SCHOOL.** Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. \$75. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 1, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. TEAKETTLE FALLS BUSHWHACKING ADVENTURE HIKE.** Ozark Natural Science Center, 1905 Madison 1305, Huntsville. \$20. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 1, 2:00–3:00 p.m. CONSERVATION IN ACTION .** J. B. and Johnelle Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 2, 9:00–9:30 a.m. SEEDS ON THE MOVE.** Devil’s Den State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 2, 2:00–3:00 p.m. SOIL BLOCKING WORKSHOP WITH SACRED HOLLOW FARM.** White River Nursery. \$30. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 6, 6:30–8:00 p.m. SOON TO BE SPRING WORKSHOP! TOTE BAG PAINTING AND SEASONAL BOUQUET CREATING.** Samantha’s Garden, 2606 E Central Ave, Bentonville. \$69. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 9, 2:00–3:30 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: SEED STARTING.** Lavender & Sage Homestead, 1008 Argyll Lane, Cave Springs. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 13, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: SUCCESSION PLANTING.** Zoom program by UADA staff. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 13, 9:30–11:30 a.m. EDUCATION VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION.** Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 15, 8:40–11:00 a.m. LAKE FAYETTEVILLE EXPLORATION: SIGNS OF SPRING.** Ozark Natural Science Center @ Lake Fayetteville. Donation. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 15, 9:00 a.m. BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES AT SHORES LAKE.** Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 15, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. GARDENING Q&A WITH MARK CAIN.** Apple Seeds Teaching Farm. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 15 or 16, 11:00 a.m.– 1:30 p.m. TREES OF HOBBS AND ARKANSAS ARBOR DAY TABLETOP.** Hobbs State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 15, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. OZARK GREEN THUMBS LECTURE SERIES: RAISED BED GARDENING.** Washington County Cooperative Extension Office. \$5. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 16, 9:00–9:45 a.m. WOODY PLANT WALK.** Devil’s Den State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 16, 2:00–3:00 p.m. FRIENDS OF HOBBS SPEAKER SERIES: THE ART OF BIRD FEEDING.** Hobbs State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 17, 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 not required. [Email Randy Forst for the Zoom link.](#)

**MARCH 19, 6:00–7:00 p.m. NATURE SEEING NATURE: A POETRY WORKSHOP.** Fayetteville Public Library. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 19, 6:30 p.m. ARCHEOLOGY OF NATIVE FOODS .** Presented by Dr. Michelle Rathgaber. Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. In person and Zoom. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 20, 4:00–4:45 p.m. HIKING BASICS.** Devil’s Den State Park. Free. [For more](#)

information.

**MARCH 21, 2:00–2:30 p.m. LISTENING WALK.** Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 22, 3:00–3:30 p.m. BIRD SONG SYMPHONIES.** Devil's Den State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

**MARCH 22, 5:00–6:00 p.m. UNVEILING THE SECRETS OF SOIL: A PANEL DISCUSSION.** Wild Ones @ White River Nursery. Free. [Registration information.](#)

**MARCH 29, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. ORGANIC FRUIT GROWING WITH GUY AMES.** Apple Seeds Teaching Farm. Free. [Registration information.](#)

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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

Judy Smith, managing editor/submissions; Mary McCully, editor/submissions and videos; Pam Butler, reporter; Olivia Harrington, reporter; Lynette Terrell, reporter; Susan Young, production assistant.

Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith or Mary McCully.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Alfi Anderson, president; Pam Butler, vice president; Carole Ball, secretary; Julie Murray, treasurer; Stephanie McGuire, assistant treasurer. Members at large: Rick Oliver, Marty Powers, Judi Sartwell. Ex officio: Liz Hale, past president; Colin Massey, Washington County extension agent for agriculture and horticulture.

*Banner photo of thyme courtesy Lucy Meskill/flickr*



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(public)



WCMG Facebook Group  
(private)



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WCMG website



Washington County  
Extension Service website

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