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Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • May 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."**

MAY MEETING

Year-Round Gardening for Birds

We hope to see you all at our May 6 meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2925 Old Missouri Road, Fayetteville. ([Here's a map.](#))

Our guest speaker is Lauren Eno, education director for Wild Birds Unlimited in Fayetteville, where she shares her love and deep knowledge of wildlife, songbirds, and environmental science with audiences of all ages. With a degree in environmental science and growing up as a bird watcher in Vermont, Lauren has been successfully teaching wildlife education for nearly a decade across the country. She is a sought-out speaker and takes pride in providing high-quality, entertaining, and informational topics to the Northwest



Arkansas community. Since she started with Wild Birds

Unlimited in 2020, Lauren has been teaching local customers, adults, and children by helping them create their ideal birdwatching oasis, facilitating custom feederscaping, leading seasonal bird walks across the region, and teaching students the importance of creating a healthy and responsible habitat for birds and other creatures.

So, whether you want to know how to attract more species to your yard, what to feed or how to house songbirds, or where to see our many colorful bird species, come go "explorin' with Lauren."

Taking Care of Business

We will vote on this item at our May 6 monthly business meeting.

April 2025 Meeting Minutes

September 2024 Treasurer's Report

October 2024 Treasurer's Report

November 2024 Treasurer's Report

December 2024 Treasurer's Report

From Your President

ALFI ANDERSON

Snakes, Weeds, Ticks, Chiggers, and Sun—Oh My!

Spring in Arkansas is a season full of life—and surprises. One day it's sunshine and birdsong, the next it's thunder and wind. The old saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers," and while that's true, May also brings a few extra guests into our gardens—some more welcome than others!

As you head outside to dig, plant, and enjoy the beauty of the season, remember we're not alone out there.

I've already been surprised by three snakes this spring! I nearly hung up my gardening hat and handed the garden over to them. But then I remembered—they don't know how to pull weeds! So, here I am, back out there with my gloves and shovel, keeping one eye on the ground and one on the blooms.



Here are a few springtime safety reminders for every gardener:

- **Snakes.** Most are harmless and even helpful but be alert. Use gloves and tools when working in brush, wood piles, or thick undergrowth. *Educational bonus:* Snake identification counts for Master Gardener education hours—so that surprise sighting can turn into a learning opportunity!

- **Poisonous Plants.** Poison ivy and poison oak are thriving this time of year. Learning to identify and avoid them—it's another great topic for education hours and an important part of gardening safely.
- **Weeds.** They never take a day off. Tackle them early, but don't forget to pace yourself and stay hydrated. Your back and knees will thank you.
- **Ticks and Chiggers.** Long pants, insect repellent, and a good scrub after garden time can help prevent bites. Chigger bites are the stuff of nightmares!
- **The Sun.** Even on cooler days, UV rays can do damage. Wear a hat, apply sunscreen, and drink plenty of water.

And don't forget—May Day is May 1! It's a wonderful tradition to make a little basket of flowers and share it with a friend or neighbor. What better way to spread the beauty and joy of gardening than with a small gift of blooms from your own yard?

Mark your calendar: Our next Washington County Master Gardeners meeting is Monday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We'd love to see you there!

So, take time to prepare before you go out in the garden. Your skin, your health, and your peace of mind are worth it. There's so much to enjoy in nature, and a little caution helps make sure we can keep enjoying it all season long.

Happy May, and happy gardening!

Garden Gate Tour Call for Volunteers

DANNA GREAR
Garden Gate Tour Committee



Our annual Garden Gate Tour is quickly approaching. The garden hosts are planting, weeding, mulching, and fertilizing as they prepare for the event on Saturday, June 14, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Many of you have signed up to volunteer to help with this event, and a number of you have already worked with some of our garden owners to help get their beds in tip top shape. If you have not already volunteered to work on the day of the tour or to help our garden owners with prep work, you still have time to sign up. Please email [Danna Grear](#) or text 479-841-6402 to add your name to the list.

Our second (and final) volunteer training meeting is June 2, 5:30–6:30 p.m. at the Washington County Extension Office. In order to receive a free ticket to the Garden Gate Tour, volunteers must attend one of the training sessions and volunteer on or before the day of the event. If you attended the first training, you are welcome but not required to attend the second training as well.

For those of you who are not volunteering, tickets to the event can be purchased online at our Washington County Master Gardener website. [Here's a link to the Garden Gate Tour page on our website](#). Please spread the word to your friends and family members, and make sure to like and share our social media posts on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Climbing Roses: How to Train Them

TALYA TATE BOERNER



Photo by Talya Tate Boerner.

In our garden this spring, I've been training my climbing roses. They are still learning to follow directions, so technically that makes them trainees. So am I. Believe me, I am NOT a rose expert by any stretch of the imagination. But we are fast learners. Today I'm gonna show you our process. Early last fall, we planted two climbing roses (their names are Rosie and Daphne) at separate ends of our rock wall. Other than planting them, we pretty much did nothing to them all winter, other than we made sure they had water. A few months later, before they began putting on spring growth, I started training them using a process called pegging. Pegging works rather well, especially in a small garden space. And the best thing about pegging your roses is that blooms will increase significantly.

Roses want to be good garden citizens. Some varieties need to be taught. Click [HERE](#) for more! (This link will take you to Talya's blog on her [Grace, Grits and Gardening](#) website.)

COMPOST CORNER

Tending to an Anaerobic (Wet) Compost Pile

ADRIANA TREADWAY
Compost Demonstration Site Project



Photo by Jason Baker/[flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/jasonbaker/)

April showers bring May flowers, but they also create an anaerobic environment that creates odor and slows down the efficiency of the compost pile. Aerobes—the beneficial microbes—require oxygen. When the pile is compressed with water, aerobes die off. This is why it is crucial to control wet or soggy materials in compost piles.

Let us explore the significance of water in composting. Properly setting up a compost pile involves using water along with organic materials to achieve the consistency of a damp rung-out sponge. Ideally this dampness should be maintained after the original set up.

While your compost pile might start off well, regular monitoring and maintenance are essential to prevent it from remaining overly damp, especially after heavy periods of rain.

The location of your compost pile is of paramount importance. Ensure the chosen site has adequate drainage and is situated in an area with partial sun to avoid full sun exposure, which can quickly dry out the compost.

Excessive rain can create a soggy and underperforming pile. Keep dry materials like leaves, straw, or partially decomposed wood chips near your pile. Use of a large trash can with a lid to store these materials for easy access is useful.

Water should be added to the compost pile during aeration, when new materials are incorporated, or during long periods of no rain. If the pile is observed to be dry, use a fork or aerator to turn the materials and add water as needed.

A well-aerated and regularly tended compost pile will remain odor-free and promote microbial activity and ensuring effective composting. If you do not have time to work the pile, it will work on its own, although possibly not as quickly, efficiently, or odor-free as a well-

tended pile.

"Compost happens" regardless of rain or human intervention.

Visit the Washington County Master Composter Demonstration Site on the campus of the Washington County Extension Office to learn about the numerous ways to compost at home. [Sign up for our quarterly Master Composter newsletter](#) for tips on reducing landfill waste and local recycling resources.

2025 Garden Gate Tour Sneak Peeks

JUDY SMITH

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.

Tickets for the Garden Gate Tour are available for purchase online at the WCMG website's [Garden Gate Tour webpage](#).

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

Photos courtesy of the garden owners.



BeBe's Garden on Mockingbird Hill

Bebe's Garden on Mockingbird Hill in Wesley (Madison County) is filled with love filtering through generations of gardeners. Gary's Aunt Mona and Becky's grandmothers, Minnie and Ellen, all had large old-fashioned gardens. Bebe's Garden today is blessed to have ferns and cockscomb that have been in the family for four generations. The Chaney's children, Clay and Stephanie, are also avid gardeners growing both vegetables and flowers and carrying on the family tradition.

Gary and Becky Chaney have lived at Mockingbird Hill for 25 years. A 60x60 square-foot flower garden complete with paths existed and gave them a good foundation for the garden that exists today. Flowers and shrubs were added along with annuals and perennials. One can sit in the garden and enjoy the outdoors thanks to the swings, benches, chairs, brick patio, and wisteria-covered pergola.



Many small beds of annuals and perennials have been added that surround the vintage 1867 home. A plant and seed exchange was started 5 years ago in May. Interest continues to develop with over 100 attending during each of the past two years. The exchange reminds the Chaney's of the way their families traded flowers in the past. The best description of their gardens would be "experimental and ever-changing and filled with love."



Mayo Hill

Mrs. Almyra Love, the previous owner and gardener of my farm, once wrote in 1976 in her weekly "Ozark Nature Notes" column for the *Washington County Observer*, "I regret we can't simply sit down and talk and discuss specimens and go exploring or walk around my yard." Through her writing and her farm, she sought to inspire others to appreciate and nurture the natural world in their own backyards, creating a sanctuary of food, water, and shelter for wild birds.

Thirty years ago, after Mrs. Love's passing at the age of 99, my husband, Ned, and I purchased her farm. Building upon the foundation she established, we expanded and refined the garden spaces to further welcome birds, bees, and other wildlife. We transformed the backyard landscape by introducing large island beds anchored by established trees (jujube, possumhaw) and woody shrubs (bladdernut), surrounded by a vibrant mix of perennials, grasses, and colorful annuals.

Over the years, we have added many additional trees, including weeping bald cypress, seven-son flower, ginkgo, and katsura and Japanese maples, as well as shrubs such as hydrangeas, Tiger Eyes™ sumac, and sourwood. These additions have enriched the garden's habitat, creating a haven for wildlife.

Water sources such as a salvaged trough, hollowed rocks, and vintage birdbaths ensure year-round availability, while martin houses and a bluebird trail with 14 nesting boxes provide further sanctuary.



Throughout the garden, large boulders and rocks play a central role. They define beds, create pathways, and serve as retaining walls. Some stand as monoliths, anchoring beds or functioning as standing stones that lend a sense of stability and permanence to the garden's design.

The objects found in the garden reflect my personality and interests. A plow-disc ball, crafted from discs from my brother's Texas farm, is a unique feature. Salvaged fence wire has been fashioned into a 55-pound barbed wire ball. A repurposed manhole, veneered with chop blocks removed from our home during renovation, now serves as the base for a Harry Lauder's walking stick and ornamental grasses. These same chop blocks are also utilized in pathways, a bench, and an art installation. Many other objects scattered throughout the garden evoke personal memories or simply bring joy.

I hope that as you explore the gardens at Mayo Hill, you'll feel the spirit of Mrs. Love's original vision and sense her presence living on through the vibrant spaces we've nurtured.

Meet the Trainees

OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL

Kim Coslett

My childhood was not like *The Waltons* or *Little House on the Prairie*, but more like a combination of *The Brady Bunch* and *Father Knows Best*.

I was born in Ibaraki, Japan, and lived in an orphanage until I was five years old, when I was adopted by an American family. I grew up in Los Angeles and Mobile, Alabama. Instead of oak trees and maples, we had orange, apricot, and pomegranate trees in our yard. In junior high, I took an agricultural class. Our class project was sowing radish seeds and harvesting them. That was the closest thing to a farming experience I had ever had. My siblings and I would visit my grandparents in Mountain Home and Branson, where they had a garden. That was the extent of my experience with garden fresh vegetables until I came to Arkansas after serving in the Navy.



I went to the University of Arkansas to study architecture. They had just started a program in landscape architecture. I entered the program, but it didn't feel right. I became restless. I was introduced to Dr. Al Einert, a horticulture professor in the UA's College of Agriculture. Dr. Einert was a landscape architect. He told me about landscape design and urban horticulture. He became my advisor and taught me about the horticulture field.

I've been fortunate to work in so many areas: the nursery industry, golf courses, designing campgrounds, and in residential and commercial landscapes. The field is ever-changing and that is why the Master Gardener's program was on my bucket list after my retirement. I attended many seminars by Janet Carson through the Arkansas Master Gardener program. Little did I know that volunteering is a big part of being a Master Gardener.

The last several years my interests have involved collecting and growing different plants that you don't find in the local nurseries and big-box stores. I have a collection of hostas, (no, I don't have a deer problem). Horticulturist Carl Totemeier got me hooked on them. He was an inspiration and a wealth of information. Trillium, ferns, lungworts, bleeding hearts, coneflowers, and milkweeds are part of my collection. It's getting harder to care for my citrus trees, mandevillas, bougainvillea, and tropical hibiscus. I also have the red Japanese maples, hollies, and roses in my yard.

I look forward to making a difference in the community, getting dirty, learning from others, and the opportunity for fellowship with the people I meet.

Jessica Guillory

Growing up and then raising my three children in Eureka Springs, I mimicked the women who came before me and grew food, kept flower beds, and tended a flock of hens. My family owns two restaurants and so I grew up in kitchens surrounded by fresh ingredients turned into meals that brought people pleasure. Focusing on growing our food became my primary pursuit in gardening.

After moving to Fayetteville six years ago with my husband



and youngest daughter, I began gardening in raised beds on my smaller space and keep a smaller flock. With a desire to spread the joy and ease that this brought in growing our food, I started a business to teach others to garden in their own small plots, Sprouted Kitchen Gardens. I especially love teaching young families how to grow their own food.

My primary client is New Beginnings in south Fayetteville, teaching people who have been chronically homeless to grow and process their own food. Through this work I have learned so much about human experience and have witnessed the beautiful therapeutic effect that gardening can have. This led me to investigate how best to utilize my experience as a rehabilitation counselor, an educator, and a gardener, and take this garden transformation magic to its fullest potential.

Last year, I completed my certification in horticultural therapy and began incorporating more purposeful therapeutic practices into the garden lessons at New Beginnings. Continuing my education through the Master Gardeners has been very rewarding and I am thrilled to meet and work alongside fellow passionate gardeners! When not playing in the soil, I love to hike, bike, knit, and play board games.

Terri Speer

Gardening makes me happy! Container gardens are my specialty. Mixing colors, heights, and textures feels like painting with flowers. I believe my love of gardening came from my mother. We would spend spring and summer weekends hunting for flowers, pots, and other garden novelties. I treasure the time we spent creating our flowering masterpieces.

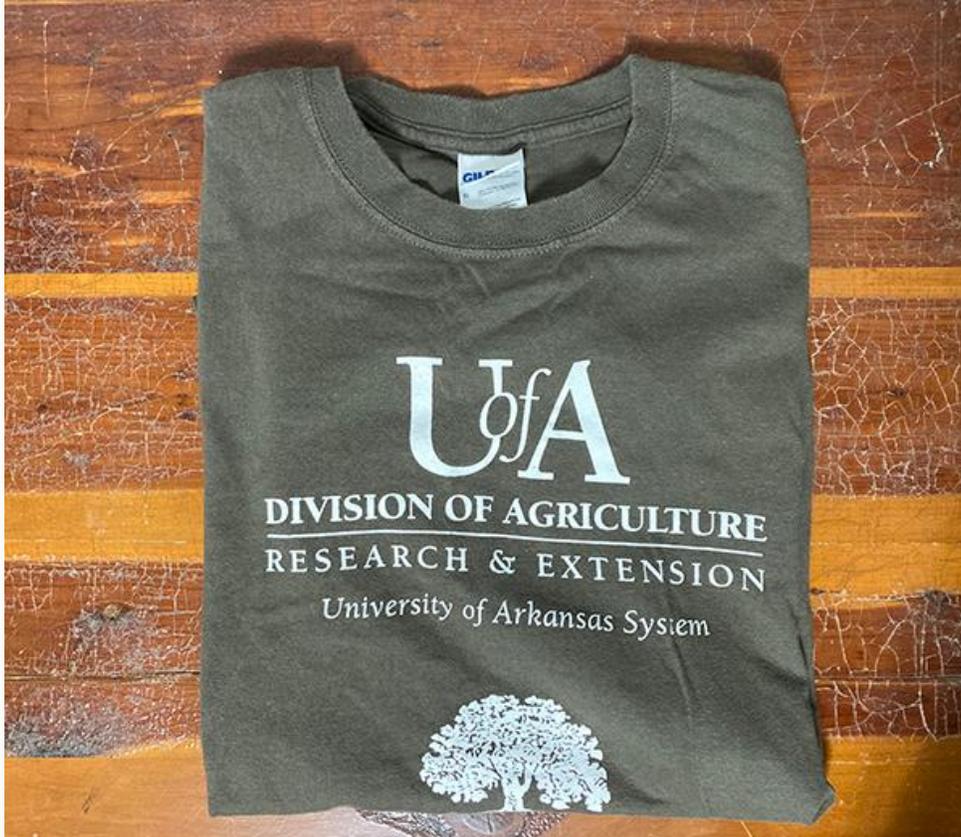


I was born in Tennessee and lived in several other states until my family settled in south Arkansas. I came to the University of Arkansas as a dance major in 1976. I met my husband there and graduated with degrees in education. I worked with special needs students for 39 years and then semi-retired during Covid. I now work part-time in a law office. When not working, you can find me at the gym, playing with our Old English Sheepdog rescues, dancing, or, of course, in the garden!

Being a Master Gardener has been on my to-do list for quite some time. With encouragement from friends, I applied and am very happy to be part of such a supportive group.

Send Your SWAG My Way!

KAREN HANNA-TOWNE
SWAG Impresaria



Here's an example of WCMG SWAG. The "Washington County Master Gardeners" wording is not visible here. It's placed underneath the tree logo, such that it accentuates the paunch of the WCMG who owns this shirt. And that's why she is donating the shirt to the SWAG event.

It's almost that time of year—the annual picnic. Besides great food and lots of visiting it's a time for new tee shirts and other SWAG. What's SWAG? It's Something We All Get!

Please check your closets and drawers for tee shirts you no longer wear, for sweatshirts, denim shirts, jackets, aprons, tote bags, writing pads, water bottles – anything that says WASHINGTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS on it. Arkansas Master Gardener items will also be appreciated. Just an FYI: no one except a WCMG is allowed to wear this stuff, so we share it amongst ourselves.

Your items should be in good condition and clean. We will give out raffle tickets to our trainees and they will get first choice from among the available items. If there are extra items other members will also be allowed to choose.

I have a bag with a few shirts left from last year, but I need a lot more in order for each trainee to get something. Please drop your clean items off at the Extension Office during their business hours. I'll be eternally grateful!

April Photo of the Month Contest: "Flowering Trees/Shrubs"



FIRST PLACE
"Redbud" by Roxanne Gallup



SECOND PLACE
"Morning Blush" by Leslie Bailey



THIRD PLACE
"Bewitching" by Sarah Teague

The May Photo of the Month contest theme is "Shade Lovers (Plants and Shade Gardens)" Deadline to enter is May 15. Contest details are available on the [WCMG website](#).

[Here's a quick link to the 2025 photo contest themes](#)

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.

MAY 1, 11:00–11:45 a.m. NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY ON THE MONUMENT TRAILS HIKE. Devil's Den State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

MAY 1, 6:00–7:30 p.m. THE EASE OF GARDENING. Presented by Tarsha Shepherd. Fayetteville Public Library Walker Community Room. Free. No registration. [For more information.](#)

MAY 2–4, DEVIL'S DEN STATE PARK'S ANNUAL BIRDER WEEKEND. Devil's Den State Park. Free. [Schedule of events.](#)

MAY 3, 8:40–11:00 a.m. OZARK EXPLORATION: MUSHROOM MEANDERINGS. Ozark Natural Science Center main campus, 1905 Madison 1305, Huntsville. By donation. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 3, 9:00–11 a.m. BIRDER'S WEEKEND AT DEVIL'S DEN. Hosted by Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society and Devil's Den State Park. Free. RSVP to trips@nwarkaudubon.org. [For more information.](#)

MAY 3, 9:30–11:00 a.m. NATIVE GARDEN TOUR @ THE RAMBLE. Hosted by the Wild Ones-Ozark Chapter. 255 S. West Avenue, Fayetteville. Free. [For more information.](#)

MAY 3, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. FROM FOREST TO TABLE: SPRING FORAGING BASICS. Ozark Natural Science Center @Mount Kessler, 1725 Smoke House Trail, Fayetteville. \$15 for adults. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 3, 2:00–3:00 p.m. WILDFLOWERS: MORE THAN WEEDS. Hobbs State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

MAY 5, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. BLOOMING BEAUTIES: A HANDS-ON FLORAL WORKSHOP. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) class with facilitator Lindsey White. \$59 OLLI member/\$74 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 6, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: SWEET POTATOES . Zoom program by UADA staff. Free. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 8–10, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. (recurring event) HANGING BASKET SALE. Peel Museum and Botanical Garden, Bentonville. \$20. [For more information.](#)

MAY 8, 10:00 a.m. FIELD TRIP TO THE ROB AND MELANI WALTON PRESERVE. Hosted by Ozark Chapter, Arkansas Native Plant Society. Ford Road, Garfield.

Free. [For more information.](#)

MAY 8, 1:00–3:00 p.m. ILLUMINATING THE NIGHT: UNDERSTANDING AND MITIGATING LIGHT POLLUTION. OLLI class with facilitator Kent Marts. \$25 OLLI member/\$40 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 9, 6:00–8:00 p.m. ART BY THE GLASS: CREATING COPPER FLOWERS . Crystal Bridges Durand/Estes Room. \$32 Crystal Bridges member/\$40 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 10, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY GUIDED HIKE. Ozark Natural Science Center at Lake Fayetteville, 599 E. Lakeview Drive, Springdale. \$20 for adults. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 10, 9:00–11:00 a.m. MILKWEED GIVEAWAY. Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Springdale. Free. (Donations accepted.) [For more information.](#)

MAY 10, 11 a.m.–12:00 p.m. FORAGING IN THE OZARKS . Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Springdale. Free. Also available for online viewing via Zoom. Registration required. [For more information.](#)

MAY 13, 5:30–6:30 p.m. OZARK GREEN THUMBS LECTURE SERIES: GARDEN PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION. Washington County Cooperative Extension Office. \$5. [For more information.](#)

MAY 14, 9:00–11:00 a.m. FIELD BIRDING BASICS . OLLI class with facilitator Lauren Eno. \$25 OLLI member/\$40 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 17, 8:00–11:00 a.m. CERULEAN WARBLERS AT ROB AND MELANIE WALTON PRESERVE. NWA Audubon Society. Free. RSVP to trips@nwarkaudubon.org. [For more information.](#)

MAY 17, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. NATIVE PLANT SALE. Hosted by Wild Ones-Ozark Chapter. GOAT LAB Brewery, 722 S. Bloomington, Lowell. [For more information.](#)

MAY 17, 4:00–8:00 p.m. CALL OF THE WILD. Ozark Natural Science Center @Lake Fayetteville, 599 E. Lakeview Drive, Springdale. \$25 for adults. [For more information.](#)

MAY 18, 2:00–3:30 p.m. BOTANICAL SKETCHERS OF THE OZARKS. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). \$5 BGO member/\$15 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 19, 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](#) OR [sign up for the state calendar of events](#) sent by the Extension Service headquarters in Little Rock.

MAY 24, 9:00–10:00 a.m. BIRDING HIKE ON SINKING STREAM . Hobbs State Park Van Winkle Trailhead. [For more information.](#)

MAY 25, 2:00–3:00 p.m. AN AFTERNOON OF LOCAL POETRY. Presented by Suzanne de Leon Huff and WCMG LaDeana Mullinix. Fayetteville Public Library Walker Community Room. Free. No registration. [For more information.](#)

MAY 30–31. OVERNIGHT OZARK NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER CAMP FOR ADULTS. OLLI event. \$175 OLLI member/\$190 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

MAY 31, 2:00 p.m. GULLEY PARK'S NATIVE PLANT GARDENS: FIVE YEARS OF GROWTH. Hosted by Wild Ones-Ozark Chapter. Gulley Park, Fayetteville. Free. [For more information.](#)

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.

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