

[View this email in your browser](#)



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • July 2025



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* 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."**

JULY MEETING

Branching Out: Native Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines for NWA Gardens

Hope to see you at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 1, at 6:30 p.m., in the air-conditioned comfort of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2925 Old Missouri Road, Fayetteville. [Here's a map showing the location of Good Shepherd](#)

Our guest speaker is Jennifer Ogle, a botanist, collections manager of the [University of Arkansas Herbarium](#), and instructor of botany courses in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas. She holds an M.S. in biology from the University of Arkansas and regularly conducts outreach to the university community and public on the

conservation of native plants and their habitats, invasive plant species issues, and the importance of using genetically appropriate native plants for habitat restoration. Jennifer is co-editor of the 2013 publication *Atlas of the Vascular Plants of Arkansas* and co-author of the 2020 field guide *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of Arkansas*. She has served on the board of the Arkansas Native Plant Society for the past 11 years and is a partner of the Arkansas Native Seed Program.



Taking Care of Business

We will vote on these items at our July 1 monthly business meeting. (There was no business meeting in June due to the frivolity of the annual picnic.)

[May 2025 Business Meeting Minutes](#)

[January 2025 Treasurer's Report](#)

[February 2025 Treasurer's Report](#)

[March 2025 Treasurer's Report](#)

From Your President

ALFI ANDERSON

Dancing in the Rain—and Looking Ahead to a Summer of Celebration

What a wet and wild start to the summer! As of this writing, Northwest Arkansas has received 37.17 inches of rainfall year-to-date, significantly above the average of 23.86 inches for the same time period. Wow! Mother Nature has been generous with the watering can this season.

Even with all this rain, our spirits haven't been dampened one bit. Our 2025 Garden Gate Tour on June 14 was a glowing success. Despite the showers throughout the event, our Master Gardeners smiled, shared, and yes—even danced in the rain. The rain boots and umbrellas were out in full force, and the joy and pride in our gardens still shone through. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped organize, hosted, volunteered, and attended. You showed the true spirit of what it means to be a Washington County Master Gardener: resilient, joyful, and dedicated.



Looking ahead, our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. You won't want to miss this one! We'll be recognizing our Busy

Bees and honoring members for their years of service. We've all worked so hard through the wind, the rain, and soon the heat—it's time to celebrate! **To make the evening even more fun, we're encouraging everyone to wear your brightest Hawaiian shirt** and join us for a festive evening of recognition and fellowship. Let's celebrate the people who make our projects thrive and who continue to spread beauty throughout our community, rain or shine.

The summer heat is just around the corner, and with it comes more opportunities to grow, to gather, and to give back. Thank you for all you do, and we'll see you July 1—aloha style!

Garden Gate Tour Report

DANNA GREAR
Garden Gate Tour Committee



Tour day photo by Laura Underwood.

Our 2025 Garden Gate Tour was a whopping success. The day started out beautifully but before noon, the rains rolled in. We had a short heavy rain but other than that just light rain off and on for the rest of the day. Visitors were undeterred by the rain, strolling through the gardens with their umbrellas. The overcast skies highlighted all the beautiful colors in the gardens.

We sold 388 tickets and provided 71 complimentary tickets to Master Gardener volunteers for a total of 459 tickets.

We want to thank all the Master Gardeners who volunteered on the day of the tour as well as those who worked behind the scenes in the gardens before the tour. A special shout out goes to the volunteers at the Elkins sanctioned project. They put in hundreds of hours and had their gardens and educational stations in tip top shape! What a great example of WCMG work for the public to experience!

We are already planning for next year's tour. If you know of someone who has a beautiful garden, regardless of the size, please put us in touch with them. We will be focusing on central Fayetteville out to the western edge of the city. You can send names and contact information to Danna Gear (479-841-6402), Laura Underwood (479-790-7773), or Ruthanne Hill (479-790-3382).



Tour day photo by Laura Underwood.

Round Up Your White Elephants

DORIS CASSIDY and KATHY LAUNDER
Washington County Fair Project co-chairs



Photo by C. R. Strebtor/ [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/crstrebtor/)

Please gather your gently used items for our “White Elephant” sale at the Washington County Fair.

We will take:

- Kitchen items – pots, pans, dishes
- Gardening items – plants, old tools, pots, gardening supplies
- Knick-knacks – You may not need it anymore but it might be someone else’s treasure.

We will not take:

- Clothing, shoes, furniture

Please bring your items to the July and/or August WCMG meetings. We will gladly take them for you.

Happy sorting!

How to Make an Insect Hotel (And Why You Should)

TALYA TATE BOERNER



Photo courtesy of Talya Tate Boerner.

I discovered my first insect hotel at the [Denver Botanic Gardens](#) in 2018. Since then, I've been enamored with them. Not only do insect hotels provide a bit of garden whimsy, but they attract solitary native bees, wasps, and other beneficial insects desperately needed for pollination. Pollinators are on the decline for various reasons—mostly due to habitat loss. Without pollinators, we may as well call it a day. Pollinators are essential to the creation and maintenance of the earth's ecosystem. Eighty to ninety percent of all flowering plants need pollinators. Pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat. Click [HERE](#) for more info! (This link will take you to Talya's blog on her [Grace, Grits and Gardening](#) website.)

Meet the Trainees

OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL

Calinda Green

Hello! I've lived in Farmington for almost twenty years. My husband and I moved here from south Arkansas in 2006. We have three kiddos, Kailey (26), Shelby (19), and Wesley (16). I am on year twenty-six as a registered nurse and operate a personal care agency in Fayetteville.

My love of gardening began when my mom started a hydrangea for me when we bought our home in Farmington. The hydrangea had been started by my grandmother and given to my mother when she and my father bought their home, grown from a plant which had been started by my great-grandmother when my great-



grandpa returned home from World War II. During my years of rearing kids while working full time, that hydrangea was hard work to keep alive!

For many years, my husband and I kept a large vegetable garden behind our church that helped supply the church's food pantry. We kept our kids busy "helping" in the garden. As they grew, we added a vegetable garden in our suburban backyard, chickens and rabbits for 4-H projects, and compost bins. We grew mealworms and added fruit trees and berry plants. We fit as much as we could into our small back yard.

Now that our children are an accountant (Kailey), in college (Shelby), and rocking in a band (Wesley), I've found my passion for flower gardening. A few years ago, I was given several Pauline Henry daylilies from the Benton County Master Gardeners at a festival and that kicked off my garden transformation from veggies to flowers. (If you are interested in daylilies, consider joining me in the Northwest Arkansas Daylily Society.)

As you all know, the garden is ever changing. This year, our very large willow tree was blown down in the spring windstorms, so reworking most of my garden from shade to sun is keeping me busy! I spend as much time as I can "piddling" in the garden, keeping tabs on the pollinators, and watching the bird families come and go.

Julie Torseth

It is energizing for me to be part of a group of Master Gardeners from whom I can learn. This has been my experience as a gardener from a young age. Other people in love with growing plants want to help you grow.



My Grandma Burnice was my first garden teacher. She lived half a mile away, and I passed by her house as I walked to a country school in Nebraska. Her garden had a woven wire fence around the flowers and vegetables and was conveniently close to the back door. I would see her bent over in her house dress, filling her apron with peas, and I knew that we would sit together on the front porch shelling them and talking about my day at school. She let my cousin and me transform the grown-too-large cucumbers and zucchinis into animals with stick legs. But most importantly I watched her pressure can the vegetables she grew, crisp cucumbers into pickles with lime, and cook green beans in cream. Summers at their table, Grandpa said grace and Grandma graced our plates with home cooked food from the garden.

My memory of Grandma was my muse during Covid in 2020. Jim and I established a 60-by-60-foot vegetable garden in Wisconsin filled with as much variety as I could squeeze in. Together with our helper, Mike, we pressure-canned or water-bathed about 500 jars of vegetables, pickles, jams, and condiments, and froze some varieties as well as venison in our walk-in cooler. We processed 80 gallons of apple juice for freezing with our hydraulic water press. (Some gardeners—me—don't have an off button!)

My father was my second teacher. Looking at a stump in the backyard, he suggested we make it into a wagon wheel garden. He made furrows with a hoe where I sowed zinnias, marigolds, cockscomb, bells of Ireland, cosmos, and globe amaranth as the spokes. When the seeds set, I

packaged them in paper bags and labeled and stored them for spring planting. I loved my garden and couldn't wait to get home from third grade to see what had changed since I last visited it.

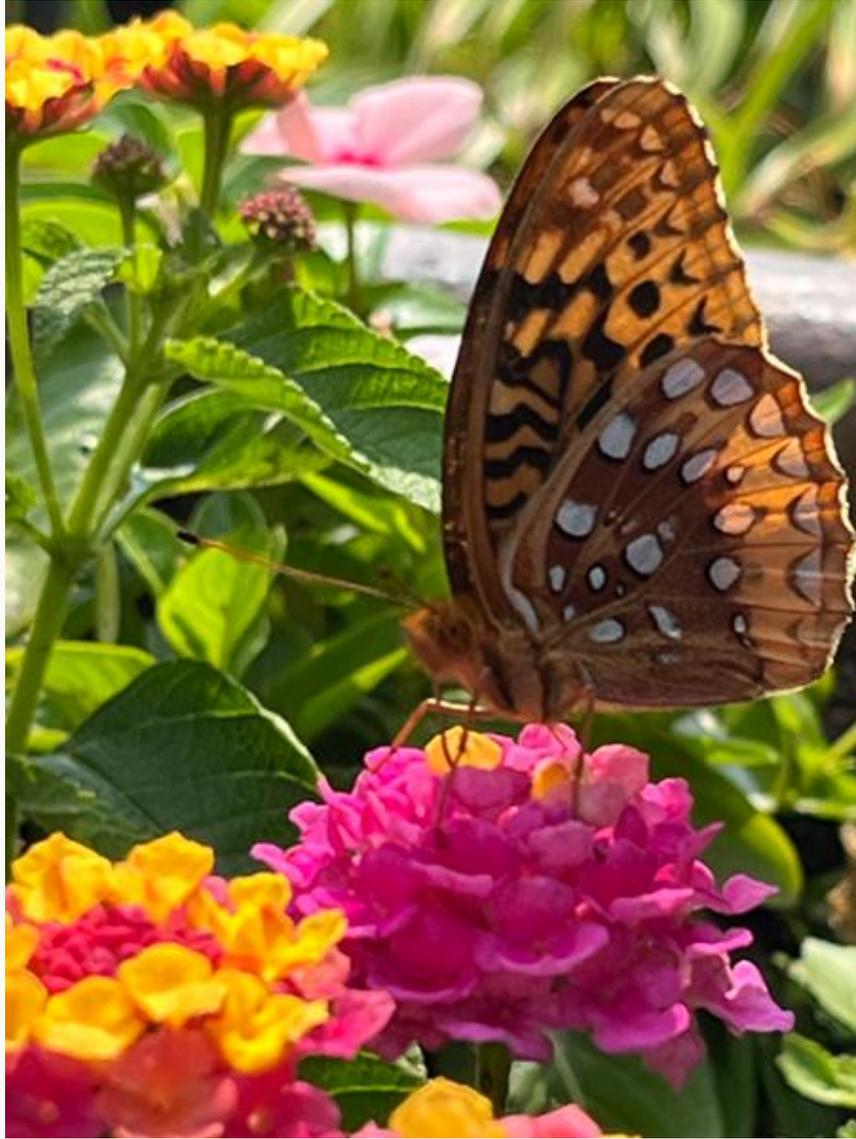
My third teacher was my friend Marilyn Jones in Kansas where I was teaching high school English and German. She fertilized her huge garden with manure from her herd of sheep raised for wool. I helped her with classes that introduced spinners and weavers to dying with native plants that grew in remnant prairies nearby. Come winter, Marilyn would call about a new variety of vegetable she had gleaned from the catalogues she amassed along with every book ever published about gardening. I'd say, "Order a packet for me too!" At Christmastime, we served paying guests meals prepared from preserves and dehydrated ingredients picked from our gardens at her little cabin (which we called Little House on the Prairie), eating by candlelight with fragrant dried herbs hanging from the wooden beams.

Marilyn urged me to open my home by reservation as a farm-to-table food venue (before this was a named concept). I grew the vegetables and enjoyed planning and preparing four-course meals that introduced unusual ingredients, e.g. Jerusalem artichokes in salads and milk infused with sweet clover in desserts. My 6'7" neighbor, Jake, and I gardened together in our adjoining plots and without his help I couldn't have juggled the "Olive Street Inn" and my job as development director at Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America. I discovered a calming peace in the garden with Jake. Cats from all over the neighborhood would come and lie between the rows on the warm soil. Jake explained, "They always like being around me 'cause my big old heart beats so slow." I liked it too.

I changed jobs, and for years there was no time for gardening. Then I discovered the love of my horticultural life, a botanical garden centered around native plants in south-central Kansas called Dyck Arboretum of the Plains. As development director and then executive director for 15 years, I had the pleasure of bringing in experts to talk about cultivating native plants in residential gardens and saving remnant prairies, and helped introduce school children to prairie plantings on their school grounds with a multi-disciplinary curriculum connected to it. My favorite event was Flora Kansas, our spring and fall plant sale. I learned about the growing habits of natives from our customers' experiences and found time to incorporate them in my own home landscape. I go into a Zen-like state listening and watching pollinators in profusion on native plants. I did this last week here in Hazel Valley, having discovered along the road butterfly milkweed covered with male and female fritillary butterflies and a zebra swallowtail. Oh, my heart!

That's why we are moving here: to enjoy the last chapter of our life along the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the White River. The spiderwort growing on the slopes to the river and the antelope horn milkweed along the driveway are just two of the treasures we discovered. It is a privilege to be in the Natural State and be a trainee in the Master Gardener program, to be mentored by Carole, and to work with and learn from all of you. I still have one foot in Wisconsin where I have a large straw bale vegetable garden on our farm thanks to our helper, Mike. This is a better working height for my aging body and newly replaced shoulder. And that's how my garden has become a new kind of friend. A healer with its lava lamp of changing beauty and nourishment for the soul.

**June Photo of the Month Contest:
"Container Gardens"**



FIRST PLACE

"Hello spring!!" by Josie Westmoreland



SECOND PLACE
"Mixed Vibes" by Terri Speer



THIRD PLACE
"Pig Sooi!" by Jodie Miskell

The July Photo of the Month contest theme is "Perennial Flowers." Deadline to enter is July 15. Contest details are available on the [WCMG website](#).

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

COMPOST CORNER

Tips for Summer Composting: How to Keep Your Compost Thriving in Warm Weather

MARIETTE SPIDEL
WCMG Master Composter



Photo by Alan Levine/[flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alanlevine/).

Composting during the summer months can be an incredibly effective way to recycle organic waste and enrich your garden soil while minimizing environmental impact. However, the increased temperatures, humidity, and longer days bring unique challenges that demand attention. Here are essential tips to ensure your compost thrives during the summer season.

Understanding Summer Composting

Composting is a natural process where microorganisms break down organic material into nutrient-rich soil. Summer composting benefits from the warmer climate, which speeds up decomposition, but it also requires careful management to prevent odors, pests, and drying out. The key is to maintain a balance between green and brown materials, moisture, and aeration.

Choosing the Right Composting Site

Shade is Crucial in Extreme Heat

Select a shaded area for your compost pile or bin to prevent overheating during the peak of summer. Excessive heat can dry out the compost and hinder the decomposition process. If shade is not available, consider erecting a temporary cover or using a tarp.

Accessibility

Ensure the composting site is easy to access. Frequent additions of kitchen scraps and the need for regular turning mean convenience is a key factor.

Managing Moisture Levels

Maintain Optimal Moisture

Summer heat can quickly dry out your compost pile. The material should feel damp, like a wrung-out sponge—not soggy or completely dry. Water the pile if necessary, but avoid overwatering, as this can lead to anaerobic conditions and foul odors.

Utilize Grass Clippings

Fresh grass clippings can help retain moisture and accelerate decomposition. Spread a thin layer over the compost to trap humidity, but ensure the clippings are mixed well to prevent matting, which could slow down the process.

Balancing Greens and Browns

Confusion on Greens and Browns?

Greens are nitrogen-rich materials like fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, and grass clippings.

Browns are carbon-rich materials such as dried leaves, paper, and cardboard. A good ratio (often 2-3 parts browns to 1 part greens) ensures effective composting.

Summer-Specific Inputs

During summer, you may notice an abundance of green materials like fresh produce scraps. Counterbalance this with extra brown material, such as shredded paper or straw, to avoid a soggy and smelly compost pile.

Turning and Aeration for the Win!

Why Turning Matters

Turning your compost pile regularly introduces oxygen, which is crucial for aerobic decomposition. In summer, the heat accelerates microbial activity, making aeration even more important to prevent overheating and compacting.

Frequency

Aim to turn the pile every week during the summer months. This ensures an even temperature throughout the pile and prevents hotspots that can dry out or overheat sections.

Controlling Odors and Pests

Preventing Odors

Odors often arise from adding too much green material without balancing it with browns. Cover fresh additions with a layer of dry leaves, straw, or cardboard to absorb excess moisture and suppress smells.

Pest Control

Pests like rodents and flies can be more active in summer. Avoid adding meat, dairy, or oily foods to your compost, as these attract unwanted visitors. Ensure the pile is well-covered and turned to prevent pests from nesting within.

Dealing with High Temperatures

Monitor Temperature

Use a compost thermometer to check the internal heat of your pile. Ideally, the temperature should range between 135°F and 160°F for effective decomposition. If it exceeds this, turn the pile to release heat and prevent microbial die-off.

Add Layers

Layering greens and browns evenly helps regulate temperature. A final layer of browns, such as straw or cardboard, acts as insulation and prevents overheating.

Harvesting Compost

When Is It Ready?

Your compost is ready when it resembles dark, crumbly soil and has a pleasant earthy smell. This process typically takes 2-4 months during summer due to the accelerated decomposition.

Using Compost

Apply the finished compost to your garden beds, potted plants, and landscaping. Its nutrient-rich content will ensure healthier plants and better soil structure.

Top Summer Composting Tips

- Add food scraps in moderation to avoid attracting pests.
- Always cover fresh additions with a layer of browns to maintain balance.
- Keep your compost damp but avoid waterlogging.
- Turn your pile weekly to ensure even decomposition.
- Monitor the temperature to prevent overheating.

Final Thoughts

Summer composting is an excellent way to reduce waste while enhancing your garden. With proper management of moisture, balance, aeration, and pest control, your compost will thrive even in the hottest months. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities of summer composting, you can create a sustainable practice that benefits both the environment and your garden.

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.

JULY 6, 2:00–3:00 p.m. FRIENDS OF HOBBS SPEAKER SERIES: “WHAT IN THE WOOD?” A TREE ID JOURNEY. Visitor Center, Hobbs State Park, 20201 E. Hwy. 12, Rogers. Free. [For more information.](#)

JULY 8, 9:00–11:30 a.m. CAVE SPRINGS RAIN GARDEN VOLUNTEER DAY. Illinois River Watershed Partnership, 221 S. Main Street, Cave Springs. [Registration information.](#)

JULY 8, 6:00–7:00 p.m. CHIGIRI-E–JAPANESE TORN PAPER ART. Fayetteville Public Library. Free. [For more information.](#)

JULY 10, 6:00–8:00 p.m. ANNUALS TO PERENNIALS. Zoom program or Master Gardener trainees and mentors. Washington County Extension Office.

JULY 11, 6:00–8:00 p.m. ART BY THE GLASS: WATERCOLOR FLORALS. Crystal Bridges, Durand/Estes Room. \$32 member/\$40 non-member. [Registration information.](#)

JULY 11, 6:00–8:00 p.m. TERRARIUMS+TEQUILA. Common Dwellings. 219 S. Main Street, Cave Springs. \$55.20. [Registration information.](#)

JULY 12, 6:00–8:00 p.m. WILDFLOWERS+WHISKEY. Common Dwellings. 219 S.

Main Street, Cave Springs. \$71.20. [Registration information](#).

JULY 16, 5:30–7:30 p.m. SOUNDS IN THE WILD: AN INTRODUCTION TO FIELD RECORDING. Fayetteville Public Library, Center for Innovation. [Registration information](#).

JULY 17, 9:00–11:00 a.m. SPRING CREEK VOLUNTEER DAY. Illinois River Watershed Partnership at Luther George Park, 300 Park Street, Springdale. [Registration information](#).

JULY 18, 6:00–8:00 p.m. JAPANESE FLORAL ARRANGING. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. \$35 member/\$45 non-member. [Registration information](#).

JULY 19, 9:00–9:30 a.m. NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY ON THE MONUMENT TRAILS HIKE. Devil's Den State Park. Free. [For more information](#).

JULY 19, 5:00–9:00 p.m. BATS AND BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL. Illinois River Watershed Partnership, 221 S. Main Street, Cave Springs. \$12.51 individual or \$33.85 family. [Registration information](#).

JULY 20, 11:00. FORAGING WALK AND TALK WITH TIM HAMMER. Ozark Folkways, 22733 North Highway 71, Winslow. \$30. [Registration information](#).

JULY 20, 2:00–3:00 p.m. FRIENDS OF HOBBS SPEAKER SERIES: PRESCRIBED FIRE FOR HEALTHIER FORESTS. Visitor Center, Hobbs State Park, 20201 E Hwy 12, Rogers. Free. [For more information](#).

JULY 22–24. ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE, FORESTS, AND WATER CONFERENCE. Don Tyson Center for Agricultural Sciences, 1371 W. Altheimer Drive, Fayetteville. \$100 early bird registration by July 1; \$200 registration after July 1. [Registration information](#).

JULY 21, 12:00–1:00 p.m. MASTER GARDENER MONDAY. Zoom gardening program plus MG event updates with Randy Forst, UADA consumer horticulture/Master Gardener coordinato. Free. Registration not required. [Email Randy for the Zoom link](#) OR [sign up for the calendar of events](#) sent out by the Extension Service headquarters in Little Rock.

JULY 26, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. PHOTO WORKSHOP: PRESERVING FAMILY TREASURES. Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Springdale. Free. [Registration information](#).

JULY 26, 1:00. PICKLING WORKSHOP WITH KYLE OXFORD. Ozark Folkways, 22733 North Highway 71, Winslow. \$35. [Registration information](#).

JULY 26, 10:00 a.m. THE RIGHT-OF-WAY TO RESTORATION: EFFECTIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT FOR NATIVE ROADSIDE PLANTINGS. Hosted by Wild Ones-Ozark Chapter. Washington County Extension Office. [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.

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](#)



WCMG Facebook Page
(public)



WCMG Facebook Group
(private)



WCMG Instagram



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 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!