

2026 SANCTIONED PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS **Washington County Master Gardeners**

ARKANSAS AIR & MILITARY MUSEUM (*Sanctioned 2008*) **Project Leader: Julie Murray**

The Arkansas Air & Military Museum is located at Drake Field between Fayetteville and Greenland. The project maintains landscaping in front of the museum using perennial plantings and colorful annuals that attract pollinators and are as maintenance free as possible. Volunteer work schedules are flexible but are usually scheduled on Tuesday and Saturday mornings.

ASK A MASTER (*Sanctioned 1992*)

Project Co-leaders: Mariette Spidel and Jim Sposato

The Washington County Master Gardener program was established in 1991, marking the launch of the “Ask a Master” telephone line to assist the community with gardening inquiries. In 1992, then WCMG, Pauline Keegan began a weekly newspaper column, in *The Free Weekly*, titled “Ask a Master,” further expanding the programs outreach. That same year, “Ask a Master” became a sanctioned project, staffed by both seasoned WCMG volunteers and trainees. This is an opportunity for trainees to field the calls, independently research the answer and return the call with the proper answer. Topics range from pest and disease management to trouble shooting poor vegetable yields. Volunteers also respond to landscape questions, offer guidance on pruning, and plant selection. The diversity of inquiries allows volunteers to share knowledge and continue to expand their horticultural abilities. Reference material containing often asked questions over the years, is available at the desk to help volunteers give well-informed answers. In 2026, the project will research, create and publish bi-weekly “Ask a Master” Q&A content for the WCMG Facebook page. If you have a knack for working independently, creative writing, research, public speaking, and editing, this project might be for you! Bonus: This project is located indoors and ideal for those who prefer to avoid the elements or have physical limitations that make outdoor gardening challenging.

BOTANICAL GARDEN OF THE OZARKS (BGO) (*Sanctioned 2005*)

Project Co-leaders: Patsy Louk and Kathy Launder

The Botanical Garden of the Ozarks is a very special place for Washington County Master Gardeners. Here WCMG volunteers supported the creation of the Sensory Garden and continue to volunteer. WCMG volunteers may work in other horticulture areas under the supervision of one of the BGO gardeners throughout the gardening seasons. Not only do WCMG volunteers help in the garden, but they can also help in the BGO office, assist with educational programs, work in the butterfly program, lead garden tours, be a garden ambassador at outreach events in the community, and assist with BGO events.

COMPOST DEMONSTRATION SITE (*Sanctioned 1999*)

Project Co-leaders: David Edwards and Geri Alvis

The project is dedicated to the promotion of composting as a means of waste management for the backyard gardener and homeowner. WCMG volunteers help maintain the site located on the Extension Office grounds, learn troubleshooting techniques, and have hands-on experience in all aspects of the composting process. Other activities may include providing composting mini classes for the public, lecture/demonstrations for schools, civic groups, etc., and promoting awareness and education about composting through participation in public events and festivals.

WCMG SANCTIONED PROJECTS

ELKINS COMMUNITY CENTER *(Sanctioned 2014)*

Project Co-leaders: Doris Cassidy and Alfi Anderson

WCMG volunteers plant and maintain gardens surrounding the Elkins Community Center building. project includes the flagpole garden located in the community park, gardens surrounding the Elkins Library, and the Elkins Senior Center. The Library and the Senior Center sites also have rain gardens. The library's butterfly garden provides education opportunities for children. WCMGs are garden consultants to the community in various ways. Since the community center is a site for elections, monthly food distribution and numerous community meetings, WCMG volunteers have opportunities to field a variety of gardening questions. Workday is scheduled for Thursday mornings from 8:30 to 11:30. You have the option of team or individual gardening. We make every effort to accommodate volunteers with special needs. Our group is diverse in background and age. Come visit us and see if you are a fit for our herd.

GARDEN EXPLORERS – *(Sanctioned 2015)*

Project Co-leaders: Peggy Sissel, Gail Pianalto and Elizabeth Woods

Garden Explorers is a project sponsored by WCMG volunteers who are certified 4-H leaders. WCMG volunteers provide hands-on gardening activities and field trips for participants. Children learn about nature and experience it for themselves. The target audience is 4-H participants, ages 5 through 12, and entire families may attend and learn.

GARDEN GATE TOUR *(Sanctioned 2020)*

Project Co-leaders: Laura Underwood/Ruthanne Hill/Danna Grear

The annual Garden Gate Tour (GGT) brings hundreds of plant enthusiasts together from across Washington County, the state, and even out of state! And when garden lovers gather, expect a day of FUN! The Garden Gate Tour project includes a core group of WCMG volunteers who work year-round to select the gardens to be highlighted (different gardens each year), work with the garden owners, coordinate educational activities, promote the tour, and manage the logistics for a gorgeous, garden-filled day. Over 100 WCMG volunteers participate in the project typically beginning work in the spring leading up to and on the day of the tour. Ahead of the tour, they assist with garden preparations by weeding, mulching, planting, etc. On the day of the tour, WCMG volunteers serve as greeters and ambassadors at each of the garden tour sites to ensure each visitor enjoys their day.

HEADQUARTERS HOUSE HISTORIC GARDEN *(Sanctioned 1997)*

Project Co-leaders: Kristi Campbell/Kathy Launder/Jan Lefler/Betty Nichols/Janice Walker

Headquarters House was built in 1853 by Jonas and Matilda Tebbetts. The house is one of the best examples of Greek Revival architecture still standing in Arkansas. The original four-acre property was used alternately as a Civil War headquarters by both Union and Confederate armies. In 1967, the house was donated to the Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) as a historic house museum. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 24, 1971. In 1997, WCHS recruited WCMG volunteers to establish and maintain the one-acre garden in the 1850s style. WCMG volunteers researched plant records from the Tebbetts family journal and local 19th century horticulturist Jacob Smith. They continue to collect and maintain heirloom and native plants, roses, shrubs, and trees. WCMGs maintain a detailed plant list found in the garden. WCMGs assist in preparing gardens for activities as needed. Gardening days begin in March and continue into late fall as needed. Project co-leaders may arrange flexible work schedules for WCMG volunteers as requested. Planning sessions, educational opportunities, and celebrations are part of the gardening experience.

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JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS 1.0 (4-H) *(Sanctioned 2008)*

Project Leader: Jody Miskell

This project is comprised of certified 4-H leaders, 4-H youth, 4-H parents, and Master Gardeners. It is a recognized 4-H club that is the parent project that led to the creation of The Garden Explorers. The club teaches parliamentary procedure in conducting meetings while encouraging 4-H members to give speeches, demonstrations, and participate in 4-H contests. The club also performs community service projects, including making hand-made cards to celebrate the retired veterans at the Veteran's Nursing Home and providing them with sugar-free candy for the holidays. The Master Gardeners, leaders and other volunteers instruct the club members on gardening skills and specialize in working with worms and have a worm exhibit at Farm Friends where the participants can see and touch the vermiculture worms. The club maintains the Pollinator Herb Garden at the Extension Grounds and maintains the beds and potted plants at the U of A Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center where the club meets. Leaders provide Horticulture Projects and Craft Projects for members and encourage them to enter and participate fully in the Washington County Fair.

LINCOLN COMMUNITY GARDEN *(Sanctioned 2016)*

Project Co-leaders: Jim Sposato and Judy Cohea

The Lincoln Community Garden was established to provide fresh garden produce for charitable organizations such as G.R.A.C.E. Place, Lincoln Senior Center, and other people in need from the Lincoln area. WCMG volunteers provide an educational background for Lincoln schools science classes to observe science first-hand. Local community groups such as 4-H, Middle School East Labs classes, etc., help in maintaining the garden. Farmers COOP and local businesses and volunteers have donated money to maintain the garden.

PRAIRIE GROVE MOCK PARK *(Sanctioned 2003)*

Project Co-leaders: Linda Morrow and Chris Bell

Located in the heart of Prairie Grove, Mock Park is a city park steeped in local history. The park contains an historic spring that was at one time the water source for the town. WCMG volunteers maintain the flower beds and other plantings throughout the park. Project goals include maintaining the original plantings as possible, including native plants, focusing on attracting pollinators, and educating the community on the importance of using native species and attracting pollinators. WCMG volunteers work on Monday mornings normally from March 1 to October 30. Contingent upon morning temperatures, workdays are begun or completed with visiting and refreshments. Volunteers are welcome to work independently as well.

PRAIRIE GROVE NEIGHBOR GARDEN *(Sanctioned 2024)*

Project Leader: Sheri Bucciferro

The Neighbor Garden provides opportunity for WCMG volunteers to help plan, preserve, and maintain heritage gardening at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. They may share collective knowledge, traditions, and memories of stories from prior generations. The 19th century-inspired beds around the Latta Kitchen, Springhouse and Smokehouse contain herbs used for culinary, medicinal and textile purposes. The Latta House also showcases historical flowers, shrubs, and trees. While working areas around the Latta Village is routine, WCMG volunteers have opportunities to offer education to park visitors. The goal is to create space to learn and grow with others while appreciating a shared relationship with nature and the landscape. Volunteers may help with research, planning and presenting programs/workshops related to historical gardening. Scheduled gardening days are Monday mornings. WCMG volunteers may get their hands in the dirt (when life allows) after attending a brief orientation. Everyone is welcome and there are tasks to fit all abilities.

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SHILOH MUSEUM OF OZARK HISTORY GARDENS *(Sanctioned 2012)*

Project Co-leaders: Linda Bennett-Smith and Steve Shearman

The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, which is currently the only sanctioned project in Springdale, is in the heart of downtown Springdale. The museum's grounds are rich in history and help tell the story of Northwest Arkansas' beautiful Ozark Mountains and the people who have called them home, from the earliest inhabitants to the diverse communities we see today. WCMG volunteers enhance the visitor experience with historically appropriate gardens and native plantings throughout the two-acre campus, with an emphasis on pollinator-friendly plants. Since the summer of 2023, Shiloh Museum grounds have been the home to an active hive of bees.

VETERANS HEALING HARVEST GARDEN *(Sanctioned 2017)*

Project Co-leaders: Kim Coslett/Roxanne Gallup/Stacy Lake/Brad Neidecker/Jane Van Tuyl

The Veteran's Healing Harvest Garden provides fresh produce for food insecure veterans and creating a healing garden environment that fosters teaching, learning, and friendship. WCMG volunteers maintain the garden and work in collaboration with the Veteran's Hospital to grow, harvest, and distribute the produce. Veterans as well as Master Gardeners are welcome to work, learn about science-based gardening practices, and enjoy the sitting areas. The garden is located on a 5,200 sq. ft. plot of land just off the southwest corner of the main hospital's circle drive and includes:

- sixteen raised vegetable beds (1,196 sq. ft.)
- four pollinator beds (244 sq. ft.)
- shade garden (96 sq. ft.)
- timed irrigation system for each bed
- storage shed
- two shaded sitting/meeting areas
- solar powered off-grid electrical system
- 8 feet deer fence

WASHINGTON COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE GROUNDS *(Sanctioned 1991)*

Project Co-leaders: Chuck Rutherford and Donilyn Rutherford

Washington County Master Gardeners consider the Extension Office their home and take pride in maintaining the surrounding grounds and assisting in the office as needed. With the assistance and leadership of the U of Arkansas Horticulture and Landscaping Departments, the grounds were originally planted with Ozark native trees and shrubs. WCMG volunteers work on a regular basis to maintain the beauty and integrity of the landscape design. A new design for the area behind the Extension Office building was implemented in 2016 with a Monarch Butterfly Waystation and picnic table.

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR *(Sanctioned 2003)*

Project Co-leaders: Doris Cassidy and Kathy Launder

Washington County Fair, located across the street from the Washington County Extension Office, is held the last week of August each year. In 2009, WCMGs assumed the operation of the Horticulture Building and its activities. Early in the year, WCMG volunteers review and update the horticulture section of the Fair Catalog. Superintendents for the eight divisions are recruited and trained. The entry sheets and entry books are updated and assembled, and award funds are arranged. Days prior to the fair, the WCMG Butterfly bench is relocated from the Extension Office to attract fair goers. Saturday before the fair start, from 7am-2:20pm, WCMGs install shelving, hang department signs, and prepare the kitchen. The County Fair is an intense week encompassing multiple activities. (continued next page)

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Fair week schedule is Monday 7am-7pm; Tuesday 7am-7:30pm; Wednesday–Saturday 9am-9pm. Sunday is check-out/clean-up from 2pm-4pm. During the week, WCMGs accept fair entries, assist with judging, and keep entries attractive, etc. Since 2010, WCMGs also sponsor a sale table with WCMG-donated items. Profits are used for Youth and Adult Grand and Reserve Champion horticulture entry awards.

The fair is an educational experience with emphasis on growing and displaying quality agricultural and horticultural items as well as outdoor and a nature journal. Some funds are used in this educational endeavor. Food trucks now operate during the evening hours. WCMGs have opportunities to contribute by helping with a meal and desserts for the judges and the Horticulture workers on Tuesday’s judging day. The fair is an excellent opportunity for MGs to share knowledge with fair visitors and serve as ambassadors for the WCMG program.

WEST FORK LIBRARY GARDEN *(Sanctioned 2006)*

Project Co-leaders: Liz Hale and Jan Hayes

The Washington County Master Gardeners and community volunteers maintain rain and pollinator gardens (including a bioswale to prevent flooding and cleanse stormwater runoff before entering the West Fork of the White River less than a half-mile downstream) at the West Fork Library, 198 W. Main St. at Garfield Ave. The gardens grow mostly native plants best suited to survive drought and rainy seasons, as well as bolster food web support with native pollinators. Working with the West Fork Library staff, WCMGs provide community outreach education advice for planting home gardens; the importance of pollinators and what to plant for them; and providing science-based resources/information from U of AR Extension Service. Flexible work schedules can easily be arranged. Beginning- and end-of-year planning potlucks bookend the outdoor gardening season. They work 50°- 90° temps. Check weather at <https://AmbientWeather.net>. Search “West Fork Library” weather station icon (appears on Hwy. 71B southbound rather than at the library.)

Volunteer Days and Library-Sponsored Education & Programs

2 nd & 4 th W & Sat. - am (March – November) Flexible hours and dates may be arranged	Liz Hale	LizHaleARMG@gmail.com	214-725-6464
T(w)een Talk Lepidoptera Club: 1 st & 3 rd Thurs. 3:30 – 5 pm, led by Aileen Wilson and Kitty Sanders. (Year round)	Jan Hayes	JanHayes5AR@gmail.com	479-466-3689

COOPERATIVE PROJECTS are not the responsibility of Washington County Master Gardeners. They do utilize WCMG volunteer labor, skills, and expertise. Two include:

(1) Arbor Day is a cooperative activity involving WCMG volunteers and local 4-H groups since 1993. The one-day event usually includes the planting of a tree in a pre-selected location, such as a school or other public area. WCMG volunteers help the local 4-H groups in this endeavor.

(2) Farm Friends is an annual event sponsored by the U of a Cooperative Extension Service since 1996. Displays, hands-on activities, farm equipment and live animals are gathered to showcase local farm life. The all-day spring event welcomes school groups and the public. WCMG volunteers participate with displays, activities relating to gardening, and cornbread donations.

Location: Pauline Whitaker Building.