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Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • March 2026

IMPORTANT REMINDERS!

- **Please do not respond directly to this email with questions, comments, or observations.** Your message will go to a rarely monitored mailbox which will result in frustration for everyone involved. Instead, send your email message to wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com.
 - ***Garden Thyme* is best viewed in your browser (instead of viewing it within your email).** Just click on the link at the top of this page that says "View this newsletter in your browser."
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MARCH MEETING

Project and Committee Fair and "Tool Time"

Find a project



that tickles your fancy.

The March 3 WCMG meeting is in Thompson Hall at the Washington County Fairgrounds at 6:30 p.m. It's the annual "Tool Time" sharing your favorites, and the Project and Committee Fair with opportunities to volunteer for service in a multitude of ways.

Taking Care of Business

We will vote on these items at our March 3 monthly business meeting.

February 2026 Business Meeting Minutes

January 2026 Treasurer's Report

Registration Deadlines

March 4. Deadline to register for Master Gardener Appreciation Day at Garvan Woodland Gardens. [Registration information.](#)

April 15. Deadline to register for the state Master Gardener Conference, unless the conference fills before this date. Maximum of 400 attendees.

- [Conference schedule](#)
- [About Your Registration](#)
- [Registration Form](#)

June Meeting Date Change

So that all WCMGs who want to attend the state Master Gardener conference may do so without missing the highly anticipated WCMG annual June picnic, the WCMG Executive Board has moved our June picnic date to **Tuesday, June 9**, at the Washington County Extension Office grounds.

From Your President

PAM BUTLER

As I look forward to planting our garden, I am reminded of the old-fashioned Victory Gardens of World Wars I and II. Victory Gardens were promoted to encourage Americans to supplement their war rations and raise morale through growing their own fruits, vegetables and herbs in private and public garden plots. Over five million gardens were planted during WWI and 17 million during WWII.



During the years of WWII, Americans were given a government brochure called “The ABC of Victory Gardens” with instructions for planting, harvesting, and preserving their crops. The slogan “Grow Your Own, Can Your Own” referred to Americans planting and canning their Victory Garden crops. Festivals and contests were even held to showcase produce from the Victory Gardens.

First ladies Eleanor Roosevelt and Michelle Obama each planted a garden on the White House lawn. More recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, victory gardens reappeared. Gardens provided emotional support as well as fresh vegetables for Americans as we faced a difficult time.

From the Victory Gardens of the past, we can see threads continuing through our gardening lives. We plant our gardens to provide fresh foods for ourselves, our neighbors, and for people we don’t even know through donations to food banks. Instead of a single government gardening brochure, we have a multitude of University of Arkansas Extension Office resources to give instructions and advice for growing and preserving our produce. The festivals and contests of WWII laid the foundations for our county fairs. Thankfully, we are not in a time of war or a pandemic, but gardening continues to provide benefits to both our physical and mental health.

Even though our parents and grandparents needed gardens to supplement their diets, we can grow our own Victory Gardens by choice. We have tools at our disposal that they didn’t have and couldn’t imagine. We have the internet at our fingertips, running water, electric stoves for canning, freezers to preserve our produce, and gasoline and battery powered tools that make our work easier than our ancestors, who used horse drawn plows, wells with buckets to get water, wood-burning cook stoves, and cellars for cold storage.

Our modern Victory Gardens may look different from our ancestors’ gardens, but the ideas behind them remain the same. We plant our gardens each year with optimism and hope for the future. We show resilience in replanting when crops fail and faith that those tiny seeds will grow and flourish. Planting and watching our gardens grow are experiences that are both exciting and worth passing along to others.

Many of us learned the joy of gardening from our parents or grandparents. Now it's our turn to share that joy with our community, our children, and our grandchildren. Pass along your enjoyment of gardening to someone today. Go outside, plant, and grow!

February in Pam's Garden



February 2: Brr!



February 18: Lenten Rose blooms.



February 18: More Lenten Rose blooms!

2026 Volunteer and Education Hours Update

It's early in the year, but WCMGs are already busy. As of February 15, here are the stats:

Number of MGs reporting: 106

Sanctioned hours, committees: 539

Sanctioned hours, projects: 567.25

Total sanctioned hours: 1106.25

Non-sanctioned hours: 27.5

Education hours: 730.5

2025 Awards Gala Recap



Oscars, Emmys, Golden Globes? Nah, the show of the year was the 2025 Awards program hosted by the Washington County Master Gardeners on February 3 at the Tyson Center. No tuxedos, no ball gowns, just lots of volunteers dedicated to gardening and community service.

AND THE WINNERS ARE:

- **Individual Friend of the Year** – Joe Cohea
- **Business Friend of the Year** – White River Nursery
- **Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can"** – Steve Brizzi, LaDeana Mullinex, Brad Neidecker
- **Rookie of the Year** – Kim Coslett
- **Mentor of the Year** – Martha Haguewood
- **Project of the Year** – Veterans Healing Health Garden
- **Master Gardener of the Year** – Marty Powers, "Mr. Monarch"

OUR OWN 200+ SANCTIONED HOURS AWARDS

- **Trowel Rookies (Those with 200+ hours during their first year as an MG!)** – Kelly Chaney, Kim Coslett, Roger Faulkner, Jessica Guillory, Donna McDaniel
- **Trowel (1-4 consecutive years of 200+ hours)** – Marguerite Abowitz, Alfi Anderson, Carole Ball, Steve Brizzi, Pam Butler, Kristi Campbell, Luanne Diffin, David Edwards, Roxanne Gallup, Carrie Gamble, Danna Grear, Ruthanne Hill, Terri Kinsey, Kathy Launder, Vicki Mayo, Julie Murray, Brad Neidecker, Rick Oliver, Lisa Owen, Lynette Terrell, Jane VanTuyl, Janice Walker, Laura Wilkins
- **Watering Can (5-9 consecutive years of 200+ hours)** – Doris Cassidy, Elizabeth Hale, Karen Hanna-Towne, Neta Winston
- **Wheelbarrow (10-14 consecutive years of 200+ hours)** – Geri Alvis, Patsy Louk, Jim Sposato
- **Golden Butterfly (consecutive years of 200+ hours since 2012)** – Jan Lefler, Kitty Sanders

Over 50 WCMGs volunteered to help organize and prepare the awards ceremony. Thanks and appreciation goes to each of them.

- **Awards** – Jan Lefler, Liz Hale, Geri Alvis, Chris Bell, Jayne Laster, Patsy Louk, Kitty Sanders
- **Membership** – Kathryn Birkhead, Annette Pianalto
- **Executive** – Alfi Anderson, Pam Butler, Julie Murray
- **Extension** – Katie Teague, Colin Massey, Debbie Clevenger, Angela Crawford

WCMG volunteers submitted nominations, painted watering cans, took photos and video, made cookies, set up and cleaned up the auditorium. You all made the event very special. Thank you for your time and talents.

Congrats, 2025 Grads!



Apologies for the smallness of this lovely photo taken by Kathryn Birkhead. Email platforms do not allow for the use of very wide photos.

Congratulations to the WCMG Class of 2025! Front row, from left: Lynne Bell, Donna McDaniel, Swathi Munagala, Julie Torseth. Middle row, from left: Timm McGinn, Jeff McGuire, Jessica Guillory, Becca Muenich, Terri Speer, Teresa Sullivan, Mari Walters-Ford. Back row, from left: Kim Coslett, Roger Faulkner, Calinda Green, Washington County Extension Agent Colin Massey

(who helped lead the training classes), Caleb Israel, Rhonda Lovell, Steve Shearman, Mary Sparks, Bill Speer. Not pictured: Debra Broyles, Kelly Chaney, James Harvey, Kalista Keck.

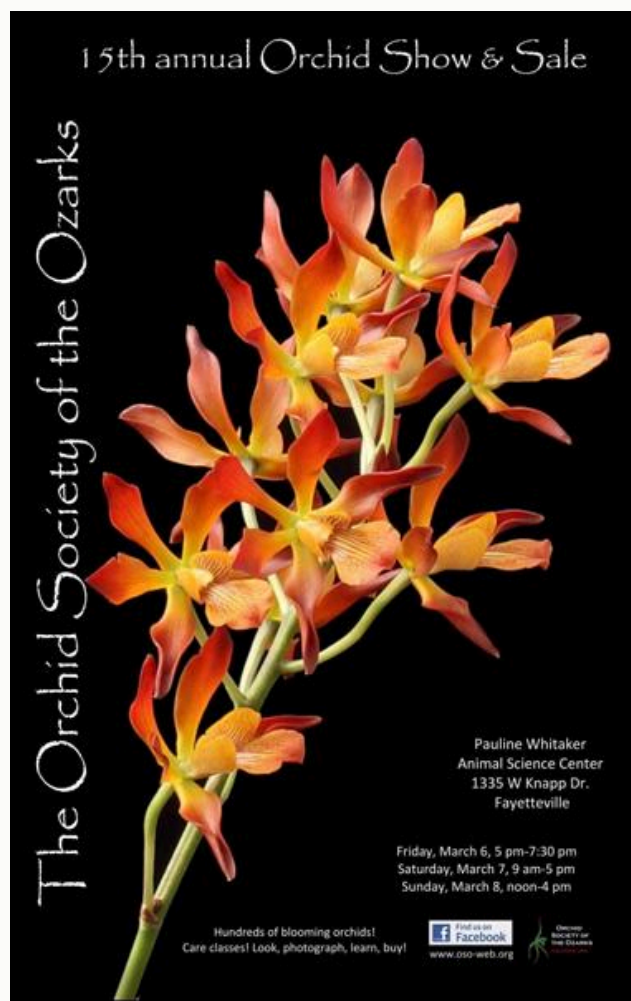
Welcome, 2026 Trainees!



Apologies for the smallness of this lovely photo taken by Kitty Sanders. Email platforms do not allow for the use of very wide photos.

Welcome to the 2026 WCMG trainees! Seated, from left: Robert White, Melissa Harwood-Rom, Laura West, Yi Lang, Sarah Farmer, Sharon Keen, Tracy Jouett, Kristine Hall. Standing, from left: Anna Watson, Kay Pike, Carol Phillips, Brandi Pucek, Deborah Coley, Colleen McCarthy, Catherine Harrison, Michael Whitehead, Sharon Etchison, Amber Stewart, Noel Morris, Marlene Craig, Katie Altland. Not pictured: Mary Harvey, Matthew Mabry, Alethea Prince, Sydney Rice, Madison Soderquist.

Orchid Show and Sale



The Orchid Society of the Ozarks will host their 15th annual show and sale March 6–8 at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center in Fayetteville. Hours are Friday, March 6, 5:00–7:00 p.m.; Saturday, March 7, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; and Sunday, March 8, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

The show will feature hundreds of blooming orchids, orchids for sale, and classes on orchid care.

Admission to the show is \$5 for adults and free for children 12 and under. Orchid Society of the Ozarks members get in free to the event, and memberships to the organization are \$10 per year.

For more information, visit the Orchid Society of the Ozarks [Facebook event](#).

2026 Garden Gate Tour Update

DANNA GREAR

Garden Gate Tour Committee

Our recent warm weather has us all pulling out our garden tools and beginning to prepare for spring. The hosts of the gardens featured on our 2026 Garden Gate Tour are actively planning and planting to make sure their gardens are in tip-top shape for the tour. We will be recruiting volunteers at the Project Fair during our March 3 monthly meeting. We will need volunteers to work at each garden on the day of the tour, June 6, as well as to help our hosts in preparing their gardens over the next few months.

This is an all hands on deck project. Please think about your availability and sign up at the project fair or contact tour volunteer coordinator Danna Grear by text at 479-841-6402 or by [email](#).

Until the tour, each month in the *Garden Thyme* we will feature two gardens that are on the tour so you can get a sneak peak into what awaits us on tour day.



"A Love of Gardening Shared by Two," one of the locations on the 2026 Garden Gate Tour.

Photo courtesy of the homeowners.

A Love of Gardening Shared by Two

This mother–daughter duo invites you to explore the gardens they’ve created together, each with its own personality. A cottage garden bursts with color, fragrance, and charm. A perennial garden features hardy plants with a mixture of textures, heights, and hues that transform throughout the seasons, and the newest addition of a carefully designed native garden focuses on attracting song birds and other pollinators.



"Lucky Old Sun Garden," one of the locations on the 2026 Garden Gate Tour.

Photo courtesy of the homeowner.

Lucky Old Sun Garden

The owner bought her house in the summer of 1999. Part of the terraced garden by the street existed, and she expanded it across the length of the property. A big tulip poplar shades most of the front yard, and dogwoods are on the west side. Window boxes filled seasonally are personal favorites.

The very shady back yard features over one hundred hostas, rock borders, and paths. The Coffeyville brick patio was a welcome addition—the owner's grandparents were from Coffeyville, Kansas—with vintage metal patio furniture which includes a couple of chairs that belonged to the owner's great-grandparents. The owner loves to add flea market finds to her garden.

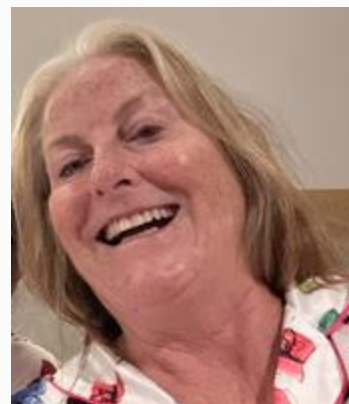
Meet the Trainees

LYNETTE TERRELL

Mary Harvey

Hello, I am Mary Harvey. I am, and have been, an amateur gardener in all of my homes. My husband, James, and I have owned seven homes, and we have tried to take each of them from "blah" to "ah." We plan on Johnson being our last home, and this may be our most challenging project.

After retiring to Fayetteville in 2020, I met a lovely lady, Mary Oxford, while volunteering at Walton Arts Center. Mary and I never acknowledged the show that was being performed yards away from us, as we were diving deep into shade-loving



plants. Mary invited me to her garden to take some hostas and other treasures to transplant into my garden. I had to corral myself walking through the beautiful simplicity of Mary's garden. I wanted to transform my barren yard into the welcoming oasis I was standing in.

My garden beds are better, but we are not there yet. As we all know, our gardens are works in progress. I look forward to creating beautiful gardens, helping to create the oasis in my mind, and add to the beauty of our town.

Madison Soderquist

Hi! I'm Madison Soderquist, an Arkansas native born and raised right here in Fayetteville. I wear a few different hats—I'm a wedding and events planner and owner of Madison Nichole Wedding and Events, as well as the new sales and events manager at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks.



My love for gardening is a family tradition. I first heard about Master Gardeners from my grandmother, who was an active Master Gardener in Drew County. Growing up, I'd tag along on garden tours with her and her friends, and she was truly an encyclopedia of plants—always ready with the Latin name, growing tips, or a story about each plant we encountered. Those experiences planted the seeds for my own gardening journey.

In 2023, after my husband, Nicholas, and I moved into our first home, I started my own vegetable and herb garden. There's something incredibly satisfying about stepping outside to harvest fresh herbs for dinner or picking tomatoes still warm from the sun. It's become one of my favorite ways to unwind.

When I'm not coordinating weddings or tending to the garden, you can usually find me knitting on the couch with my two mini schnauzers, Sandy and Onyx, curled up beside me. I'm excited to deepen my gardening knowledge through the Master Gardener program and continue my grandmother's legacy!

All the Tiny Weed Flowers

TALYA BOERNER



***Veronica* spp. Courtesy of Talya Boerner.**

I love this time of year when all the tiny weed flowers begin blooming. Tiny weed flowers are a sure sign that spring is just around the bend. I've already noticed a few butterflies flitting about in our yard! In earliest spring after a long winter's nap, the early butterflies and bees are hungry for nectar. Tiny weed flowers provide a sweet buffet for our earliest pollinators. If your goal is to rid your yard of these plants, I encourage you to look at them in a different light. [Click here to read more](#). (This link will take you to Talya's blog on her *Grace, Grits and Gardening* website.)

February Photo of the Month Contest: "Flowers, flowers, flowers"



FIRST PLACE
"Lunch" by Michael Whitehead



SECOND PLACE



THIRD PLACE TIE

"Nature's Brushstroke" by Kelly Chaney



THIRD PLACE TIE

"Clematis Show Offs" by Donna McDaniel

The March photo contest theme is "Spring Bloomers." Deadline to enter is March 15. Contest details are available on the [WCMG website](#). Questions? Email wcmgphotos@gmail.com.

Gardening and Community Events

MARY McCULLY and SUSAN YOUNG

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.

MARCH 1, 6:00 p.m. INVASIVE PLANTS, SESSION 1. City of Fayetteville Community Forester program. City Parks Office, Fayetteville. Free. [For more information.](#)

MARCH 4. REGISTRATION CLOSES FOR MG APPRECIATION DAY AT GARVAN WOODLAND GARDENS. [Registration information.](#)

MARCH 6–8. 15th ANNUAL ORCHID SHOW AND SALE. Sponsored by the Orchid Society of the Ozarks. See article in this issue of the *Garden Thyme*.

MARCH 12, 12:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: GREEN BEANS. Zoom program by UADA extension agents. Free. [Registration information.](#)

MARCH 14, 11:00 a.m. INVASIVE PLANTS, SESSION 2. City of Fayetteville Community Forester program. Veterans Memorial Park, Fayetteville. Free. [For more information.](#)

MARCH 19, 10:00 a.m. RECYCLING GLASS INTO HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS.

Presented by WCMG Susan Caple Gardner. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), Fayetteville. \$45 OLLI member/\$60 non-member. [For more information.](#)

MARCH 28, 10:00 a.m. PLANT AND SEED SWAP. Fayetteville Public Library Walker Community Room. Free. [For more information.](#)

MARCH 28, 2:00 p.m. BASICS OF SEED STARTING. Presented by WCMG Karen Hanna-Towne. Fayetteville Public Library Walker Community Room. 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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Banner photo of thyme courtesy Lucy Meskill/flickr



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