

[View this newsletter in your browser](#)



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • June 2026

Inspired by the Greek Goddess Persephone and A Missing President's Column

A Garden Thyme Myth



"Proserpina." [The Greek goddess Persephone was known in Roman mythology as Proserpina.]. 1874 painting by Daniel Gabriel Rossetti. [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Once upon a time there lived a very wise magistrate named Pam who governed a community of gardening zealots known as Emm Gees. Each month, Pam wrote a message of inspiration to the Emm Gees. Pam emailed her writings to the Emm Gees head courier, Judy, who then worked with a

team of messengers to deliver Pam's message and other news of interest to the Emm Gees community via a mysterious and very fickle force known as The Internet.

One springtime, The Internet decided to play a trick on the Emm Gees. When Magistrate Pam sent her message to Head Courier Judy, The Internet hid the message in a section of the Underworld called the World Wide Web.

Upon discovering this trick, Pam and Judy asked their good friend, Persephone, Queen of the Underworld, to rescue Pam's email and return it to Judy. Persephone readily agreed because she was not only goddess of the underworld, but also goddess of spring growth. Persephone knew that Pam's words of wisdom would help the Emm Gees have a productive spring season.

After finding Pam's message languishing in the Underworld's World Wide Web, Persephone commanded The Internet to resend Pam's email to Judy and her team of messengers, who quickly worked to deliver Pam's wisdom to the Emm Gees.

And that is how Pam's June 2026 "President's Column" came to be delivered in this email, separately from the rest of the June 2026 *Garden Thyme*.

From Your President

PAM BUTLER

Gardeners take care of the earth and the plants in our gardens, and our gardens also take care of us. As we tend to the plants in our care, those plants and the soil surrounding them give back to us in a variety of ways. This month let's look at how we have a mutually beneficial relationship with our gardens. You may be surprised to see that we actually receive more from gardening than we give!



Did you realize you are getting a full body workout when you garden? It's true! Many of our everyday tasks in the garden count as moderate intensity exercise. Pulling weeds, planting seeds, pushing a wheelbarrow, pulling a wagon filled with mulch, and hoeing around your plants are all activities that use multiple muscles in your body. Gardening is gentler on your joints than some other forms of exercise, and you get a bonus for your workout in the form of a beautiful flower garden or a bounty of garden vegetables.

Gardening is relaxing to your body and soul. Many health professionals recommend gardening as an activity that can lower high blood pressure. Getting your hands in the soil eases stress and brings satisfaction as you watch your garden grow. An added benefit is enjoying the fruits of your labor when those first ripe tomatoes appear. Gardeners often eat healthier meals due to the fresh fruits and vegetables that come directly from the garden to your plate.

Sunshine gives gardeners a healthy dose of vitamin D, so it's not just your imagination that you feel better when the sun shines. And that bit of dirt under your fingernails? It's full of beneficial microbes that work to strengthen your immune system. It seems that a little bit of dirt doesn't hurt after all.

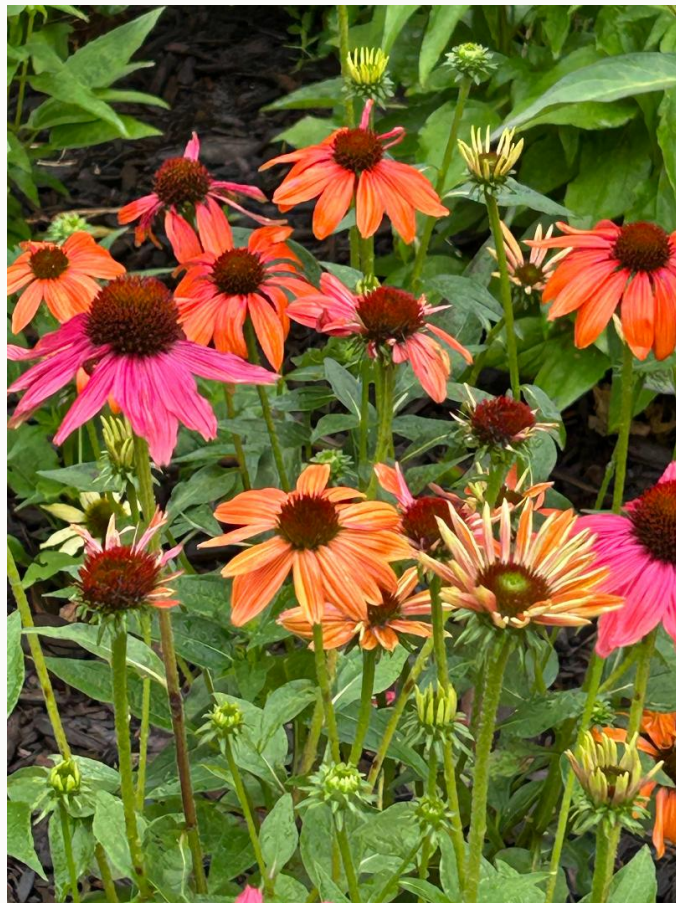
Have you ever heard of therapeutic horticulture? Studies have verified what gardeners have suspected all along. Gardening can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. It gives gardeners an outlet to support emotional and mental health. Since the beginning of recorded history, people have been drawn to plants and gardens, not only for the bounty, but also for the beauty. Gardens bring a calmness and respite from the busy world.

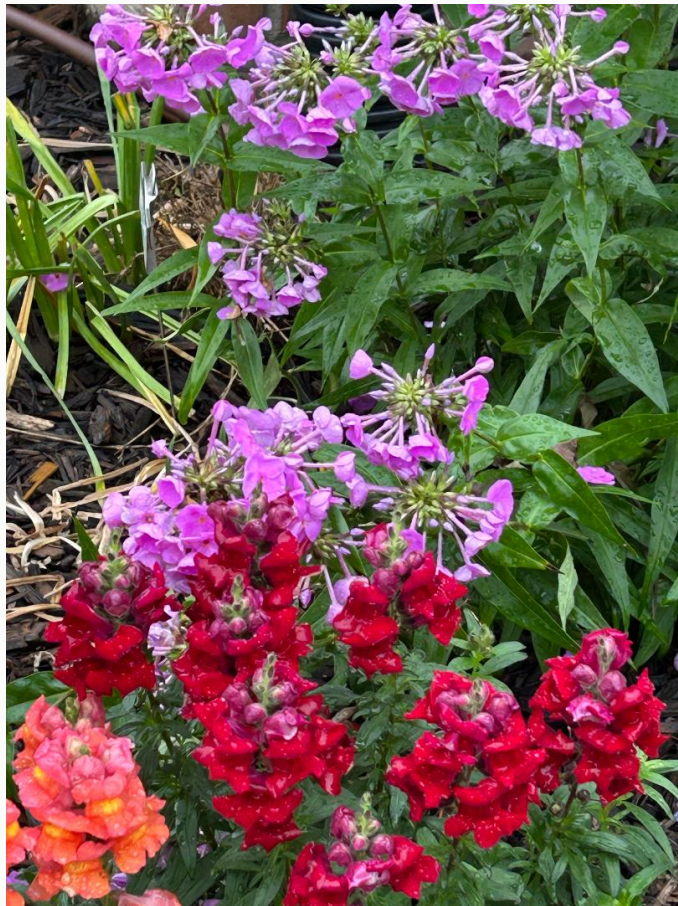
Gardening can increase your happiness in several ways. One is through a tiny microbe found in the soil called *Mycobacterium vaccae* which can actually improve your mood. Getting your hands dirty instead of using gloves may result in a natural feel-good experience. A second source of joy comes from the feeling of accomplishment and pleasure you receive from picking and preparing produce from your own garden. A third is the clean natural feeling that chemical-free gardening can bring, along with the knowledge that your produce is safe for you and your family.

Another benefit gardeners get from growing their own fruits and vegetables is peace of mind and food security. Gardeners know exactly where and how their produce is grown. It's gratifying to have a reliable source for fresh produce in your own back yard. Some studies even suggest that gardeners eat more fresh produce than non-gardeners.

Because gardening offers so many health benefits, most gardeners choose to grow a variety of plants. A bouquet of flowers from your garden brightens up a room and is a welcome gift to friends. Fresh produce picked from your garden and shared with neighbors brings smiles to their faces. Gardening is beneficial for you, and it also brings joy to those around you. It enriches your life and gives back to you in countless ways. Keep growing and sharing your bounty, because it truly is good for you!

Scenes from Pam's Garden







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; [Lynette Terrell](#), reporter; [Susan Young](#), production assistant.

Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[Pam Butler](#), president; [Steve Shearman](#), vice president; [Carole Ball](#), secretary; [Julie Murray](#), treasurer; [Caleb Israel](#), assistant treasurer. Members at large: [Kim Coslett](#), [Mary McCully](#), [Judi Sartwell](#). Ex officio: [Alfi Anderson](#), past president; [Colin Massey](#), Washington County extension agent for agriculture and horticulture.



WCMG Facebook Group
(private)



WCMG Facebook Page
(public)



WCMG Instagram



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 72704 US

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



Try email & social marketing for free!