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Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • June 2026

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

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Your message will go to a rarely monitored mailbox which will result in frustration for everyone involved. Instead, send your email message to the contact person listed in the article, or to wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com.
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JUNE MEETING and PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Picnic Time!

PAM BUTLER and STEVE SHEARMAN
President and Vice President

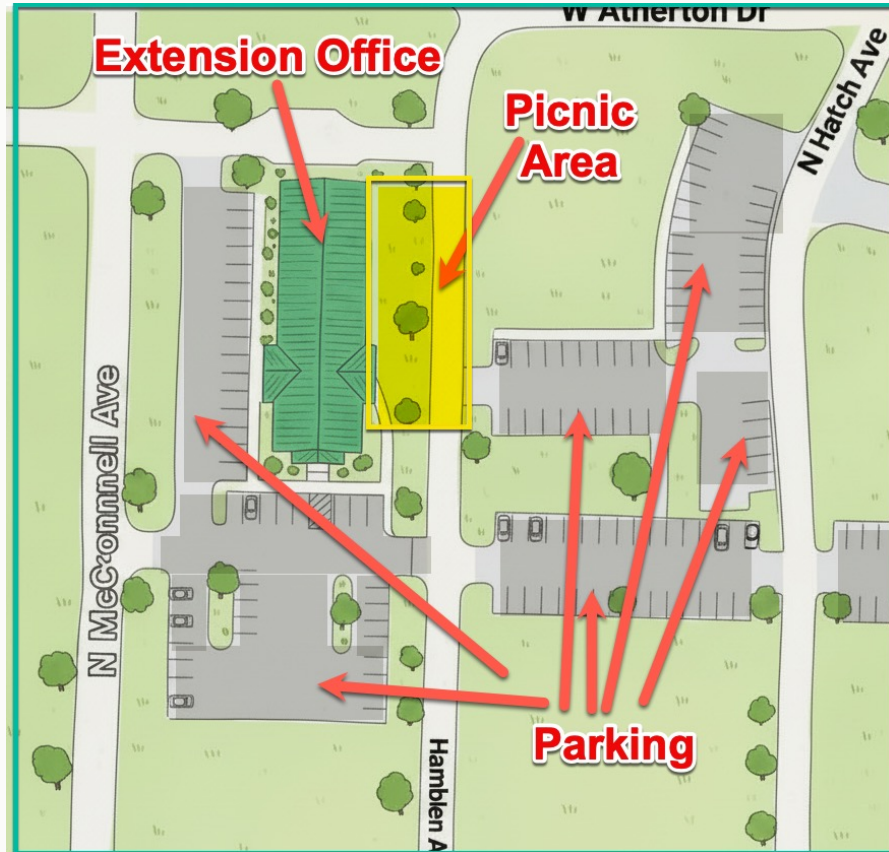


Picnic time in 1961, people and location unknown. Courtesy Thomas Hawk/[flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/thomashawk/)

You are cordially invited to attend our WCMG meeting and annual potluck picnic on Tuesday, June 9, at 6:30 p.m. at the Extension Office. You may bring a guest. Here are some things to know.

1. We will have a very brief meeting with one item of business. Treasurer Julie Murray has an announcement to make which will require a vote.
2. If it rains, we'll have tables and chairs set up inside the auditorium. If we have pretty weather, we'll eat outside and have the food on tables inside the auditorium. Please leave your favorite potluck dish along with a serving utensil on a table in the auditorium when you arrive.
3. You and your guest will need to bring your own lawn chairs. Limited seating is available outside. You may set your lawn chairs up on the street behind the Extension Office, which will be blocked off, or on the sidewalk directly behind the Extension Office. See map below.
4. We will have two handicap-accessible tables available for members and guests.
5. Because we are trying to stay green and environmentally friendly, you will need to bring your own dishes and silverware, along with a napkin and water bottle/cup. No paper plates or cups will be provided. Tablecloths are compostable. Please bring your own drink or use the bottle filler inside the Extension Office.
6. We plan to compost food waste, so watch for the buckets to recycle your leftovers. Judi Sartwell's chickens are the recipients this year, so please don't put anything in the food waste buckets except food.
7. Karen Hanna-Towne will be hosting the Swag Shop. She will take your clean Master Gardener shirts, aprons, hats, and anything else with the Master Gardener logo that you wish to donate. New Master Gardener trainees will be given dibs on the swag. Please see Karen at her table inside for more information.
8. Passports are going strong! Caleb Israel will have a passport table inside. Please see him for stamps and stickers.

9. Patsy Louk and Kathy Launder will have the tools you purchased available at a table inside for your convenience to pick up.
10. The educational program will consist of tours of the Extension grounds and the Compost Site. Extension grounds volunteers and compost site volunteers will be available for guided tours and questions.
11. Please remember your bug spray because mosquitos love the shade just like we do!
12. You are free to leave when you finish eating and have toured the grounds. Please be sure to record your two hours of education when you finish!



Map by Steve Shearman

Taking Care of Business—Next Month

President Pam Butler wants you to know that we will vote on the May meeting minutes, June meeting minutes, April treasurer's report, and May treasurer's report at our July 7 meeting.

2026 Garden Gate Tour: The Home Stretch!



The Garden Gate Tour committee asks all WCMGs to please help spread the word about the tour and encourage folks to attend.

If you're on social media, tell all your friends and family and fans and followers:

- [Facebook](#). This link will take you to the tour's Facebook Event page. Please share!
- [Instagram](#). This link will take you to a recent Instagram post about the tour. Please share!

Other ways to share tour info:

- [Here's a link to the tour page on the WCMG website](#). Share the link via text, email, or carrier pigeon.
- [Here's a link to a pdf of the tour flyer](#). You don't have to print it out, just download it and email or text it to your peeps.
- Good old-fashioned word of mouth is great, too.

And say, while we're talking about encouraging folks to attend, we hope to see *your* smiling face amongst the lovely gardens on tour day!

Our 2026 Garden Gate Tour is Saturday, June 6, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., rain or shine, and features seven Fayetteville gardens plus our projects at the Cooperative Extension Service Office.

Tickets for \$20 are on sale with credit card at the [Garden Gate Tour webpage](#) through June 6 and with cash or check at the Extension Office on June 4, 3:00–5:00 p.m., June 5, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and June 6, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

TOUR VOLUNTEER REMINDERS

DANNA GREAR

Garden Gate Tour Committee

Our next volunteer training session is **Monday, June 1**, 5:30– 6:30 p.m. (To get a complimentary ticket for tour day, you must attend one of the training meetings). We will have the Garden Gate Tour t-shirts for pick-up at this meeting if you were not able to pick them up at the May monthly MG meeting.

We have filled the volunteer slots for Tour Day. If you were assigned a slot, you should have received an email on **May 11** with details. If you did not receive an email and are still interested in volunteering, we would love to put you on our alternate list. Please text Danna Gear at 479-841-6402.

For those of you who are volunteering on Tour Day, you are invited to a preview of the residential gardens on **Friday, June 5**, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

We are still seeking volunteers to help our hosts prepare their beautiful gardens for the tour! Your hands-on help is greatly appreciated. **To join us, [please click here to sign up](#) or text Danna Gear at 479-841-6402.**

GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

JUDY SMITH



"Welcome Garden," one of the locations on the 2026 Garden Gate Tour.

Photo courtesy of the homeowners

Welcome Garden. The homeowners explain, "When we were children, our grandparents' homes welcomed us with white picket fences, gravel driveways, honeysuckle-covered arbors, and tall hedges of rhododendron, lilac, and boxwood. Inside the gates, flower beds were full of color and fragrance, alive with butterflies, bees, and birds singing. We ran barefoot through the grass, wove

dandelion garlands, and chased fireflies beneath the stars. As adults, we've often longed for the lightness and joy of those gardens. Three years ago, inspired by those memories—and by Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*, Douglas Tallamy's *Bringing Nature Home*, and Akira Miyawaki's 'Urban Forest Method'—we began to create our own 'Welcome Garden.' On our half-acre lot, we fenced, tilled, and planted with the hope to create a garden space where all who pass by—people and wildlife alike—might pause a moment to enjoy the warmth, color, and welcome that our grandparents shared with us."



**Washington County Extension Office, the sanctioned project
featured on the 2026 Garden Gate Tour.**

The ***Washington County Extension Office*** is this year's sanctioned project on the tour. The gardens there include a variety of flowering plants, vegetables, grasses, shrubs, and small trees suited for Northwest Arkansas. The Compost Demonstration Site will also be open for tours. Extension Service staff will discuss a variety of resources for home gardeners, including gardening fact sheets, soil testing, plant disease diagnosis, food preservation, and water quality best practices (rain barrels, rain gardens, planting natives, integrated pest management). Representatives from Washington County 4-H clubs and the Washington County Fair will share ways that kids and adults can become involved with gardening-related activities and events. Last but not least, WCMGs will conduct a raised garden bed demonstration build throughout the day. Register to win one of two raised beds that will be given away at the end of the day—but be prepared to take it home right then and there if you're one of the lucky winners!

Pollinators in Search of Citizen Scientists

[Here's a pdf of the flyer below.](#) (The pdf may be easier to read. The pdf also has a direct link to email the class instructor, Dr. Lilia Stemet.)



Do you love watching pollinators visiting your flowers?

Might you be interested in being trained as a citizen scientist to help monitor pollinator populations and learn more about their plant associations/preferences in your garden?

Then, you are in luck! Dr. Lilia Stemet; a native pollinator ecologist, previous NWA Master Naturalist Chair of Curriculum, and U of A at Monticello Assistant Professor/Herbarium Director; is offering a class for the public this summer (2026) at the U of A in Fayetteville.

This class is FREE and all supplies are provided!

This extensive training course will take place over four consecutive Saturdays:

**May 30th – 9 AM - Noon: Introduction to Plant and Pollinator Identification
1PM - 3 PM: Field Trip: Collection of Pollinators Visiting Native Plants**

**June 6th – 9 AM - Noon: Specimen Curation (Pinning and Positioning Appendages)
1PM - 3PM: Making Location Labels and Entering Location Data**

**June 13th – 9AM - Noon: Preliminary Insect Identification
1PM - 3PM: Making ID Labels and Entering ID Data**

**June 20th – 9AM - Noon: Finalize Remaining Identifications, Labeling, & Data Entry
1PM - 3PM: How to Collect and Report Data Going Forward**

NOTE: If you already have other plans one of these weekends, an alternative time to work on curating your collection can be arranged.

Please contact StemetL@uamont.edu to register or with questions.

By the Numbers

STEVE SHEARMAN

Vice President

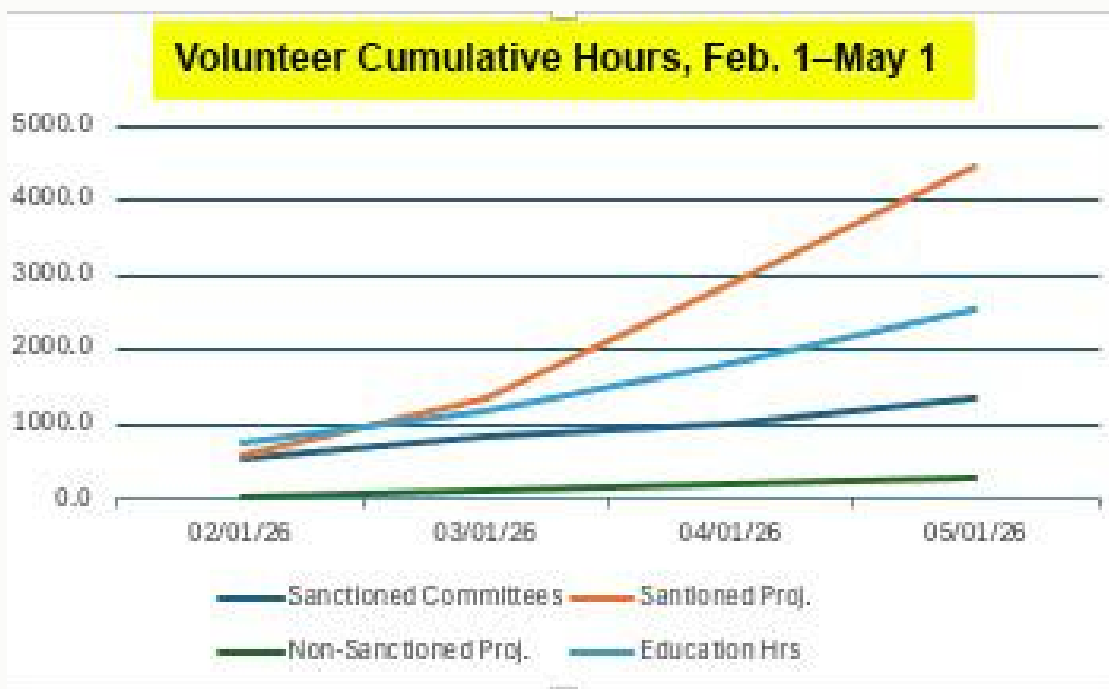
Chart and graph created by Steve Shearman based on statistics collected by Kathryn Birkhead, Membership Committee Co-Chair

2026 Volunteer Cumulative Reporting: 2.15.26 to 5.15.26

Committees, Sanctioned Projects, Non-Sanctioned, Education

	2.15.26	3.15.26	4.15.26	5.15.26
# of MG Reporting	106.0	123.0	135.0	145.0
Sanctioned:				
Committees	539.0	819.0	993.8	1331.3
Projects	567.3	1325.5	2864.3	4460.0
Total	1106.3	2144.5	3858.0	5791.3
Non-Sanctioned	27.5	96.5	192.0	274.0
Education Hrs	730.5	1160.0	1831.5	2542.0
Grand Ttl	1864.3	3401.0	5881.5	8607.3
Ave per MG	17.6	27.7	43.6	59.4

Over the past four months, WCMGs have significantly increased their cumulative volunteer hours across committees, sanctioned projects, non-sanctioned projects, and educational efforts.



The graph above shows steady growth in all areas, with especially strong gains in sanctioned projects and educational hours, highlighting a deepening commitment to both community impact and personal development. This upward trend reflects not only more time given but also a greater investment in quality outcomes that will enhance every aspect of our committees, sanctioned projects, non-sanctioned projects, and educational efforts, all of which impact our organization and public outreach. The Executive Committee is grateful for those who enter their volunteer hours promptly, which allows us to see the valuable work you have accomplished. The results are truly impressive. Thank you for your faithful response to the needs of the Washington County Master

Gardener organization and our community, and for the dedication that continues to make this an amazing group of passionate people who call ourselves Master Gardeners.

Meet the Trainees

LYNETTE TERRELL

Colleen McCarthy

On my kitchen counter by the window you'll always find a bouquet of flowers and something rooting. My love for plants is an addiction, especially in spring and summer. Outside I have a vegetable garden and a flower garden which I care for like my children. I am so excited to be a Master Gardener in training! Everyone has been so nice and supportive!



I moved to Arkansas sixteen years ago from Fort Collins, Colorado. Before I retired, I was a probation officer for the State of Colorado. We've had a house on Lake Hamilton since the mid '60s so I'm kind of a native! Ha!

My hobbies include gardening, hiking, kayaking, and camping, to name a few.

My husband Mark and I have been married for 20 years. Our combined family consists of three daughters and two granddaughters. Lots of estrogen in these parts!

Kay Pike

Greetings fellow Master Gardeners, here are a few tidbits of my life. I am a newly retired neonatal ICU nurse of 32 years. As a nurse you tend to have nurturing skills which I would like to focus on in a new area of expertise: nurturing plants, tending gardens, and preserving the environment.



I grew up with parents and my grandmother and aunt who visited many gardens and had their own. Growing up in the Chicago area I had many opportunities to visit gardens, especially in the winter. Mitchell Park in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was my favorite. Three large glass domes featured a jungle, desert, and a showcase that changed throughout the year.

I have been to Hawaii, Bellingrath Gardens in Alabama, and Ben Franklin's estate in Virginia. My wish list is to travel to New Zealand and Japan.

I thirst for knowledge and challenges in the last quarter of my life. Thank you for including me! My mentors for Dutch oven cooking were Janice Neighbor and Mary Loftus Mashie. Two great women I admire.

My sister lives in Wyoming and has a master's degree for teaching agriculture education and horticulture. She was a floral designer for many years. We now can sit and discuss our knowledge

and passion for plants and flowers. Her growing season is very short and challenging.

Michael Whitehead

Greetings. I am a native of Fayetteville, Arkansas. I have been married for nearly 40 years to my wife, Dorothy. I have three children and five grandchildren. Before retiring I put in 40 years with the United States Postal Service as well as fifteen years as a volunteer firefighter/emergency medical technician in Elkins. Since I have retired my life mostly revolves around my duties as Poppy. I stay busier than I did when I worked. My wife and I love to travel, camp, hike, and fish. In my free time you can find me behind the camera chasing birds and animals.



My love of gardening started with my grandfathers. I still remember watching one grandfather standing on a six-foot ladder to collect his okra pods. My other grandfather had to garden to feed a family of nine. Even in his eighties he would put out large areas of potatoes and two to three acres of truck patch. I also remember watching him crawl up and down two acres of strawberries and blackberries, not being able to bend over after damaging his back working at the sawmill. As a young adult, I would help them sell their produce at the Farmer's Market.

Our church is known as the "Pumpkin Church." We sell pumpkins every year for the entire month of October. It's a fundraiser for our youth group. The pumpkins are grown on a Navajo Indian reservation in New Mexico. I have been involved with this for 20 years. I have learned so much about pumpkins, I feel like I could be a professor in the Department of Gourdology.

Now that I'm retired, I can devote more time to my love of gardening. I joined Master Gardeners to increase my gardening knowledge as well as meet new people. So far, the Master Gardeners program has exceeded my expectations. I have met a great group of people and have learned much more than I had anticipated. I look forward to gaining even more knowledge and making lasting friendships.

May Photo of the Month Contest: "Critters in the Garden"



FIRST PLACE
"A Little Spicy" by Geri Alvis



SECOND PLACE

"Lunch Time" by Delcina Cunico



THIRD PLACE TIE

"Bumblebee on Penta Flowers" by Jody Miskell



THIRD PLACE TIE
"Find the Aphids" by Kitty Sanders

The June photo contest theme is "Vegetable Gardens." Deadline to enter is June 15. Contest details are available on the [Photo of the Month Competition](#) webpage. Questions? Email wcmgphotos@gmail.com.

First Quarter Busy Bees



JANUARY BUSY BEES. Kim Coslett, Pam Butler. Photo by Caleb Israel



FEBRUARY BUSY BEES. Julie Murray (from left), Patsy Louk, Jan Lefler. Not pictured: Liz Hale. Photo by Caleb Israel



MARCH BUSY BEES. Back row, from left: Roger Faulkner, Jim Sposato, Carole Ball, Kelly Chaney, David Edwards, Kathy Launder, Caleb Israel. Front row, from left: Susan Young, Carrie Gamble, Marguerite Abowitz, Doris Cassidy, Karen Hanna-Towne, Peter Gavin. Not pictured: Roxanne Gallup, Ruthanne Hill, Pam Salamo, Mariette Spidel. Photo by Alfi Anderson

Outreach Committee Expands Local Engagement

KELLY CHANEY

Community Outreach Committee Chair



Steve Shearman, Sharon Keen, Kelly Chaney, and Kristine Hall (not pictured) bring their gardening know-how to the Farmington Farmers Market on a recent Saturday. Photo by Calinda Green

The Community Outreach Committee has launched an active season, strengthening partnerships, promoting gardening education, and preparing for upcoming events across Northwest Arkansas.

At the **Farmington Farmers Market**, WCMGs **Steve Shearman, Sharon Keen, Kelly Chaney,** and **Kristine Hall** hosted a booth that drew steady foot traffic from residents curious about gardening. The booth served as a hub for sharing resources and answering questions about the committee's ongoing initiatives, including the upcoming Garden Gate Tour. Market manager and WCMG **Calinda Green** also engaged with visitors to the table.

As a way to show our support of the Garden Travelers program, WCMG prepared a fresh salad-and-dessert luncheon for **Janet Carson and the Garden Travelers**, who were visiting the area on their way to Kansas City. The meal offered a chance for informal conversation and collaboration with one of Arkansas's most respected gardening educators. Participants also toured the Extension Gardens and Compost Demonstration Site. **Patsy Louk** arranged the luncheon and **Martha Haguewood** created the flower arrangements.

The committee also reached out to **Springdale Schools** to establish a partnership supporting students who need community service hours for graduation. The proposed collaboration would connect students with hands-on volunteer opportunities in gardening, education, and event support—an initiative expected to benefit both the students and the broader community.

Media outreach has been equally active.

- **Caleb Israel** appeared on Channel 5, offering practical guidance on planting tomatoes and peppers as the growing season ramps up. [Here's a link to the segment.](#)
- **Laura Underwood, Nicholas Sammer,** and **Colin Massey** were on the KNWA & Fox 24 morning show to highlight the Garden Gate Tour and upcoming library programs. [Here's a link to the segment.](#)
- **Laura Underwood** and **Danna Grear** will be on Channel 5 soon for a segment focused on the Garden Gate Tour and its role in promoting horticulture education.

Looking ahead, the second of the **Gardening 101 with WCMG** series at the Fayetteville Public Library is set for June 13 at 2:00 p.m. **Kathy Launder** and **Kitty Sanders** will present "If You Plant It, They Will Come" and will be looking at how what we plant in the garden can determine the pollinators and other wildlife that will visit.

The committee has officially registered for the **Arkansas Insect Festival**, scheduled for September 12 at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center. The event is expected to draw families, educators, and nature enthusiasts from across the region, offering another opportunity for the committee to share expertise and connect with the public.

The season's activities reflect a clear theme: deeper engagement, broader visibility, and a commitment to fostering community connections through gardening, education, and service.

Gardening and Community Events

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.

\$ = fee charged.

June 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, 5:30–7:00 p.m. TERRIFIC TUESDAY NIGHTS. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, Fayetteville. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 3, 12:00–1:00 p.m. PRAIRIE GRASS OF PRAIRIE GROVE TRAIL WALK. Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 6, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. GARDEN GATE TOUR. WCMG’s annual event! \$. For more information, see article elsewhere in this newsletter or visit the [WCMG website](#).

June 11, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. RIVER CANE. Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. Meet on Black Nursery Road just east of the park. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 12, 1:00–2:00 p.m. APPLE ORCHARD TOUR. Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 13, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and June 14, 12:00 –5:00 p.m. “LAND THAT I LOVE” TULSA COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS GARDEN TOUR. \$. [For more information.](#)

June 13, 10:00–11:00 a.m. VERA’S VICTORIAN GARDEN TOUR. With Benton County Master Gardeners at the Rogers Historical Museum, 313 S. Second Street. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 13, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. WHAT ARE VICTORIAN PLANTS? Program by Benton County Master Gardeners. Rogers Historical Museum Education Annex, 322 S. Second Street. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 13, 2:00–3:00 p.m. IF YOU PLANT IT, THEY WILL COME. Pollinator gardening talk with our own WCMGs Kitty Sanders and Kathy Launder. Fayetteville Public Library. Free. [For more information.](#)

June 16, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: SWEET CORN. Zoom program by UADA extension agents. Free. [Registration information.](#)

June 24, 5:30–7:00 p.m. TREE TALK & TOUR. With certified arborist David McNiel. Compton Gardens and Arboretum, Bentonville. Free; registration required. [For more information.](#)

June 27, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. WHAT’S BLOOMING AT THE BATTLEFIELD HIKE. Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. 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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Send all newsletter submissions to Judy Smith.

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WCMG Website



WCEX Website

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