



Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • August 2026

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

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AUGUST MEETING

The Miracle of Monarch Migration

We hope to see you at our next WCMG monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 4, at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington County Extension Office. Our guest speaker is WCMG Kitty Sanders, who will present "The Miracle of Monarch Migration."

Kitty has been an active Washington County Master Gardener since 2012 and currently serves on the WCMG Website Committee. She is widely recognized for her passion and expertise in butterflies—especially monarchs—which earned her the 2024 Arkansas Master Gardener Excellence in Education Award for her outstanding work with the butterfly team and education team.

In addition to her Master Gardener contributions, Kitty is a member of the Northwest Arkansas Master Naturalists (NWAMN). Along with fellow NWAMN member Jane Foster, Kitty was honored with the NWAMN Master Naturalist of the Year Award in 2020 and 2021. Kitty's deep knowledge and engaging teaching style have made her a sought-after speaker across the state, including at the University of Arkansas's



Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, where she presented “All About Monarchs: Ecology & Migration.”

For our August 4 meeting, Kitty will share insights into the fascinating life cycle of monarch butterflies and recount their incredible journey to Mexico following their migration.

Taking Care of Business

We will vote on these items at our August 4 monthly business meeting.

July 2026 Business Meeting
Minutes

June 2026 Treasurer's Report

From Your President

PAM BUTLER

August is My Favorite Month!

I know August may be an unpopular choice for a favorite month. Most people would choose December or July or even November. But I have many reasons to love August, and you may decide you like August better than you thought after you read my reasons.

The first reason involves a bit of background information. I am a retired teacher, and August is back-to-school month. Some teachers dread August for numerous reasons, including the required professional development, extra hours needed to prepare classrooms, Meet the Teacher Night, the heat, and outside recess duty. Throw in the children who have been free spirits all summer and helicopter parents? You can understand the possible dread many teachers face in August.



My love of the month of August has nothing to do with most of those things. My heart starts to beat faster in July as stores prepare for their Back-to-School sales. I absolutely LOVE the back-to-school aisles with the new writing products, notebooks, storage containers, and all the other treasures I may accidentally find as I wander the aisles. I don't have a list or a specific need. I just look at everything and usually find something that is absolutely necessary to improve my life. If anyone in my family loses me in a store, I can always be found with the children who are shopping for school supplies. My family knows my weakness.

August is also Washington County Fair time. Randy and I are certified judges. We judge wherever and whatever we are assigned. It's fun to see all the creative items people design and enter in the fair. We've judged knitting, sewing, entomology displays, crafts, and vegetables. Our favorite area though, is food preparation or, in other words, baking. We have judged baking for several years. But as much as we love tasting all the goodies, by the end of the day, we have sampled our way through dozens of chocolate chip cookies and brownies. We both swear we never ever want another chocolate chip cookie, but, in a year, by the next fair time, we're ready to do it again!

Another reason I love the fair and another of my favorite areas at the fair is the Master Gardeners' White Elephant booth. It's great fun to browse through all the items that friends have donated. I always find something to buy, and many times it's a new plant or a book or a gift for someone. I manage to walk by the booth several times while I'm there and see something new each time. I encourage you to donate to the White Elephant booth and then shop during your break time and before and after you volunteer. You never know what you might find. It's a lovely way to spend some time and a little money!

August is also special to me because it's my birthday month. My 92-year-old mom and my brother have birthdays within a few days of mine. (I'm sure both my brother and I were delightful birthday presents for my mom.) We try to have one big celebration for the three of us and invite the rest of the family to our party. We make sure Mom has plenty of birthday cake with candles and homemade Butterfinger ice cream.

Finally, August ushers in autumn, which is my favorite season. As summer winds down and the trees begin to show off their glorious colors, I relax and enjoy my new school supplies and maybe some plants or books from the White Elephant booth. I pause as I realize how blessed I am to have experienced another year, and my favorite month of August, once again.

August is a delightfully chaotic month with beckoning back-to-school aisles, surprises at the fair, and family birthdays which remind me that I'm another year older and wiser. Life sometimes seems to go by in a rush, so it's important to take the time to stop and reflect on, and be thankful for, what's really important. I'm grateful for every exciting moment.

Scenes from Pam's Garden



Dahlia



Rudbeckia



Caladium



Fan Flower



Dahlia



Hardy Hibiscus

Enter Something in the Fair! It's a Good Excuse to Eat Cotton Candy.

DORIS CASSIDY and KATHY LAUNDER
Washington County Fair sanctioned project co-chairs



Photo by [David Trink](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Calling all Washington County Master Gardeners! The Washington County Fair takes place August 24–30. **Entry day is August 24.** We encourage all WCMGs to enter any or all of the following gardening-related exhibit categories:

- Open Agronomy/Horticulture
- Cut Flowers
- Potted Plants
- Flower Arrangements
- Outdoor Art
-

[The Washington County Fair Book](#) is available online and provides all the info you need to enter the fruits of your labor in the fair.

2027 Executive Committee Slate of Nominees

ALFI ANDERSON

Nominating Committee chair

The WCMG Nominating Committee, consisting of **Alfi Anderson, Doris Cassidy, and Darielle James**, is pleased to present the **2027 Executive Committee slate of nominees**. After interviewing and carefully evaluating each candidate, the committee unanimously selected a slate of dedicated volunteers who will provide strong, collaborative leadership for our program. The proposed slate has also been approved by the Executive Committee.

2027 Executive Committee Slate of Nominees

- **President:** Stephen Shearman
- **Vice President:** Kristi Campbell
- **Secretary:** Jan Lefler
- **Treasurer:** Caleb Israel
- **Assistant Treasurer:** Calinda Green

- **Immediate Past President:** Pam Butler
- **Member-at-Large** (Class of 2026): Michael Whitehead
- **Member-at-Large:** Kim Coslett
- **Member-at-Large:** Susie McKinney

Additional nominations will be accepted **in writing through August 28**. No nominations will be accepted after that date to allow time to prepare the ballot for the election at the **September 8 membership meeting**. Written nominations should be emailed to thegabbygardener@gmail.com.

The Nominating Committee thanks each nominee for their willingness to serve and encourages all members to participate in the election.

Time to Get Started on Awards Nominations

LIZ HALE and JAN LEFLER

Awards Committee co-chairs

Call to Action! Master Gardeners are encouraged to nominate individuals and projects for 2026 award recognition. **Nominations are due prior to October 15**. Award nomination forms and guidelines are found in the Member Portal section of our [WCMG website](#). Some prior WCMG award winners are ineligible for renomination; others become eligible again after five (5) years. Please review the document listing of all prior winners for more details.

The State County 76 RRR Project (Recruitment, Retention and Recognition) manages the Arkansas Master Gardener Awards program. State MG awards are presented at the 2027 annual Arkansas Master Gardener Conference.

Plan Now. Give yourself time to read the nomination criteria, gather information and lots of action images, draft the nomination, check it for errors and word counts, etc., to ensure your nomination qualifies.

Gather Information

1. Make notes about contributions/achievements/measurable results against goals, etc., of individuals/teams and projects.
2. Use statistics to track measurable results.
3. Take action-oriented photos, identify all people with their roles, and include a short caption (maximum of four sentences) for each photo.
4. Invite input from the potential nominee individual/team. Doing so can help create a unique story of your nominee and provide detailed examples you may not have known.

Draft Your Nomination

1. Think of your nomination as an investigative story record: Who, What, When, Where and How.
2. Address all award criteria, including contributions to the Extension service and the local community.
3. Focus on how the nomination's contribution/achievement/skill, be specific and describe nominee's impacts.
4. **NEW:** Include feedback (quotes) from other MGs about nominee's contributions and media circulation.

5. NEW: Include participation in special program(s) or special event(s), surveys done and their results.
6. Use data (number of people served, money earned, hours worked, etc.) to measure nominee's impact against goals. Judges want to know evaluation data.
7. Use verbs and action photos to tell the narrative. Be a storyteller. Draw the judge in.
8. Be thorough and accurate, but also be inspiring!

WCMG Awards Categories

- Master Gardener of the Year
- Rookie of the Year
- Mimi Cox Mentor of the Year
- Project of the Year
- Excellence in Education Project of the Year
- Individual Friend of Master Gardeners
- Organization or Business Friend of Master Gardeners
- Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can" Award

Questions? Email [Jan Lefler](#) or [Liz Hale](#). Let's ensure Washington County Master Gardeners are represented and recognized.

New Membership Committee Co-Chair

KATHRYN BIRKHEAD

Membership Committee co-chair

Roger Faulkner (WCMG Class of 2025) is bringing his considerable experience in IT to WCMG as the new membership committee co-chair. He is very comfortable managing data and also helping people with problems they have with technology. Roger is a native of California but spent much of his professional life in Colorado before coming to Arkansas. Roger has worked on WCMG projects at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks and the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. He is also on the New MG Training and Mentoring Committee. Besides being a great worker and colleague, he enjoys camping and other outdoor activities. We appreciate you, Roger!



Service Pin Award Winners

Photos by Kathryn Birkhead unless otherwise noted.



5 Years. From left: Linda Hall, Alfi Anderson, Teri Kinsey, Vicki Spencer, Janice Walker, Carol Van Scyoc. Not pictured: Nan Abbiatti, Judy Cohea, Serenity Lewis, Annie Moore, Kathryn Sampson Stinson, Karen Takemoto, Adriana Treadway.



10 Years. From left: Martha McBride, Deby Prince. Not pictured: Steve Brizzi, Paula Dutton, Pat McKeown, Terry Merchant.



Lifetime–15 Years. From left: Dawn Fisher, Chuck Rutherford, Judy Smith, Joyce Starr. Not pictured: Margaret Barron.



Lifetime Plus 20 Years and Lifetime Plus 25 Years. From left: Annette Pianalto (Lifetime Plus 20), Shirley Durning (Lifetime Plus 25), Jan Hayes (Lifetime Plus 25), Diane Standefer (Lifetime Plus 25.) Not pictured: Jayne Laster (Lifetime Plus 20).



April Busy Bees. From left: Kristi Campbell, Alfi Anderson, Geri Alvis, Marlene Craig, Randy Butler, Janice Walker, Peggy Sissel, Rick Stanley, Teri Kinsey. Not pictured: Brad Neidecker, Lisa Owen, Alethea Prince, Laura Underwood, Laura Wilkins.



May Busy Bees. From left: Mike Whitehead, Danna Gear, Lynne Bell, Regina Gabel, Betty Nichols, Nancy Sloan, Lynette Terrell, Laura West. Not pictured: Judy Cohea, Mary Harvey, Yi Liang, Steve Shearman, Robert White.



June Busy Bees. From left: Kitty Sanders, Chris Bell, Terry Hedden, Jessica Guillory, Noel Morris, Kathryn Birkhead. Not pictured: Sonja Everitt, Sharon Keen, Colleen McCarthy, Kathryn Sampson Stinson, Julie Torseth, Adriana Treadway, Deborah Whicker. *Photo by Geri Alvis.*

ONE WORD: AMAZING!

Volunteer Hours Summary

STEVE SHEARMAN

Vice President

By mid-July, the average Master Gardener has already contributed nearly twice the annual volunteer requirement—an outstanding achievement that reflects the passion and dedication of you,

our members.

Volunteer activity has grown steadily from February through July 15, with total hours increasing more than sixfold. Despite summer heat, busy schedules, vacations, and the natural shift in the gardening season, your commitment has remained strong across all areas—projects, committees, and continuing education.

Project work continues to make up the largest share of service hours, highlighting the meaningful, hands-on impact you are having throughout our community. By mid-year, the average Master Gardener has contributed more than 75 combined hours—well above annual expectations—while also surpassing continuing education goals.

This level of participation speaks volumes. It reflects not only the growing involvement of our members but also a deep and ongoing commitment to learning, service, and community.. Your efforts are visible, valued, and truly make a difference across Washington County.

2026 Total Cumulative Hours

- Committees: 1794.75 (Increase of 13% from June to July)
- Sanctioned projects: 7,600 (Increase of 18% from June to July)
- Non-sanctioned projects: 423.50 (Increase of 16% from June to July)
- Education: 4,014.5 (Increase of 18% from June to July)

Sorting Things Out



The Plant Labeling Committee met on July 8 to sort labels to be reused on sanctioned projects and next year's Garden Gate Tour. From left: Mari Walters-Ford, Carole Ball, and Elaine Mills. *Photo by Karen Hanna-Towne.*

Meet the Trainees

LYNETTE TERRELL

Sharon Etchison

If you have met me, I always comment on how important it is to give people a way to remember your name. So . . . Hi, my name is *Sharon*, like the Rose of Sharon. *Etchison*, like an Etch-a-Sketch.

I am so excited to be in the Master Gardener program, but I must admit being a Master Gardener feels like a bit of a misnomer because I've always looked at myself as a "jack of all trades," master of NONE.

I got my LOVE of gardening from my precious grandmother. I spent most of my summers (from second grade to college) at my grandmother's helping with her vegetable garden. I did everything from tilling, to picking, to snapping/shelling, but only she could do the planting. LOL. I did get to eat fresh produce daily. Yum!



Melissa Harwood-Rom

Happy summer to my fellow trainees and to all Master Gardeners.

I am absolutely enjoying my trainee experience. Thanks to all for your contributions to this delightful and productive endeavor.

I am a proud native Arkansan. Born in Fort Smith, I moved to Hot Springs as an elementary student and appreciated the beauty of the National Park, Lake Ouachita, and other natural delights.

A proud Razorback, I am a 1980 graduate of the University of Arkansas. One of my outstanding accomplishments as an undergraduate was to secure a horticulturist (Curt Rom) as my future partner in life as well as in gardening. I earned an MFA at Oklahoma State and then joined Curt in Columbus, Ohio.

We were fortunate to return to Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas in 1989. Curt assumed duties in tree fruit research as well as teaching. I was associate athletic director and engaged in some gardening-related activities such as laying sod on the new soccer field.

I joined the Division of Student Affairs in November 2011 and was honored to retire from the University in 2025.

What a privilege it is to be a Master Gardener trainee! I have reconnected with friends and colleagues and met new friends, too. I am drawn to herbs and perennials, and I hope to continue to add to my knowledge of good gardening practice. Thank you for the warm welcome to this community.



Curt and I thrive and garden on 2.3 acres in east Fayetteville. We are delighted to have two daughters as well as two Shetland Sheepdogs. I would be remiss not to mention our red-shouldered hawks, Athena and Chris, as well as assorted owls, a pond full of fish and frogs, and sadly, deer and rabbits.

July Photo of the Month Contest: "Perennial Flowers"



FIRST PLACE

"Waiting out the rain" by Michael Whitehead



SECOND PLACE
"Sunrise Surprise" by Geri Alvis



THIRD PLACE

"Triple Delight" by Delcina Cunico

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

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.

August 1, 12:30–5:00 p.m. TOMATO FESTIVAL. Ozark Folkways, Winslow. Free. [For more information.](#)

August 1, 5:00–7:00 p.m. CROWNS & COCKTAILS WORKSHOP WITH MOUNT OLIVE FARMS. Hands-on floral workshop. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. \$ [Registration information.](#)

August 1, 10:00 a.m.–? **FALL GARDENING TIPS.** With Benton County MG Susan Esche. Helping Hands Garden, 2602 SW D Street, Bentonville. Free, no registration required. For more information, email bcmgardener@gmail.com.

August 4, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: PEACHES, PLUMS, AND NECTARINES. Zoom program by UADA extension agents. Free. [For more information.](#)

August 4, 5:00–7:30 p.m. TERRIFIC TUESDAY NIGHT. Also on August 11, 18, and 25. Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). Free, but tickets required. [For more information.](#)

August 9, 9:00–10:30 a.m. HIKING THROUGH THE CONSERVATION OF THE OZARK CHINQUAPIN TREE. Also on August 23. Lake Fort Smith State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

August 9, 1:30–2:00 p.m. TREE RINGS TELL ALL. Devil's Den State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

August 15, 2:00–3:00 p.m. PLANT, GROW, EAT. With WCMG Teresa Sullivan. Fayetteville Public Library. Free. [For more information.](#)

August 19, 9:30–11:30 a.m. FIELD TRIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING. BGO. Free, but tickets required. [For more information.](#)

August 20, 11:00–11:45 a.m. PLANT ARMOR: FROM THORNS TO TOXINS HIKE. Devil's Den State Park. Free. [For more information.](#)

August 22, 1:00–3:00 p.m. OZARK PLANT MEDICINE & MAGIC. Ozark Folkways, Fayetteville. \$ Registration required. [For more information.](#)

August 29, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. GARLIC BRAIDING WITH AVIVA & NIKKI. Ozark Folkways, Fayetteville. \$ Registration required. [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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[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.

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[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.



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Washington County Master Gardeners
c/o Washington County Cooperative Extension Service
2536 N. McConnell Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72704 US

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