

WILLIAMSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

THE PERENNIAL





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A Message from our President

Slow Down

This is the only time of year I hope for regular rainy days. Now that my seedlings are in the ground, there's nothing better than a nice steady rain every few days. With some breaks of course; the yard won't mow itself.

Late afternoon to early evening is my favorite time to walk around the garden. It's a welcome transition from work to home, and it allows me to observe the garden through its gradual changes. Effective management of your garden relies on you knowing your garden. Catching a problem early can be key to correcting it, and you can only catch it if you are out there looking. Plus it's really good for your body and soul.

It also allows me to appreciate the stages of growth and maturity the landscape experiences. If I only paid attention when I planted, when things bloomed or were harvested, and then cleaned it all up, I would miss out on so much wonder. I don't garden for results; not entirely. Sure I want beautiful flowers, juicy tomatoes, and spicy peppers. But I also want to have my hands in the dirt, being part of the process of guiding the garden to where it wants to go every year. Sometimes cliches are true: the joy is in the journey. Too many things these days are about speed and efficiency. A garden should be lived in. Allowed to ebb and flow a bit. Just slow down.

Not everything is going to flourish in your garden every year. And some things are going to exceed your expectations. If you take the time to be in your garden, watching and enjoying it, you just might pick up on some things that can help push it towards the later.

I leave you with a bit of Mary Oliver's "Leaves and Blossoms Along the Way" (I highly recommend reading her):

For how many years did I wander slowly
through the forest. What wonder and
glory I would have missed had I ever been
in a hurry!

Happy Gardening!

Matt Bergstrom
President, WCMGA



Photo by Kristy Berstrom

Container Gardening in Tennessee: Big Beauty in Small Spaces

By Taylor Reeder, UT/TSU Extension, Williamson County

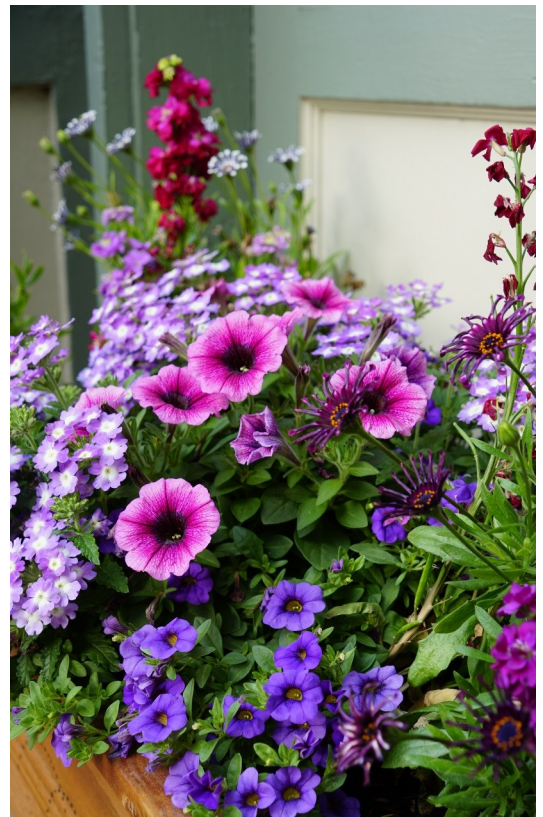
Let's face it—between our busy schedules and often limited outdoor space, traditional gardening isn't always practical. But that doesn't mean you have to give up your green thumb. Container gardening is a smart, flexible, and downright delightful way to enjoy the rewards of gardening—no backyard required.

Whether you're working with a sunny balcony or a shady porch, containers let you customize your garden to fit your lifestyle, your space, and even Tennessee's unique climate. Plus, with the right approach, container gardening can be just as satisfying—and stunning—as a full-size garden bed.

Start with the Right Plants (and the Right Neighbors)

Before you grab a trowel, think about what you want to grow. Tennessee's climate gives us hot, humid summers and relatively mild winters, which opens the door for a wide range of container-friendly plants. Some great choices for Tennessee container gardens include:

- **Caladiums** and **coleus** for colorful foliage in partial shade
- **Petunias**, **lantana**, and **salvia** for sunny spots and bright blooms
- **Herbs** like basil, rosemary, thyme, and mint (great for cooking and cocktails!)
- **Compact veggies** like patio tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, and bush beans
- **Ornamental grasses** for texture and movement
- **Succulents** for those who want low-maintenance drama



If you're combining plants in the same pot, make sure they all enjoy the same conditions—sunlight, water, and feeding. A sun-loving tomato won't be happy paired with a shade-loving fern. Think compatibility!

The “Thriller, Filler, Spiller” Formula: Your Recipe for Stunning Containers

Also, play with height, color, and texture. A good rule of thumb: pick a “thriller” (something tall and eye-catching), a “filler” (to add body), and a “spiller” (something that trails over the edge). The result? Instant container magic.

Thrillers (Height & Drama):

- Purple Fountain Grass
- Canna Lily
- Elephant Ears (*Alocasia/Colocasia*)
- Dracaena Spike
- Ornamental Millet (*Pennisetum*)
- Salvia
- 'Black Pearl' Ornamental Pepper
- 'Autumn Joy' Sedum

Fillers (Fullness & Color):

- Coleus
- Calibrachoa (Million Bells)
- Begonias
- Lantana
- Angelonia
- Dusty Miller
- Pansies/Violas (cool season)

Spillers (Trailing & Texture):

- Sweet Potato Vine
- Creeping Jenny
- Bacopa
- Vinca Vine
- Trailing Lobelia (spring/fall)
- English Ivy (invasive! Keep in container)
- Torenia (Wishbone Flower)

Pick a Pot—Almost Any Pot

One of the most fun parts of container gardening is choosing your pots. Got an old washtub? A wooden crate? Even a broken wheelbarrow? If it holds soil and has drainage holes, it can be a garden.

Just be sure the size fits your plant's needs—roots need room to grow, and soil should stay moist but not soggy. Tennessee's summer heat can dry out small containers quickly, so bigger pots help buffer temperature swings and retain moisture better.

Soil Matters—Don't Dig from the Yard

When it comes to soil, skip the stuff in your yard. Tennessee clay might be rich, but it's heavy and compacts easily in a pot. Instead, go for a lightweight soilless mix made from materials like peat moss, coir, perlite, or composted bark. These blends offer great drainage and aeration while holding onto enough moisture for happy roots.



Pro tip: Moisten your potting mix before planting—it's easier to work with and helps avoid dry spots that resist water later on. And always leave about an inch of space at the top of your pot to make watering easier.

Water Smart—Especially in Tennessee Heat

Morning is the best time to water your container plants. It gives leaves time to dry out and reduces the risk of fungal diseases. During summer, containers may need watering daily—especially if they're in full sun.

To test if your plant needs water, stick your finger into the soil or lift it to feel the weight. If it's dry, give it a drink. Overwatering is just as dangerous as underwatering, so don't assume dry-looking soil on top tells the full story.



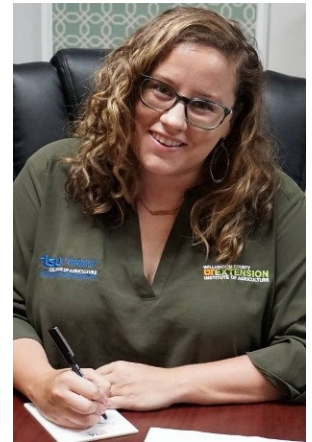
Feed with Care

Since container soil has limited nutrients, you'll need to fertilize—but don't overdo it. Use a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer every few weeks during the growing season. Keep an eye out for signs of salt buildup (white crust on the soil), and flush the pot with clean water if needed.

Let Your Creativity Bloom

The best thing about container gardening? There are no rules (well, just a few helpful guidelines). Mix colors, try odd containers, and don't be afraid to experiment. Group containers of different sizes for a dramatic effect or line them up along a porch railing for a cheerful border.

And remember: you don't have to stick to flowers. Many vegetables love life in a pot—especially patio tomatoes, radishes, and leafy greens. Want a salsa garden on your back porch? Go for it!



Taylor Reeder
UT/TSU Extension
Williamson County Horticulture Agent
[Horticulture | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](http://Horticulture | Williamson County (tennessee.edu))

For more information:

[Vegetables and Herbs | UT Hort](#)

[Container Gardening | Oklahoma State University](#)

[Container gardening basics | OSU Extension Service](#)

[Container Gardening | Extension | West Virginia University](#)

[Container Gardens | Illinois Extension | UIUC](#)



Black-eyed Susan Vine

By Brenda Musick, WCMGA Member

Thunbergia alata, commonly known as the Black-eyed Susan vine, is a beautiful annual vine that grows well here in Middle Tennessee. This plant with its striking tubular blooms and heart-shaped leaves, is named after the Swedish botanist Carl Peter Thunberg who discovered the species in South Africa in the 18th century. The plant family is Acanthaceae.

Last spring, I planted “Lemon A Peel” variety in a large pot on the south side of my house. It did receive some partial shade, but nimbly climbed by vintage angel weathervane. Over six hours of sun a day is recommended for *Thunbergia* to have the most flower blooms, but the vine will still bloom some in partial sun conditions.

The vine may grow as tall as five to eight feet. It could be planted to climb on fences, posts, latticework, or in a large hanging basket. Fertilizer is recommended every two to four weeks. I added mushroom compost to the soil when it was planted. Later, I added Miracle Grow Flower Bloom Booster to the water about every two weeks. The vine does require watering a couple of times a week in the summer heat. I placed a layer of mini pine bark mulch around the stem to help retain moisture.

The vine bloomed all summer until late Fall with no need for dead-heading. It was pest and disease-free, but in my reading, I noted that thrips may occur and can be treated with Spinosad.

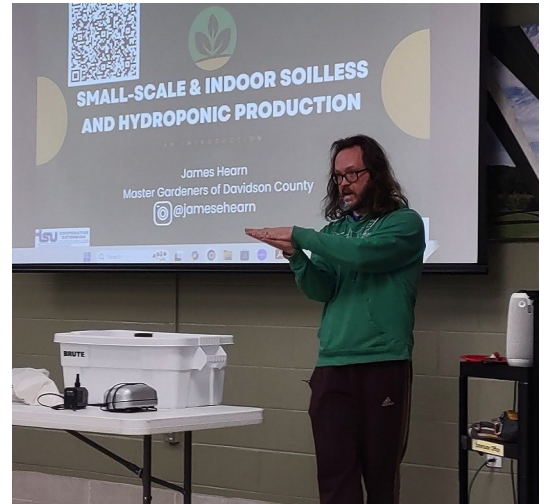
And yes, I am planting Black-eyed Susan vine again this year as it provides a wonderful focal point in my small yard. This year, I am planting “Sunny Susy Tiger Eye” variety. I am ready to look out my window and see the hummingbirds and butterflies that will soon arrive!



Photos by Brenda Musick

THE VINE: News

Our February WCMGA meeting featured James Hearn with an introduction to the joys of hydroponic growing and fun ways to get started using mason jar growing. James currently serves as an Executive Board Member of the Master Gardeners of Davidson County, where he takes pride in his role as Webmaster. He also teaches "Earn and Learn" classes for members, including a yearly iris division workshop at the Nashville City Cemetery. His gardening interests include hydroponic gardening and cool-season gardening, areas where he enjoys blending innovation with tradition. Through his work, James hopes to inspire Tennesseans to build meaningful connections with the earth and with each other.



Online educational resources to learn more:

- [House Plants, Hydroponics, and Greenhouses | UT Hort](#)
- [Small-scale hydroponics | UMN Extension](#)
- [Hydroponics | Oklahoma State University](#)



Pamela Lambert and Joanne Fuller (pictured at right) showed off some of the arts and crafts projects our members had been working on and recruited more crafty volunteers in preparation for our Garden Festival and Plant Sale in April.



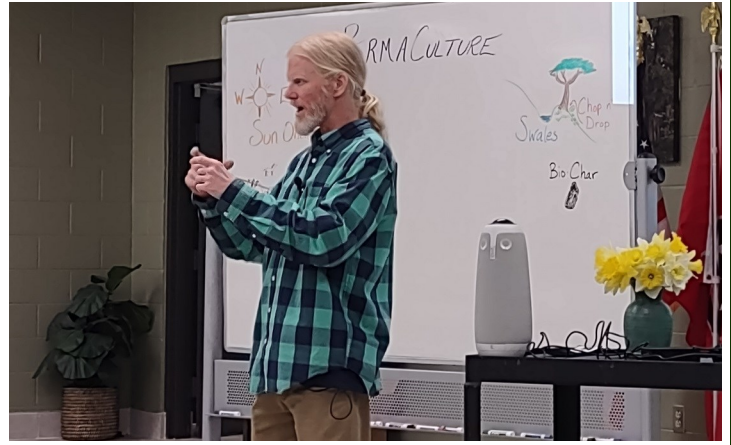
Our lovely, Valentine-themed table decorations were provided by the Hospitality Committee. Pictured here are Lisa Hagenbuch, Cheri Liddell, and Carol Bond.



Photos by Holly Gardner

Photo by Rachel Fortuna

During our March association meeting, George “Robert” Rembert delivered an insightful presentation on permaculture. This gardening approach focuses on creating sustainable lifestyles that minimize impact on natural ecosystems. Derived from the words “permanent” (emphasizing sustainability) and “culture” (encompassing agriculture and more), permaculture extends beyond food production to include sustainable building practices and efficient resource utilization.



Robert is a lifelong lover of plants and the outdoors. He has lived in American Ecovillages and currently practices permaculture where he resides in Franklin, Tennessee. He believes great outcomes are achievable through small changes over time. He discussed the small steps we can take toward a more sustainable future.

Online educational resources to learn more:

[Permaculture | USU Extension | USU](#)

[Permaculture Continuing Education at Oregon State University](#)



In March, our 2025 Master Gardener intern class and mentors spent the morning with Master Gardeners Ron Novak and Chris Andrews learning how to prune peach and apple trees at the historic Carter House in Franklin. Such a wonderful time learning from those who’ve led this project and maintained these gardens for many years!

Photos by Kristy Bergstrom

This year's WCMGA Garden Festival and Plant Sale on April 5th proved to be an incredible gathering of passionate gardeners, eager buyers, and dedicated volunteers. Hundreds of plant enthusiasts turned out to browse an impressive selection of native plants, vegetables, herbs, perennials, trees, crafts, and garden tools and accessories. The crowd of customers remained consistent throughout the day until we were interrupted by the impending weather and increasing winds. We closed a bit early, but the sale was still a success!



Not only did the event provide a fantastic opportunity for members of our community to stock up on healthy, locally-grown plants, but it also served as an educational hub.



Our educational speakers presented various topics including "Worm Composting" by Audrey and Rob Wynkoop, "Tennessee Smart Yards" by Anita Tilley, "Tomatoes in Containers" by Ann Harvey, and "Fairy Gardens" by Anna Whitworth. Volunteers were on hand to answer questions, offer gardening advice, help customers take purchases to their vehicles, and inspire attendees to incorporate sustainable growing practices into their own landscapes.



Dulcimer music permeated through the area providing a relaxing and pleasant shopping and learning environment.



The community impact was undeniable. Proceeds from the sale will go toward local gardening projects, educational workshops, and outreach initiatives that promote environmentally responsible horticulture.



Photo by Maggie Blake



Photos by Holly Gardner

With record participation and widespread community support, the 2025 sale solidified itself as a must-attend event for garden lovers and newcomers alike.

This year was our first year to incorporate sponsorships into the sale and it proved successful. Please see our list of generous sponsors on the right of this page.

We also added face painting for children. That, along with other kids educational programming, was a big hit with the little gardeners!

Williamson County
WCMGA
 Master Gardeners Association
Garden Festival
 and Plant Sale Sponsors

Diamond Level



Gold Level



Silver Level



Bronze Level

Walmart

Arrington Vineyards

Tito's Mexican Restaurant

The Gideons International

Costco

Thank you to
 our generous
 sponsors!



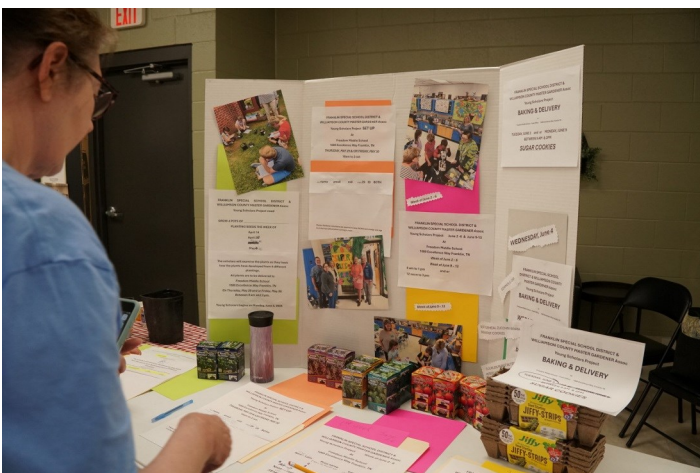
Looking ahead, WCMGA Garden Festival committee members are already brainstorming ways to make next year's sale even bigger, better, and more beneficial to Tennessee gardeners. Our committee leader, Jack Melnick, and our numerous committee members deserve a big thank you. There so much work that goes on behind the scenes and in preparation for this community event and the team performs like a well-oiled machine!

We are so thankful to our customers, volunteers, vendors, sponsors, and supporters!

Check out our website for any information on vendors, speakers, and sponsors that you missed, and stay tuned for information on the 2026 festival at [WCMGA Garden Festival and Plant Sale](#). See you next year!!



Our WCMGA projects were the focus of our April association meeting along with service awards for our high-performing and long-standing members.



Project leaders were given the opportunity to share a brief presentation about their projects and a few tables were set up



Photo by Rachel Fortuna

around the room to display additional information. Providing information about our projects helps members and interns learn about how they may help our

community and what options are available to earn their required volunteer hours for membership in the association. More information about our current and past projects may be found on our website at [Williamson County Master Gardeners | Project and Event Info](#)

Pins and certificates were awarded to those WCMGA members who contributed over 100 hours of volunteer service for 2024.

Members working over 100 hours: Pictured below: Debby Lawrence, Jerry Aldredge, Mary Pemberton, Carol Bond, Jack Melnick, Mary Pogge, Sunny Sargent, Cheryl Carlson, Susan Ramsay, Martha Hansen, Kristy Bergstrom, Rachel Fortuna, Mary Holt, Sonya Craig, Simone Salghetti-Tansey, and Ryan Palmer,

Not pictured: Julia Francis, Lorena Machado, John Guthas, Melody Hall, Patti Dial, Roberta Gigeat, Anita Tilley, Norma Dunlap, Sandra Corrigan, and Carol Eck



Photos by Holly Gardner



Members working over 200 hours include: Pictured at left: Holly Gardner, Mary McBean, and Ron Novak, Not pictured: Ryan Palmer

Member working over 300 hours:

Pictured at right: Jamie Desmond

Member working over 1,000 hours!!:

Not pictured: Phillip Francis



Long-standing members were also recognized for their service to the organization. Those members were celebrated and received a new name badge with their years of service updated.

10 years of service: Pictured at right: Rachel Fortuna and Ryan Palmer, Not pictured: Phillip Francis, Julia Francis, Missy Redler, and Carolyn Worthy



15 years of service: Not pictured: Ann Duncan, Kathie Hendren, Lisa Raiford, Faye True

20 years of service: Pictured at right: Peggy Hargrove, Holly Gardner, Susan Ramsay, and Mary Ann Calahan

Every year the WCMGA gives over 10,000 hours back to our community through education, outreach, and service. We simply could not do what we do without them! **THANK YOU, WCMGA VOLUNTEERS!!**



Photos by Taylor Reeder

Several of our WCMGA members staffed our booth at the Arbor Day Celebration at Pinkerton Park in Franklin on April 12th. Pictured are Speakers Bureau Project Leader Marti Savouray, Judith Berthaud, and WCMGA Vice-president, Rachel Fortuna.

The Arbor Day Celebration was presented by Franklin Tree Commission and the City of Franklin Parks Department.



Photo provided by Rachel Fortuna

In the April 16th Master Gardener intern class, UT Horticulture Extension Agent Taylor Reeder demonstrated trimming a fruit tree, growing blackberries over a trellis, and planting and maintaining the strawberry bed in the small garden located outside the UT Extension office at the Williamson County Ag Expo Park.



Photo by Kristy Bergstrom



Photo by Maggie Blake

For class on April 23rd, our 2025 Master Gardener interns visited The Giving Garden at Franklin First United Methodist to tour their vegetable gardening operation. Even though we ended early due to storms, it was great to see this incredible operation in person! This is one of our biggest projects and we are blessed to be able to partner with the church to make a difference in the community. Thanks to Master Gardener and Project Leader Jamie Desmond for hosting us!



Photos by Kristy Bergstrom

Did you know...?

Forty of the 49 graduates from our 2024 Master Gardener intern class have officially joined the Williamson County Master Gardeners Association! That is fantastic!! A warm welcome to our new members! Current WCMGA members, be sure to look out for them and introduce yourselves at upcoming association meetings and while volunteering at our projects. A big thank you to all who have helped (and continue to help) our interns along the way. We look forward to seeing their passion and knowledge in action as they contribute to our projects and events!



Spider Plants: The Easiest Houseplant You'll Ever Grow (And Propagate!)

By Tennille Melcher, WCMGA Member

If you're new to the world of houseplants and wondering where to start, I've got just the plant for you: the trusty spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*). Whether you're looking to add a pop of greenery to your space or you're a little unsure of your green thumb, the spider plant is one of the most forgiving and easy-to-grow plants out there. Plus, it's a champion at reproducing, meaning you'll soon have a jungle of these beauty queens hanging out in your home. Let me walk you through just how easy it is to grow and propagate spider plants, especially if you're living in Tennessee's Zone 7b, where our seasonal changes can keep us on our toes.



Why Spider Plants are the Best for Beginners

First off, let's talk about why spider plants are perfect for those who are just starting out with houseplants. If you're prone to forgetting about your plants every now and then (no judgment here, we've all been there), the spider plant will forgive you. It's super low-maintenance and can thrive with minimal attention.

Spider plants love indirect sunlight, which is ideal for indoor spaces. A nice spot by a window, but not directly in the sun, is perfect. If your windows face north, no problem—these guys are perfectly happy with a little less sunshine. In fact, they'll be just fine in bright, indirect light and can even survive some shady spots. They're basically the "chill" houseplant of the bunch. So, no need to worry about overzealous sunbathing or sunburns here!

Watering? Not a hassle either. Spider plants are more tolerant of a little neglect in the watering department. Let the soil dry out a bit before watering, and avoid letting them sit in standing water. They hate soggy feet, so make sure their pot has good drainage. A general rule of thumb: water when the top inch or two of soil feels dry. If you're not sure, err on the side of under-watering—they won't hold it against you.

If you're in Tennessee like me, you know that temperatures can vary widely between seasons. Thankfully, spider plants aren't picky about that either. They thrive indoors, even when the weather outside is frightful. And while they can live happily outside in the warmer months, they're best kept inside during the chilly Tennessee winters (when temperatures dip below 50°F). Just make sure to bring them back indoors before the frost hits.

Propagating Spider Plants: The Fun Part

So, let's talk about the fun part: propagation. If you're anything like me, you'll quickly fall in love with your spider plant and want more of them (it's just how it works). The good news is

that spider plants are really easy to propagate, meaning you can quickly multiply your plant collection without any fancy tools or complicated techniques.

How do they propagate? Simple! Spider plants grow little offshoots, often called "pups," that hang down like tiny, baby spider plants. These pups are basically clones of the mother plant, and all you have to do is snip them off and let them grow their own roots. It's so simple, you might feel like you're cheating.

Here's how to do it:

Find a Pup: Look for a baby plant that's grown on a long stem. This will be your "pup." These pups will often look like tiny little versions of the parent plant, and they typically form after the spider plant has been well taken care of.



Snip It: Using a clean pair of scissors or pruning shears, snip the pup from the stem. Don't worry if there's a little stem left attached to the pup—it'll be just fine.

Root It: You can root the pup in two ways: water or soil. If you choose to root it in water, just place the pup in a glass of water, making sure the base of the plant is submerged but not the leaves. Change the water every few days. Alternatively, you can plant it directly in a small pot with soil. Either method will work, but I personally like the water method because it's fun to watch the roots grow!

Wait for the Roots: In a few weeks, you should start to see some roots developing. Once they're about 1-2 inches long, the pup is ready for its permanent home—be it in a new pot or back with the parent plant.

And boom, you've got yourself a new spider plant! You can keep propagating as much as you like, giving your friends and family little green gifts or filling your own home with lush greenery.

The Spider Plant Is Your New Best Friend

There you have it! Growing and propagating spider plants is a breeze. They're the perfect plant for beginners, with very few requirements and tons of rewards. Whether you're new to gardening or just want a plant that'll thrive even when life gets busy, the spider plant is an ideal choice. And don't forget about propagation—it's an easy way to create more plants and share the love.

If you're ready to grow a mini jungle in your home, grab a spider plant (or two), and let the fun begin. Your green thumb may be just beginning, but with a spider plant, you're already winning. And remember, there's no such thing as too many spider plants—trust me, they'll make your house feel like a calming oasis. Happy planting, friend!



National Parks Series: The Flora and Fauna of Biscayne National Park: An Underwater Paradise

By Lisa Hagenbuch, WCMGA Member

Editors Note: This is sixth in a series of articles by Lisa Hagenbuch, following and documenting her travels to some of our national parks.

Biscayne National Park, located just south of Miami, Florida, is a sanctuary where the land meets the sea in a breathtaking display of natural beauty. Unlike most national parks, Biscayne is predominantly aquatic, with 95% of its 172,000 acres covered by water. This vast marine environment, teeming with life, offers a unique glimpse into the vibrant ecosystems of the Caribbean, all within the borders of the continental United States. For gardeners, conservationists, and anyone enchanted by the mysteries of the ocean, Biscayne National Park is a living treasure, where both the flora and fauna play critical roles in the health of our planet.



Red Mangrove (Photo by Lisa Hagenbuch)

Biscayne's shallow, turquoise waters shelter one of the most diverse and productive ecosystems in the world: coral reefs. These ancient structures, built by colonies of tiny coral polyps, form the foundation of life in the park. The coral reefs of Biscayne, part of the third-largest barrier reef in the world, are home to an astonishing array of marine species. Hard corals such as brain coral (*Diploria labyrinthiformis*) and elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) create the complex, rocky habitats that shelter fish, invertebrates, and other marine life. These reefs are living, growing ecosystems that have developed over thousands of years, their vibrant colors and intricate shapes a testament to the wonders of nature.

Beyond the coral reefs, Biscayne's underwater world is alive with seagrass beds, mangrove forests, and tropical fish. The seagrass beds, dominated by species like turtle grass (*Thalassia testudinum*) and manatee grass (*Syringodium filiforme*), are critical to the health of the marine environment. These underwater meadows stabilize the ocean floor, reduce wave impact, and provide essential habitat for juvenile fish, crustaceans, and endangered species like the West Indian manatee. The dense seagrass also acts as a carbon sink, playing a significant role in mitigating climate change by capturing and storing carbon dioxide.

The mangrove forests that line Biscayne's shores are equally vital. These salt-tolerant trees, including red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), and white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), form a protective barrier between the land and sea. Mangroves serve as nurseries for a wide variety of fish species, providing shelter and food for young fish until they are ready to venture into the open ocean. The intricate root systems of mangroves trap sediment and nutrients, helping to improve water quality and protect the coastline from erosion.



Manatee Grass (Photo by Lisa Hagenbuch)

Above the water, Biscayne's islands and coastal areas are home to a diverse array of terrestrial flora. The subtropical climate supports a rich tapestry of plant life, including hardwood hammocks - dense, broadleaf forests that thrive in the park's limestone substrate. Here, visitors can find species such as gumbo-limbo (*Bursera simaruba*), strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), and wild tamarind (*Lysiloma latisiliquum*). These trees are not only integral to the park's ecology but also provide essential habitat for birds, mammals, and reptiles.

Biscayne National Park's fauna is as diverse and vibrant as its plant life. The waters are alive with a dazzling array of fish, from the small and colorful parrotfish (*Scaridae*) to the majestic, slow-moving sea turtles that glide gracefully through the water. The park is a critical habitat for several endangered species, including the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*), both of which rely on Biscayne's protected waters for their survival.

The park is also a birdwatcher's paradise, particularly during migration seasons. Species such as the roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), and the magnificent frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) can be seen soaring above the mangroves or hunting in the shallow waters. The islands within the park, including Elliot Key and Boca Chita Key, are also important nesting sites for wading birds and provide resting spots for migratory species on their long journeys.

Conservation is at the heart of Biscayne National Park's mission. The park's ecosystems are under constant threat from climate change, pollution, and human activity. Rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification pose significant risks to the coral reefs, while coastal development and pollution threaten the health of the mangroves and seagrass beds. Efforts to protect and restore these critical habitats are ongoing, with park staff, scientists, and volunteers working tirelessly to ensure that Biscayne remains a sanctuary for future generations.

Biscayne National Park is more than just a destination for outdoor enthusiasts; it is a vital refuge for countless species, many of which are found nowhere else in the United States. The park's unique combination of coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove forests, and tropical hardwood hammocks makes it a biodiversity hotspot, offering invaluable lessons in the importance of conservation and stewardship.

For those who are passionate about the natural world, Biscayne National Park is a place of endless fascination and wonder. Its underwater realms and coastal landscapes invite exploration and discovery, offering a glimpse into the intricate and interconnected systems that sustain life on our planet. As we strive to protect and preserve this underwater paradise, we ensure that the beauty and biodiversity of Biscayne National Park will continue to inspire and educate for generations to come.

[Biscayne National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)



THE BARK: Monthly To-do List

MAY

- Harvest cool-season crops and watch for pests/disease (see June).
- Direct seed cucumbers.
- Seed succession plantings of common warm-season, direct seeded crops, such as beans and sweet corn. Some of the sweet corn cultivars that prefer warmer soil conditions may be best saved until this month.
- Prepare beds that will be covered in plastic prior to planting transplants. Black plastic can warm the soil and speed early growth of transplants. Make sure that irrigation is provided if plastic is used. Sometimes natural mulches, such as straw, are applied a few weeks after planting as they can reflect light and actually slow soil warming.
- Continue transplanting warm-season crops. Peppers and eggplants prefer even warmer soil conditions than tomatoes and are often planted later. Make sure that young transplants are watered in and given a starter fertilizer solution to support early growth.
- Set up your irrigation system as transplants are placed in the garden. Drip irrigation is best to maintain dry leaves and reduce disease risks.



- Set up stakes, trellises, cages and support systems for your plants. It is best to have these set up at or soon after planting.
- Don't let weeds get started in the garden — take control early with mulches and proactive management.
- Bring your houseplants outdoors to help rejuvenate them. Check them for any diseases or insects.
- Remove any dead flowers from your plants to encourage new growth.
- Plant bulbs for a summer of color, including early- to late-blooming varieties of daylilies.
- Fertilize your annual and perennial flower beds.
- Water early in the morning and deeply, avoiding leaves.
- Make sure that crops and beds have plenty of mulch during dry spells.



JUNE

- Be on the lookout for maturity in the first corn and bean plantings.
 - Manage soil after cool-season crops are removed. Those areas may be a location for a summer cover crop, such as buckwheat, to prevent weed growth and add organic matter. If a warm-season crop is planted immediately after cool-season crops are removed, make sure to follow a crop rotation that moves to a different family.
 - Plant heat-loving herbs, including basil, rosemary, and Mexican tarragon.
 - Harvest your vegetables as soon as they are ripe for freshest taste, to prolong production, and to avoid pest issues. Beans, peas, squash, cucumbers, and okra are often ready.
- Plant annuals that can take the full sun during hot summer months, including celosia, portulaca, vinca, and some coleus.
 - Some of the latest warm-season crops to be planted are often watermelons and pumpkins, as well as sweet potatoes.
 - Add bright color to the landscape with perennials, including zinnia, coneflowers, daylilies, salvia, and blue sage.
 - You can still be succession planting corn and beans.
 - Harvest Irish potatoes when two-thirds of the tops have died down. Store in a cool, dark place.
 - Make sure your irrigation system is functioning well and manage weeds.
 - Scout for any issues with pests or disease at least weekly.
 - If conditions support disease infection, or if you see signs of disease, a protective spray program may be needed.
 - Pinch your annual and perennial herbs to promote bushier growth.
 - Do not remove the foliage of spring bulbs until it has yellowed and dried.
 - Stake any tall plants to help prevent any damage. If you have areas where grass simply doesn't grow well, consider a ground cover.



JULY



- Consider succession planting of zucchini or later season tomatoes.
 - Pick tomatoes, beans, corn and other warm-season crops.
 - Manage irrigation as needed, but try to reduce leaf wetness and overhead watering.
 - Manage fertility through proper side dressing and in-season fertilizer applications
 - Continue to manage weeds.
 - Check irrigation. The hot July temperatures in Tennessee make it necessary to keep up moisture levels in containers and borders. Do not neglect your container plants; they need more water than those plants in the ground.
- Water early in the morning and deeply to avoid drought stress.
 - Pumpkins should be seeded according to maturity. A 100-day pumpkin seeded on July 1 would be estimated to mature October 11. However, it is common in our Mid-South climates for pumpkins to mature a few days earlier than listed.
 - Scout frequently for insect or disease issues and spray as needed.
 - Select cool-season crops and cultivars for fall and make seed order.
 - Some cool-season crops (Brussels sprouts, cauliflower) will likely need to be seeded in July if you are starting your own transplants.
 - Prune your shrubs and trees if necessary. Do not heavily prune your spring-flowering shrubs.
 - Remove any dead or diseased plants from your garden immediately. You can replace them with new plants.



Another good resource is the [2025 Tennessee Home Vegetable and Fruit Garden Calendar](#)



Real. Life. Solutions.™

WEXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF PRACTICE

Member Gardens

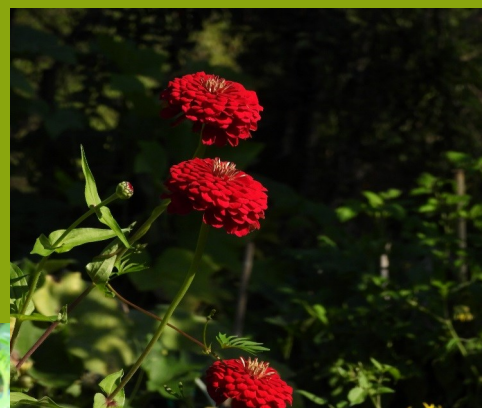


Gorgeous Japanese Maple on the front porch of Matt and Kristy Bergstrom's home.

The light through leaves makes for a fantastic photo on the right.



These beautiful photos of Laura Lichfield's garden were taken by Norma Dunlap. Laura likes to mix vegetables with flowers. There are okra, zinnias, cardinal flowers, celosia, squash, and cosmos.



We need photos!
If you would like to have your photos shared or your garden featured, please contact us at ThePerennialWCM-GA@gmail.com.



Member Gardens (continued)



What a gorgeous and well-organized garden created by Lorena Machado!



Azalea loaded with white blooms from the garden of Rachel Fortuna



Beautiful Spring tulips show out in Michelle Keith's garden.



Continued Growth

UT INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE HANDS-ON CLASSES

Learn a new skill, try a new method, or develop a new passion. The Williamson County Extension's hands-on classes provide opportunities to experience agriculture, horticulture, and much more.

Agriculture	Mechanics	Craft Products
Horticulture	Preservation	Outdoors



[Hands-On Classes Williamson County](#)

Strawberry Workshop - May 6, 2025

Description – Join us on the farm for a workshop all about growing strawberries in Middle Tennessee. Learn the dos and don'ts of strawberry production from local experts.

[Strawberry Workshop | Williamson County](#)

Landscape Irrigation - May 20, 2025

Description - Join us and learn the ins and outs of your irrigation system. We will discuss setting up zones, the different types of irrigation systems, and much more.

[Landscape Irrigation | Williamson County](#)

Blueberry and Elderberry Workshop - June 24, 2025

Description: Join us on the farm for a workshop all about growing blueberries and elderberries in Middle Tennessee. Learn the dos and don'ts of production from local experts.

[Blueberry & Elderberry Workshop | Williamson County](#)

Summer Weeds - July 8, 2025

Description - Learn to identify different summer weeds, how to control (environmental, mechanical, or chemical), and when to control. Participants will be doing a field walk.

[Summer Weeds | Williamson County](#)

Seed Saving - July 17, 2025

Description: Come learn how to save seeds from your garden plants year after year. Knowing how to save seeds can give you peace of mind and a tradition to pass down for years to come.

[Seed Saving | Williamson County](#)

Preregistration and payment is required for all classes. Classes may be purchased as a series or individually. Some classes may be free. See links above for more information. For questions, please contact Taylor Reeder at treeder2@utk.edu.

Also, check out the UT Extension publication, Welcome Home: Gardening in Tennessee!

[PB1919 Welcome Home: Gardening in Tennessee](#)



Friends of WCMGA - Upcoming Events

Maury County Master Gardeners

invites you to our

Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, May 10, 2025
8 am - 12 pm

The Baker Building, Maury County Fairgrounds
1018 Maury County Park Drive, Columbia, TN

Perennials - Annuals - Shrubs - Trees - Herbs
Flower Arrangements - Garden related Items

Many grown by Master Gardeners

Vendors - Kids Activity

Cash or Credit Card

Sponsored by: Maury County Parks & Recreation

Free Admission

visit us on our website:
www.maurycountymastergardeners.org
also find us on Facebook & Instagram



[Maury County Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale | MCMG](#)

AUGUST 25-28, 2025

2025
INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE
There is no Planet B

Save THE DATES

A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

HOSTED BY THE TEXAS MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

[2025 International Master Gardener Conference - Extension Master Gardener](#)

See you MONDAY @9am

Plant Chat

@ UT Gardens Jackson
with Celeste & Jason
Join for the plants, stay for the fun!

Facebook Live at UT Gardens Jackson is BACK for 2025!

We are focusing the majority of Facebook Live sessions during the active growing season on select Monday's @ 9am. Save these dates by adding our EVENT inside FB to your calendar.

🕒 9:00 a.m.													
📅	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Feb. 3</td> <td>July 7, 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March 3</td> <td>Aug 4, 18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April 7, 14, 21, 28</td> <td>Sept 8, 15, 22, 29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 5, 19</td> <td>Oct 6, 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June 2, 16</td> <td>Nov 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 7, 21</td> <td>Dec 1</td> </tr> </table>	Feb. 3	July 7, 21	March 3	Aug 4, 18	April 7, 14, 21, 28	Sept 8, 15, 22, 29	May 5, 19	Oct 6, 20	June 2, 16	Nov 3	July 7, 21	Dec 1
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May 5, 19	Oct 6, 20												
June 2, 16	Nov 3												
July 7, 21	Dec 1												

SATURDAY, May 10th
8:00AM - 2:00PM

- PERENNIALS
- ANNUALS
- SHRUBS
- HERBS
- AND MORE

Robertson County Master Gardener
PLANT SALE

(New Location) Highland Rim Research & Ed Center
3181 Experiment Station Rd, Springfield TN 37172

TENNESSEE MASTER GARDENERS
ROBERTSON COUNTY

Instagram: RobertsonCountyMGA, Facebook: RobertsonCountyMasterGardenersAssociation
Webpage: www.RCMGA.org

[Robertson Co Master Gardeners Spring Plant Sale](#)

WILD ONES®
Middle Tennessee

Owl's Hill
NATURE SANCTUARY

Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 17, 2025 (in person sale)

Friday, May 16, 2025 (online order pickup)

Online ordering will be available at Noon on Tuesday, May 6 - 13

Location: Owl's Hill Nature Sanctuary, 545 Beech Creek Road S, Nashville, TN 37027

Additional information at <https://midtn.wildones.org/spring-plant-sale>



[May 2025 Native Plant Sale - Wild Ones Middle Tennessee Chapter](#)

Upcoming WCMGA Events

May

May 8 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “Color Your Seasons Beautiful” - David Miller - John P Holt Brentwood Library - [Color Your Seasons Beautiful](#)

May 12 - 1-3 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “The Truth About Tomatoes” - Williamson County Public Library, Franklin, TN, with an option to attend virtually - [Williamson County Public Library](#)

May 12 - 6 p.m. - WCMGA meeting - “Spring Ephemerals” - Susan Ramsay - Williamson Co. Ag Expo Park

June

June 5 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “Trees of Tennessee” - Taylor Reeder - John P Holt Brentwood Library - [Trees of Tennessee Arboretum Walk](#)

June 9 - 1-3 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “Hydration Management for Your Landscape” - Brian Hitchcock - Williamson County Public Library, Franklin, TN, with an option to attend virtually - [Williamson County Public Library](#)

June 9 - 6 p.m. - WCMGA meeting - TBD - Williamson Co. Ag Expo Park

July

July 14 - 1-3 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “Aging Gracefully with Your Garden” - Mary Pemberton - Williamson County Public Library, Franklin, TN, with an option to attend virtually - [Williamson County Public Library – Events](#)

July 14 - WCMGA meeting - 6 p.m. - Mario Forgione - Riparian zones and habitats - Williamson Co. Ag Expo Park

July 17 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “Understand the Fundamentals of Scouting your Landscape, Detecting Symptoms or Signs of Plant Disease and Diagnosing the Culprit” - Taylor Anita Tilley- John P Holt Brentwood Library - [Scouting Your Landscape: Signs & Symptoms of Plant Disease - Calendar - The John P. Holt Brentwood Library](#)

August

August 1-9 - Williamson County Fair - Williamson County Ag Expo Park

August 11 - 1-3 p.m. - Library Garden Talk Series - “From Dusk 'til Dawn - The Garden at Night” - Marti Savouray - Williamson County Public Library, Franklin, TN, with an option to attend virtually - [Williamson County Public Library – Events](#)

August 11 - No WCMGA meeting



Newsletter and Website Articles Wanted

Special thanks to Matt Bergstrom, Taylor Reeder, Lisa Hagenbuch, Tennille Melcher, Brenda Musick, Kristy Bergstrom, Rachel Fortuna, Maggie Blake, Michelle Keith, Holly Gardner, Lorena Machado, Laura Lichfield, Norma Dunlap for their contributions to this issue.

Great job on sending articles, news stories, and photos! Keep up the good work! We cannot do this without you! If you have photos or stories to share, you can get volunteer hours!

ThePerennialWCMGA@gmail.com

Keep contributing!

Keep reading!

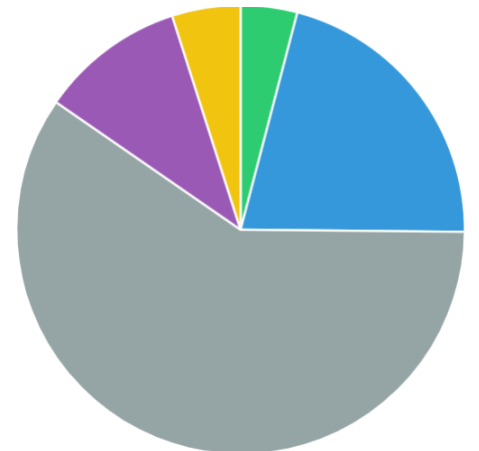
Keep sharing!

WCMGA by the Numbers

Total Volunteer hours reported so far for 2025 = 3,647

Based on values determined by Independent Sector Website:
Hours Value: \$80,808.21

Project Hours by Category



WCMGA Mission

The mission of the Williamson County Master Gardeners Association (WCMGA) is to provide research-based, horticultural education, while promoting environmental stewardship, via community volunteerism.

WCMGA operates under the umbrella of University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) and the UT/TSU Williamson County Extension Office.

Contact Us

Editor: Holly Gardner

General Email: ThePerennialWCMGA@gmail.com

Address: [4215 Long Lane Suite 200, Franklin, TN 37064](https://www.google.com/maps/place/4215+Long+Lane+Suite+200,+Franklin,+TN+37064)