

WILLIAMSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

THE PERENNIAL





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OUR ROOTS

A Message from our President

And so it continues.....COVID is still rearing its ugly head with the forecast for an upswing during winter months. Please get your flu shot because flu further weakens your immune response and gives COVID a chance to get its foot in the door. Our hospitals just can't handle both viruses at once so we need to be as proactive as we can be. Our WCMGA population is almost completely in the "high risk" category and I refuse to lose a single gardener to this monster!!!

Some tentatively good news is that we are going to be able to meet again as a group with all kinds of restrictions in place. We are going to be able to hold meetings in the arena area where you can drive in, park, take a socially distanced seat in the stands, or view the meeting via ZOOM from home. I am particularly pleased with that last option because we can now accommodate those folks who can't drive at night. Masks MUST be worn and no food or drink can be offered. I hate that last part!!! The AG Center folks will be closely monitoring the pandemic in conjunction with the city of Franklin and UT. We must be ready to make changes as we go along so be patient and flexible as we try to work through this whole sorry mess. We're still trying to decide about the spring plant sales but will keep you posted.

The REALLY GOOD NEWS is that we are about to graduate 27 new MGs! I have to say, this group of interns has really raised the bar in terms of adapting to all the restrictions, keeping themselves and their families safe, and still certifying! The graduation ceremony will be ridiculously small, but those green badges are the light at the end of the tunnel for them and I am so very proud of all of them.

It's a "quiet" time for gardeners, but you all know that's a misnomer. We're not out playing in the dirt (sorry, SOIL) as much as usual, but now's the time to organize your seeds for next year, map out your garden plots for next spring (remember to rotate!), and cruise through the seed catalogs that are beginning to accumulate in your mail box. If you are as old as I am, you can equate this with getting the annual Sears Christmas catalog! Lots of new "toys", new seed strains, better tools.....so much fun! Now that all those lovely vegetables are frozen away, start making some soups, salsa, stews and so on. Nothing like eating a nice bowl of soup made with your own produce!

And welcome to our new Board members! We hate to see some "roll off", but we have some stellar gardeners ready to step up to the plate and keep the ball rolling, even in this very, VERY hard time. Thank you to ALL of you, both the outgoing and the incoming.

Stay safe, keep in touch with each other, and WEAR MASKS.

WCMGA President *Linda Horton*

Melnick/Hall Family Heirloom Tomato, the 'Aunt Gladys'

By Jack Melnick, Williamson County Master Gardener



Some time prior to 1928, a good friend of my grandfather, a man named Ernest Hennon, father of Butler Hennon, gave my grandfather, Herb Hall, tomato seeds that he had been growing. Butler, at some time later, became a famous basketball coach in a small town called Wampum, PA, winning multiple state championships and a string of impressive victories through the 1950s with an overall 514-146 record, a unique story of its own.

My grandfather grew the tomatoes in his garden until his death in 1943. Afterwards, his daughter, Gladys Parker, my mother's sister, and my aunt, continued growing the tomato every year until her passing in 2017 at 94 years old.

In 1995, at a combined family reunion and birthday celebration for my mother and Aunt Gladys, this tomato was a featured table offering. Everyone in the family raved about the tomato while Aunt Gladys told the story of its origin.

I began in the summer of 1996 to grow the tomato myself and keep the tradition alive. At the time, while living in Ohio, this plant thrived, producing many large fruits. Today, when it is grown in Tennessee, the humid summers still produce many large fruits on a plant, but fruit production does not start until late July or early August. I have had tomatoes that weigh 2lbs and larger when grown in Tennessee. This tomato was entered in the Williamson County Fair in 2017 and won a third-place ribbon. I was able to share that ribbon with my aunt before her passing.

Growing lots of heirloom tomatoes over the years and continually trying different varieties since 1996, I have never run across a tomato quite like this.

I have done lots of research and talked with many people, growers, and horticulturists including Master Gardeners and have never been able to identify this fruit. I refer to it as the "The Aunt Gladys" in her honor.



2 pound sample of "Aunt Gladys" with tennis ball for size reference

I believe this tomato has been open pollinated for the last 92 years and is its own variety. I don't know for sure if Aunt Gladys ever used any commercial fertilizer, however, since 1996 when I started growing this tomato, I have never used any commercial fertilizer or any inorganic fertilizer. I grow it as it is, as I believe it was for the last 92 years with water and sun only.

This fruit is pink in color and almost blemish free.

The taste is sweet with no bitterness.

The skin is relatively thin and meat inside is thick and plentiful with a normal amount of small seeds.

The tomato is perfect for slicing and eating as it is. I have never tried canning or making any sauce with it.

The leaves on the plant are like potato leaves.

Since I have been growing this tomato, I have never had any disease problems. Insects and bugs do not seem to bother it.

I plan on submitting this variety to Seed Savers Exchange, to preserve it for the future and make available to others.

Jack Melnick

Williamson County Master Gardener

Carnton work day **Saturday, November 7**

Two shifts: 8 am-10 am and 10 am-noon

We will be dividing and replanting the irises, and if time permits, some daylilies too. Bring a small trowel, a cutting tool and a kneeling pad.

We'd like to keep it to 10 people in the garden at one time so we can still maintain a safe distance. This invitation is to all the WCMG volunteers.

To help with schedules, the work time is broken up into 2 sessions; 8am-10am and 10am-noon.

If there is a weather issue, we will communicate via text.

The contact for the work day is Mary Loftus (615) 790-4055

We'll take sign-ups via the attached Google document linked here: [CARNTON WORK DAY](#)



Gardening at the “House”, Carter House that is

By Janet Masters, Williamson County Master Gardener

From across the orchard, you see this tall tower of wild sprouting green vines. Yard Art? Yet up close you start to see the small delicate flowers and long thin green pods mixed amongst the growing leaves and vines. Ah. The tower of green beans. Yum. You walk around it to see all four of its sides. But upon closer inspection of this tangled wild mess of vines and leaves, you see something unlike anything you have seen on garden leaves before. These bean leaves are pitted with holes. Ok, we have all seen the remains of caterpillar destruction but what's with the curling ends of the leaves themselves? It looks the leaf tip curled and rolled into itself. I get the holes but what is it with the curling of the leaf tips?



It reminds me of a little sleeping bag. A sleeping bag for WHAT? If you look very carefully at the space where the cocoon and leaf meet, you will see threads. It looks as if it has sewn itself to the main leaf. Once again, how cool is that. This is just one of the many little sleeping bags I found.

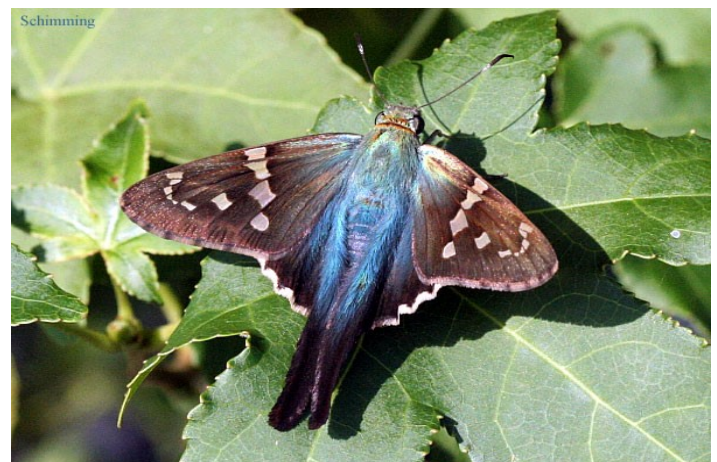
Being a Master Gardener in the pursuit of knowledge (Hahahaha), I googled it.

**Meet: Bean Leafroller *Urbanus proteus*
Long-tailed Skipper Butterfly**

Skippers are insects that are an intermediate between butterflies and moths. Named for the



way they fly in a skipping motion from flower to flower during the day just like butterflies. Bean Leafrollers Skippers lay about 80 eggs on the surface leaves of legume crops: peas, cowpea, lima bean, snap bean and soybean. The larvae are defoliators, feeding only on the leaves' tissue. I read four larvae can consume 2175 sq cm of foliage, enough to cause damaging levels of defoliation to just one bean plant. Just four eggs, what about the other 76 eggs? The mystery of the sleeping bag has been solved. The larvae cut a triangular patch at the edge of the leaf, fold over the flap, creating a little sleeping shelter. Once inside their silk-lined lodgings, you won't see them until the sun goes down. They are nocturnal feeders like moths.



Do you [follow](#) TN Nature Conservancy on Instagram?



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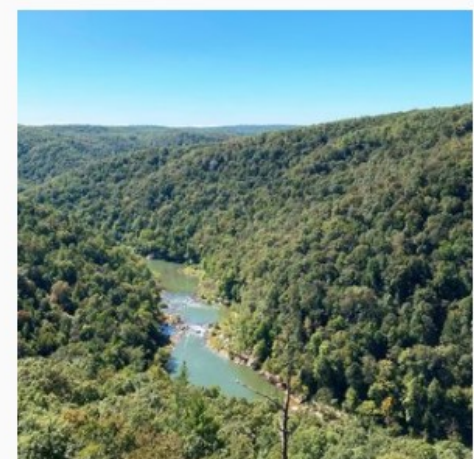
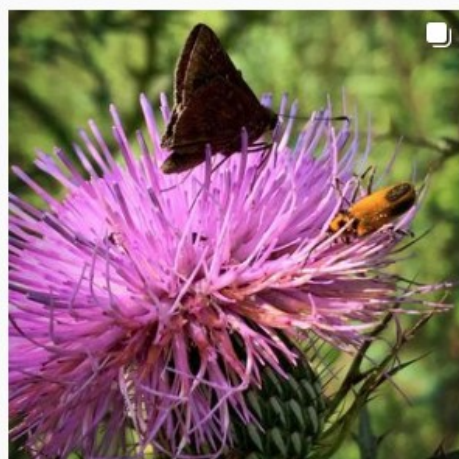
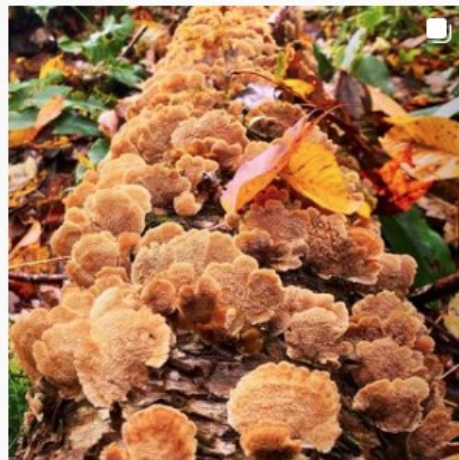
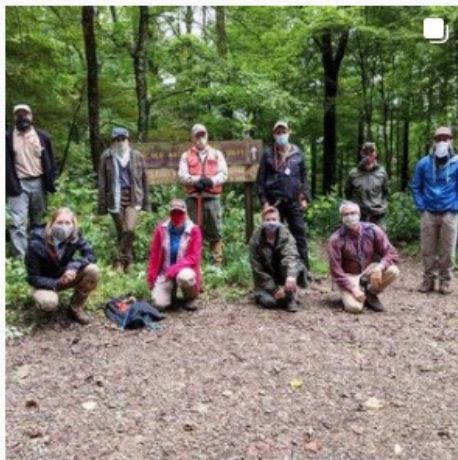
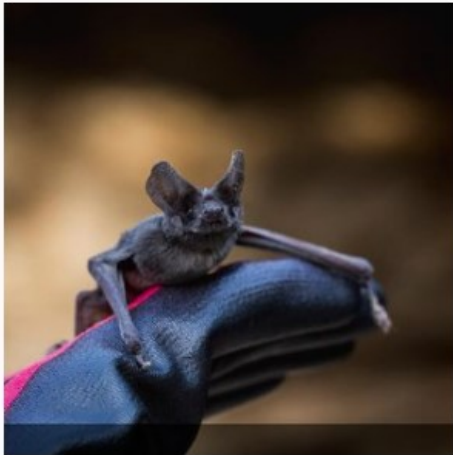
376 posts

2,124 followers

1,701 following

The Nature Conservancy in TN

Conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Help us protect Tennessee nature today:



THE BARK

November

- Plant tulip and daffodil bulbs for a stunning display next spring
- Cut back the yellowing foliage of herbaceous perennials, and lift and divide overcrowded clumps to maintain their vigor
- Plant out spring bedding displays of pansies, violas and primulas
- Prepare a bed for planting autumn garlic
- If you have access to fresh manure, now is the time to spread it across the surface of your vegetable beds to rot down over winter
- Tidy up your strawberry plants - cut off any dead leaves and remove runners
- Continue to clear fallen leaves off the lawn to keep it healthy
- Create compost bins for collecting fallen leaves and dead plant material
- If the soil is dry, give your garden one last good watering before the ground freezes
- Once plants are dormant, it is a good time to lift and relocate any plant that you want to move
- Winterize spigots and take in hoses

December

- Cover unused beds with mulch or a thick layer of leaves
- Clean gardening tools
- Clean any pots or seed trays
- Feed fall crops (do this every 6 weeks during the growing season)
- Water fall crops during dry spells
- Order seed catalogs
- Organize seeds and determine what you will need for spring

- Don't overlook other great plant choices for holiday color. Poinsettias aren't your only option. Consider kalanchoe, cyclamen, bromeliads, 'Diamond Frost' euphorbia, Christmas cactus, orchids, or even blooming mini-cactus.
- Pot up amaryllis, paperwhites or pre-chilled hyacinths so you'll have winter blooms inside for the holidays and beyond.

January

- Inventory left-over seeds
- Keep an eye out for spider mites, mealybugs and scale insects on houseplants
- Start planning gardens and other yard projects
- Keep your bird feeders full
- Compost or chip your Christmas tree
- Get a soil test to prepare for amendments in spring



Newsletter/Website Articles Wanted

Special thanks to Jack Melnick, Janet Masters, and Holly Gardner for their contributions to this issue. If you have photos or stories to share, you can get volunteer hours!

Keep contributing. Keep reading. Keep sharing. Please send your contributions to: wcmgatheperennial@gmail.com.

Check out our amazing
WCMGA website!

Also, look here for
important links to many
of your favorite
gardening resources!

THE DIRT



WCMGA by the numbers
Volunteer hours for 2020 so far:
6,931

Based on values determined by Independent Sector Website:

\$153,589

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 UTIA and the UT/TSU Williamson County Extension Office.

Contact Us

General Email: wcmgatheperennial@gmail.com

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