

WILLIAMSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

THE PERENNIAL



WILLIAMSON COUNTY
UT EXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Volume 17 | May 2022



Board of Directors

President

Matt Bergstrom

Vice President

Ann Harvey

Secretary

Corinne Ruty

Treasurer

Sonya Craig

Director of Public Relations

Holly Gardner

Director of Membership

Sue Boyer

Director of Volunteers & Projects

Dave Horton

Director of Education & Activities

Open

Table of Contents

- 3 Our Roots: A Message from Matt Bergstrom, WCMGA President
- 4 Gardening in Containers
By Taylor Reeder
- 6 Cut Flowers for Tennessee
By Taylor Reeder
- 8 News: WCMGA Plant Sale a Huge Success
- 10 The Bark: Monthly To-Do List
- 13 Did You Know...
- 14 Member Gardens
- 15 The Dirt: Reminders and Contact Information

Cover photo by Holly Gardner

A Message from our President

Nature's Best Hope

I've been reading the book *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy, and I highly recommend you read it too. My wife Kristy has already finished it, and it's making us rethink how we garden and landscape. All across the country our yards and spaces have become sterilized and homogenized ecological deserts, with chemicals that kill everything we deem a nuisance, and plants that only serve us. Many people feel it's someone else's job to save the environment, and that my little plot of dirt can't do that much. But Tallamy argues that it is precisely the home gardener that can help save our ecosystem.

If enough of us begin to treat our property as a small but vital part of that ecosystem, we can move towards a coexistence that stewards the nature around us, and provides beauty and bounty for us humans as well. I'm still early in the book, but I'm already inspired to plant things that have more than one benefit, like bushes that provide berries and nesting sites for birds, and to convert parts of my small backyard into wildflowers. Some of this will take changing our (and our HOAs) mindset about yards, about weeds, and about insects.

I have felt a certain amount of weight lately about the state of the world. There's a lot going on, and a lot we can't change. But this book, and mindset, have given me some hope that even on my little .25 acre lot in suburban Franklin, TN, I can make a difference. And even more, that I have a responsibility to return some of the habitat that was lost so I could have my beautiful home. I hope you'll join me in being nature's best hope.

WCMGA President

Matt Bergstrom



TN State Wildflower, native Passionflower



Native Ironweed

Gardening in Containers

By Taylor Reeder, UT/TSU Extension, Williamson County

In a world of limited time and space, container gardens seem to make more and more sense. Poor soil and no place to put plants in the ground are no longer good excuses for not being able to enjoy the simple pleasures of gardening. Container gardening allows the individual to create gardens to fit any situation. Gardening in containers can be just as rewarding as having a full-size garden.

There are a few items to consider when you are planning your container garden. The first is the plants you intend to use. If you are planting more than one plant in the same pot be sure that all your plants meet the same requirements. The requirements you should consider are amount of light, amount of water, climate and fertilizing needs. Some other things you might want to think about



when planning your container garden are height, color, and texture. A nice variation of these elements will make your container

gardens more attractive and increasingly more interesting to look at.

The next step in container gardening is choosing your container. A good rule of thumb is: "Anything that holds soil and has drainage holes in the bottom may be transformed into a container garden." It can



be a pot you purchased from the local gardening center or an old bathtub you picked up off the side of the road. However, be sure that the size of the container matches the current and potential size of your plant. For vibrant plant growth, the containers must provide adequate space for roots and soil media, allowing the plant to thrive.

Next on your list is choosing a soil for your container. Container soils need to have good aeration and decent drainage, while still being able to retain enough moisture and nutrients for plant growth. When choosing what to use in containers, never use garden soil by itself. When garden soil is added to a container, both drainage and aeration are severely impeded, and the results are plants that grow poorly or not at all.

Container soils are often referred to as soil-less or artificial media, because they literally contain no soil. They are commonly composed of various media such as peat moss, perlite, vermiculite, bark and coir fiber (ground coconut hulls) in a variety of mixes. When using soil-less media, remember to moisten it slightly before planting. Fill a tub with the media, add water and lightly fluff the media to dampen it. This will keep the mixture from becoming hydrophobic (unable to take up water) throughout its life in the container. When adding media to your containers, never fill the pot to the top. You should leave about a one-inch space between the top of the soil and rim of the pot. This will make watering the pot easier as it provides a place to “put water” and not have it run over the edge.

When watering your container gardens, the best time to do so is in the morning. Watering in the morning allows the leaves of your plants and soil to dry out, preventing diseases. Remember that overwatering is the most common reason for fatalities in container gardens. Check your soil by pushing your finger into the media; if the media is moist don't water it. When it comes to fertilizing your container gardens, fertilize only as needed. Over-fertilization will result in a buildup of salts and may burn the roots of your plants. Try to fertilize your plants

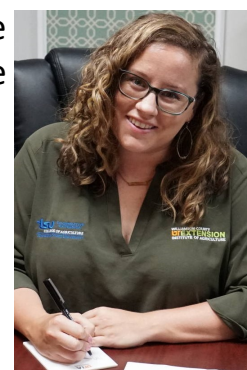


during the growing season, and only if needed during the dormant seasons.

The most important objective when container gardening is to be creative. Maybe, try a variety of plants in one container garden. While a nicely put together individual container can be quite impressive, think what might happen if you put several containers together in a group. Also, don't limit your container gardens to flowers—many vegetables can be grown in a container and actually do quite well. There really is no limit to what can be done in a container!

If you would like more information, please give me a call.

Taylor Reeder
UT/TSU Extension –
Williamson County
Horticulture Agent



Want more information about container gardening? Click on these links:

[Container Gardening | USDA](#)

[Getting the Most Out of Your Raised Bed or Potting Mix - UT Hort](#)

[Container Tomatoes - UT Hort](#)

[Container Gardening: Thrillers, fillers and spillers MU Ext](#)

Cut Flowers for Tennessee

By Taylor Reeder, UT/TSU Extension, Williamson County

Zinnia - Zinnias are vigorous all-season producers that hold up well in the summer rain and heat. They come in many different colors and sizes and will bloom until frost. Make sure to plant in full sun to get the most blooms and avoid fungal diseases like powdery mildew. There are also resistant varieties you can plant. Available in a brilliant rainbow of colors, these happy blooms are a must-grow for any flower lover. As one of the easiest cut flowers to cultivate, they are a perfect first crop for beginning growers and are reliable, prolific producers.



Zinnias at the Giving Garden

Cosmos - Of all the annual flowering plants you can grow in your cutting garden (or even the back of your veggie patch), none is more productive than cosmos. They truly are a cut-and-come-again flower: The more you harvest them, the more they bloom. A single planting will produce buckets of airy, delicate, daisy-like blossoms for many months. You can arrange them on their own or weave them into mixed bouquets. The possibilities are endless. Cosmos are incredibly easy to grow, making them perfect

for beginning gardeners. Seeds can be started indoors to get a jump-start on the season or sown directly into garden beds once the weather warms.



Cosmos

Rudbeckia - this is a heat- and drought-tolerant, low-maintenance staple that ranks right up top as one of the easiest and most productive cut flowers. It blooms for weeks on end, and not in yellow alone - blooms can come in some of the richest, prettiest reds and warm palette of oranges, golds, bronzes, and chocolates, plus bicolor. Perennial varieties are available as well, so you can have more permanence in your garden.



Rudbeckia at the Giving Garden

Basil - With a spicy, licorice-like scent, basil is one of the most fragrant, easy to grow, and abundant summer foliage plants. Plants are easy to start from seed, but they should be protected from cool weather in the spring, so don't set them outside until all danger of frost has passed. These hardy plants work great as filler and foliage plants for arrangements



Purple Basil at the Giving Garden

Gomphrena - are drought tolerant annuals that reach 3-4 feet tall and are covered with masses of papery globe-shaped flowers in shades of red, white, pink, or purple. The wiry stems hold up beautifully in fresh arrangements, or they may be cut and hung for use as dried flowers.



Gomphrena—Mississippi State University

I have a hard time choosing just 5, so here are some other options for TN...

Sunflower (Annual) – Harvest August through October



Sunflower

Celosia (Annual) – Harvest July through September (up to 10 weeks)

Yarrow (Perennial) – Harvest June through September

Dahlia (Perennial) – Harvest June to Frost

Goldenrod (Perennial) – Harvest Late Summer to Frost

Mexican Sunflower (Annual) – Harvest Summer to Frost

African Marigold (Annual) – Harvest Summer to Frost

Amaranthus (Annual) – Harvest Summer to Frost w/ Succession Planting

Taylor Reeder

**UT/TSU Extension – Williamson County
Horticulture Agent**



WCMGA Plant Sale a Huge Success!

Our annual WCMGA Garden Festival and Plant Sale was held this year on April 23, 2022, at the Williamson County Ag EXPO Park in Franklin, TN. It was a huge success thanks to the volunteers, the leadership, the vendors, and the community!

After months of work by the planning committee led by Jack Melnick, our event finally came together on a beautiful Saturday morning. We were so excited to see all the plant-loving people after cancelling last year's event due to COVID-19. Our Master Gardeners had been growing seedlings, dividing plants, and creating beautiful crafts to sell.

For plant offerings, we had vegetables and herbs, shade plants and sun plants, house plants and everything in between. There were so many various tomato plants, from heirloom to popular standards, cabbage, basil, eggplant, iris, amaryllis, lilies, succulents, creeping jenny, vinca and so many more. Local businesses donated beautiful perennials, annuals, and shrubs including poppies, columbines, and petunias. Our Master Gardeners and our community neighbors donated gently-used items for our Potting Shed.



Our members with a talent for baking provided delicious items for our bake sale. Yum!



Our creative craft group provided a wide range of items including painted rocks, painted and decorated terra cotta pots, stained-glass plant stakes, kitchen towels decorated by applying paint using natural elements as “paint brushes”, garden art made by painting brick pavers to look like books, decorated pots with succulents and faux candles, and natural impressions clay



ornaments. We even had a few painted items printed on a 3-D printer and beautifully-made, high-end wooden bird houses, trees, and mushrooms.

Our vendors offered a wide variety of items including fruit trees, berry bushes, Japanese maple trees, jewelry, lavender-infused products, cedar raised beds, painted pots and crafts, wooden signs and birdhouses, organic soil and compost, honey and honey products, essential oils, cedar creations and furniture, metal art, candles, etc. Plus, we had a food truck to keep everyone fueled.



Our educational vendors included the Williamson County Diagnostics Team, Nashville Rose Society, Perennial Plant Society of Middle TN, Middle TN Hosta Society and more.

Brief speaker programs were scheduled on the half hour which included subjects by our education vendors, UT Extension Agent, and volunteers from our WCMGA Speakers Bureau.

We appreciate everyone who helped along the way and all those who showed up to support our association! Our volunteers (including class interns and special help from some MG family members) provided planning, leadership, public relations/advertising/sharing, setup, labeling and pricing, organization, ticket writing, customer service, checkout, picking up/delivering plants, loading/unloading, coordination, tear down, clean up, and of course, PLANTS!!



This was our first time at this venue and it was perfect...outside and under cover. Special thanks to Williamson County UT Extension office and Williamson County Ag EXPO Park for everything they did to help make this happen!

And, last but not least, we appreciate everyone who came out and shopped and contributed.

We hope that you enjoyed our event, acquired some quality plants and products, and maybe learned something along the way.

Each and every participant is appreciated and we could not have done it without you, so **THANK YOU!!** (If I missed mentioning someone specifically, we still appreciate you!)



This sale is our main fundraiser for the year and the funds go to support our various community projects. If you missed it this year, “like” our Facebook page or check back



frequently on our website to stay tuned for more events.

If you are interested in joining us for fun events like this and serving our community through cool volunteer projects, look into our Master Gardener program and the Williamson County Master Gardener Association (WCMGA) or your local Master Gardener association, if you are not in our area.

For more information, explore our website at www.wcmga.net!

Holly Gardner
Director of Public Relations (and member of Plant Sale Committee)
WCMGA



THE BARK

MAY

- Harvest cool-season crops, and watch for pests/disease (see June).
- 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.
- Plant annuals that can take the full sun during hot summer months, including celosia, portulaca, vinca, and some coleus.
- 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.
- 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
- Manage weeds.
- Check irrigation. The hot July temps in Tennessee makes 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 it is 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 [2022 Tennessee Home Vegetable and Fruit Garden Calendar - UT Hort](#)

Did you know...?

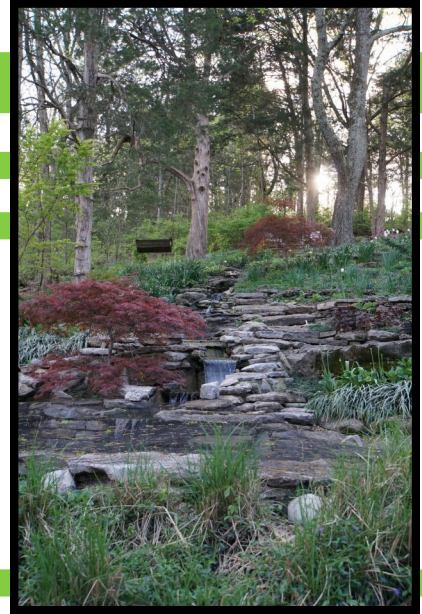
Did you know that you....yes YOU...can write an article for The Perennial! That is right! Pick a gardening subject you know and love; then start writing. It does not have to be long, and Taylor, Holly and /or Kristy will edit it. Try writing about your favorite flower or vegetable, a story from growing up and learning how to garden from a family member or friend, your favorite garden gift, a garden tool you can't live without, something that worked (or didn't work), your experience volunteering for WCMGA (that is a good one!)...anything you want to share. We need you!



Member Gardens

Here, we share various photos from our WCMGA members' gardens. With this issue, we get to see photos of David Allard's gorgeous gardens!

We need more garden photos! If you would like to have your photos shared or your garden featured, contact us at wcmgatheperennial@gmail.com.



Spring flew swiftly by, and summer came; and if the village had been beautiful at first, it was now in the full glow and luxuriance of its richness. The great trees, which had looked shrunken and bare in the earlier months, had now burst into strong life and health, and stretching forth their green arms over the thirsty ground, converted open and naked spots into choice nooks, where was a deep and pleasant shade from which to look upon the wide prospect, steeped in sunshine, which lay stretched out beyond. The earth had donned her mantle of brightest green, and shed her richest perfumes abroad. It was the prime and vigour of the year, and all things were glad and flourishing.

~Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 1838
(quotegarden.com)



THE DIRT



Upcoming Events

- May 9 - 6:00pm** - WCMGA meeting - Nashville
Hosta Society - Beth O'Leary presenting, "Almost Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Hostas"
- May 16 - 1:00pm** - 2022 Garden Talk Series at Williamson County Library - Tennessee Smart Yards
- May 19 - 10:00am** - 2022 Brentwood Library Garden Talks Series - Tennessee Smart Yards
- June 6-10 - 9:00-12:30pm** - Jr. Master Gardener Camp
- June 13 - 6:00pm** - WCMGA meeting - speaker TBD
- June 27 - 1:00pm**—2022 Garden Talk Series at Williamson County Library - Gardening for Pollinators
- July 11 - 6:00pm** - WCMGA meeting - off-site at Stoney Creek
- July 25 - 1:00pm** - 2022 Garden Talk Series at Williamson County Library - Seed Harvesting and Saving

Newsletter and Website Articles Wanted

Special thanks to Taylor Reeder, David Allard, 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!

WCMGA by the Numbers

Volunteer hours reported for 2022 so far: **3,160**

Based on values determined by Independent Sector Website:

Hours Value: **\$70,023.38**

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

Editor: Holly Gardner

General Email: wcmgatheperennial@gmail.com

Address: [4215 Long Lane Suite 200, Franklin, TN 37064](#)