

WILLIAMSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

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# THE PERENNIAL

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WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
**U|EXTENSION**  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

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## **Table of Contents**

- 3 Our Roots: A Message from Matt Bergstrom, WCMGA President
- 4 **Keep Your Love Alive: Preserving Cut Flowers** by Taylor Reeder
- 6 **Aunt Gladys' 100 Year Journey and Conclusion** by Jack Melnick
- 8 **From Bud to Bloom: Embracing the Individuality of Tulip Evolution** by Tennille Melcher
- 10 The Vine: News
- 14 **National Parks Series: Enjoying the Unique Flora and Fauna of Saguaro National Park** by Lisa Hagenbuch
- 16 **Starting Seeds Indoors** by Jill Wright
- 18 The Bark: Monthly To-Do List
- 21 Member Gardens
- 23 Continued Growth
- 24 Did You Know...?
- 25 Friends of WCMGA - Upcoming Events
- 27 The Dirt: Reminders and Contact Information

# OUR ROOTS

## A Message from our President

### A Beginning

I know for some of us there isn't really an "ending" or a "beginning" of the gardening season. Something gardening related is always happening around the Bergstrom household. But February always seems like the beginning of this year's garden. Most of our seeds are here and many of them will get started this month. I still need to make my overall plan for how much of each thing to start, but I have a general idea. And then I will inevitably start more than I can possibly grow and end up giving seedlings away or buying more large pots.

Remember to start seeds and divide plants for the Plant Sale too, we will need all we can get this year.

This is also the month I truly start to get excited about the growing season. Seeing how perennials come back; how new plants last year will perform this year. And, finding more holes in the landscape to stick new plants. I'm also excited for the Association this year. What we'll accomplish, what we'll learn. Don't forget about the statewide Master Gardener Conference October 9-11. It should be a lot of fun and will provide plenty of volunteer hour opportunities and give us the chance to meet other Master Gardeners from across the state.

Here's to another great gardening season together!

Matt Bergstrom  
President, WCMGA



# Keep Your Love Alive: Preserving Cut Flowers

By Taylor Reeder, UT/TSU Extension, Williamson County



Valentine's Day is coming soon. You may be showered with gifts from loved ones; gifts covered in chocolate, gifts of the stuffed variety, and more than likely the kind covered in petals. And as you languish in the afterglow of this affection, it would be wise to remember that your bouquets will need to be shown some affection if you intend for them to remain beautiful.

Fresh cut flowers are a popular gift for Valentine's Day and a simple, yet elegant way to relay your affections. Flowers have the capacity to brighten up a room and bring a smile to your face. The myriad of colors and scents are admittedly irresistible. However, after a few days, your once overflowing vase may seem wilted and despondent. Follow these easy steps to increase the lifespan of your flowers and extend their potent powers!



Re-cut the flower stems using a sharp knife or shears. Remove at least one-half inch of stem to expose a fresh surface. Stems, especially rose stems, should be re-cut under water. A freshly cut stem absorbs water freely, so it is important to cut at a slant to avoid crushing the stem and to prevent a flat-cut end from resting on the bottom of the vase.

Put flowers in water as soon as possible. Maximum water uptake occurs in the first 36 to 48 hours after cutting flowers. Place stems in 100-110°F (38-40°C) water, because warm water moves into the stem more quickly and easily than cold water.

Make sure to remove any leaves from the stem that may be submerged. Because transpiration through leaves drives water flow up the stems of cut flowers, don't strip all the leaves from the stem.

Use a commercial flower food; they work best at controlling microbial populations, hydrating stems, and feeding flowers. Make sure you follow the directions on the floral preservative packet.

Removing thorns from your roses may shorten their vase life. If damaged during the removal process, flowers may be opened up to microbes that could slow down water conducting cells.

If your vase solution begins to become cloudy, re-cut the stems and place into a new vase solution.

Do not place flowers in direct sunlight, over a radiator, or on a television set. Heat reduces flower life since flower aging occurs more rapidly in high temperature conditions. It is important to avoid all drafty locations because warm or moving air removes water from flowers faster than it can be absorbed through the stems.



Keep flowers away from cigarette smoke and ripening fruit, because they contain ethylene gas, which is harmful to flowers.

Taylor Reeder  
UT/TSU Extension  
Williamson County  
Horticulture Agent

[Horticulture | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](http://tennessee.edu)



### Want more information?

[How to Harvest, Condition, and Care for Cut Flowers | Horticulture and Home Pest News \(iastate.edu\)](http://iastate.edu)

[Greenhouse & Floriculture: Sugar and Acidity in Preservative Solutions for Field-Grown Cut Flowers | Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment at UMass Amherst](http://umass.edu)

[How to Keep Cut Flowers Fresh | N.C. Cooperative Extension \(ncsu.edu\)](http://ncsu.edu)

[Preserving Flowers | Illinois Extension | UIUC](http://illinois.edu)

[Preserving Flowers // Missouri Environment and Garden News Article // Integrated Pest Management, University of Missouri](http://missouri.edu)



# Aunt Gladys' 100 Year Journey and Conclusion

By Jack Melnick, WCMGA Member



It all started in 1923 when Butler Hennon, a friend, gave my grandfather, Herb Hall, a tomato. Grandpa grew it until his passing in 1943. His daughter, my Aunt Gladys continued to grow the tomato in her Wampum, Pennsylvania garden for 74 years. I learned the details of the tomato at a family reunion in 1995 where everyone raved about the taste and history and I have grown it ever since.

Not until I became a Master Gardener in 2014, did I realize what our family had. I began the process of getting it named in her honor, contacting Horticulturist, UT Agriculture folks, the Seed Saver Exchange and local UT agents. After purchasing the book "The Epic Tomato" authored by Craig LeHoullier of Seed Savers Exchange, doors began to open. Offering to help, he grew the tomato for two years in his South Carolina garden. Through conversations with him, I found out he grows hundreds of heirloom tomato plants in straw bales. Craig, being the creator of the "Green Zebra" tomato, knew how to go about the process. At the completion of two years of experimenting and consuming the fruit, he wrote the following description:

*"I found the flavor to be a bit on the mild side in flavor. It, to me, was very similar to the potato leaf version of German Johnson that I have grown. Taste is an extremely personal thing, and I think that many would find the tomato to be absolutely wonderful. For health, productivity, and earliness, it was probably the best of the pink potato leaf varieties I've grown."*

Craig turned the seeds and growing information over to Mike Dunton of Victory Gardens, a commercial grower. Along with his partner Dave Whiting, Mike began growing them in Oregon on their farm and continued for three years, keeping me informed as to the progress before shipping to Texas to prepare for distribution and commercial introduction. During this time, they asked me for pictures of my grandfather, aunt, and myself holding the tomato, as well as stories or history of the growing. After three years, in 2023, Mike informed me of a very successful growing trial in their fields and they were ready to harvest. He sent the following updates and descriptions:

August 10, 2023

*"I just wanted to give you a quick update. The growing season has been pretty decent here in Oregon this summer. The 'Aunt Gladys' tomato plants were some of the first to produce ripe fruit for us. We were able to harvest the first dozen or so fruits and save seed from them today! I am guessing that the main harvest will be in about two weeks. Fingers crossed, we are hoping to get enough seed saved to send them down to Victory Seeds in Texas to get them available to the gardening public later this year. I will keep you posted."*

October 11, 2023

*“Regarding ‘Aunt Gladys’, as noted in my last email, it was an early producer here on the farm and continued producing! As a matter of fact, we ate some amazingly firm but juicy, very flavorful “slabs” on freshly baked sourdough bread last night for supper. For as much rain as we have had, enough to turn most varieties to split up mush balls, ‘Aunt Gladys’ is still hanging in there. Thank you again for sharing an amazing tomato with the world.”*

In 2016, I entered samples in the Williamson County Fair and won third place in the heirloom division. I was able to give the ribbon to my aunt before she passed away.

For the 2023 Williamson County Fair, the tomato won a second-place ribbon.

Ironically, after exactly one hundred years, it is official and a new strand of an heirloom tomato has been preserved for future generations, which was my goal.

A Master Gardener I met from Marthas Vineyard has been following the process and staying connected. He asked for seeds, which I sent to him three years ago. It is now part of his garden. This year the rain and conditions were right in my garden and I had a banner year growing them and giving them away to neighbors.



After pursuing this for more than eight years, I have learned plenty about this process. I never realized it was so time consuming to bring this to fruition. Researching other varieties, I discovered it took many years for them to happen. The fact is that nobody takes your word for it that you have something different and new; it must be grown and harvested in their environment to prove it is legitimate. I am grateful for their efforts and time.

The introduction by Victory Gardens as a new variety is on the following link:

[Aunt Gladys Tomato - Victory Seeds®](#)

New for 2024 Vegetables Tobacco Seeds Flowers Herbs Organic/CNG AAS Winners Seed Packs

### Aunt Gladys Tomato

\$3.95 USD  
Shipping calculated at checkout.

Quantity:

[Add to cart](#)

[Add to Wishlist](#)

**Aunt Gladys**  
(A 2024 Victory Seed Company Introduction)

70 days, *indeterminate* - The potato leaf vines of 'Aunt Gladys' are early maturing, high yielding, produce large (5 to 20 ounce), pink colored, beefsteak type slicing tomatoes that are juicy and deliver a nice, mildly tart, delicious flavor.

Sent to us by [Craig LeHoullier](#) who described them as being, "... similar in flavor to 'German Johnson'."

This old family heirloom variety was shared with Craig by Jack Melnick of Williamson County, Tennessee. Jack recounted that sometime prior to 1928, his grandfather, Herb Hall, was given tomato seeds by his good friend, Ernest Hennon.

# From Bud to Bloom: Embracing the Individuality of Tulip Evolution

By Tennille Melcher, WCMGA Member



Join us as we unravel the captivating lifecycle of tulips and discover the diverse array of varieties that can transform any garden into a rainbow of colors and shapes.

## The Lifecycle of a Tulip:

Every tulip begins its journey as a bulb, patiently awaiting its time to emerge from the earth and dazzle us with its brilliance. The lifecycle of a tulip can be divided into several stages:

**Planting and Dormancy:** Tulip bulbs are typically planted in the fall before the ground freezes. During the winter months, the bulbs remain dormant, storing the energy they need to burst forth in spring.

**Germination and Growth:** As temperatures rise with the arrival of spring, the tulip bulbs awaken from their winter slumber. Shoots emerge from the soil, and the plants begin to grow. The iconic tulip leaves unfurl, absorbing sunlight and nourishing the developing flower.

**Budding:** In early spring, the tulip plant forms a bud at the tip of its stem. The bud gradually swells and takes on the distinctive shape that heralds the imminent arrival of the flower.

**Blooming:** The moment we eagerly await has arrived – the tulip blossoms into a stunning display of color. Whether it's a single, elegant cup-shaped bloom, or a multi-petaled marvel, each variety offers a unique visual spectacle.

**Pollination and Seed Formation:** Tulips reproduce both sexually and asexually. While bees and other pollinators assist in the transfer of pollen between flowers for sexual reproduction, tulips also produce offsets or bulbils, allowing them to multiply and create new plants.

**Dormancy:** As spring transitions into summer, the tulip flowers fade, and the plants enter a period of dormancy once again. The foliage gradually withers, and the energy is redirected to the bulb for storage until the next growing season.

## Diversity of Tulip Varieties:

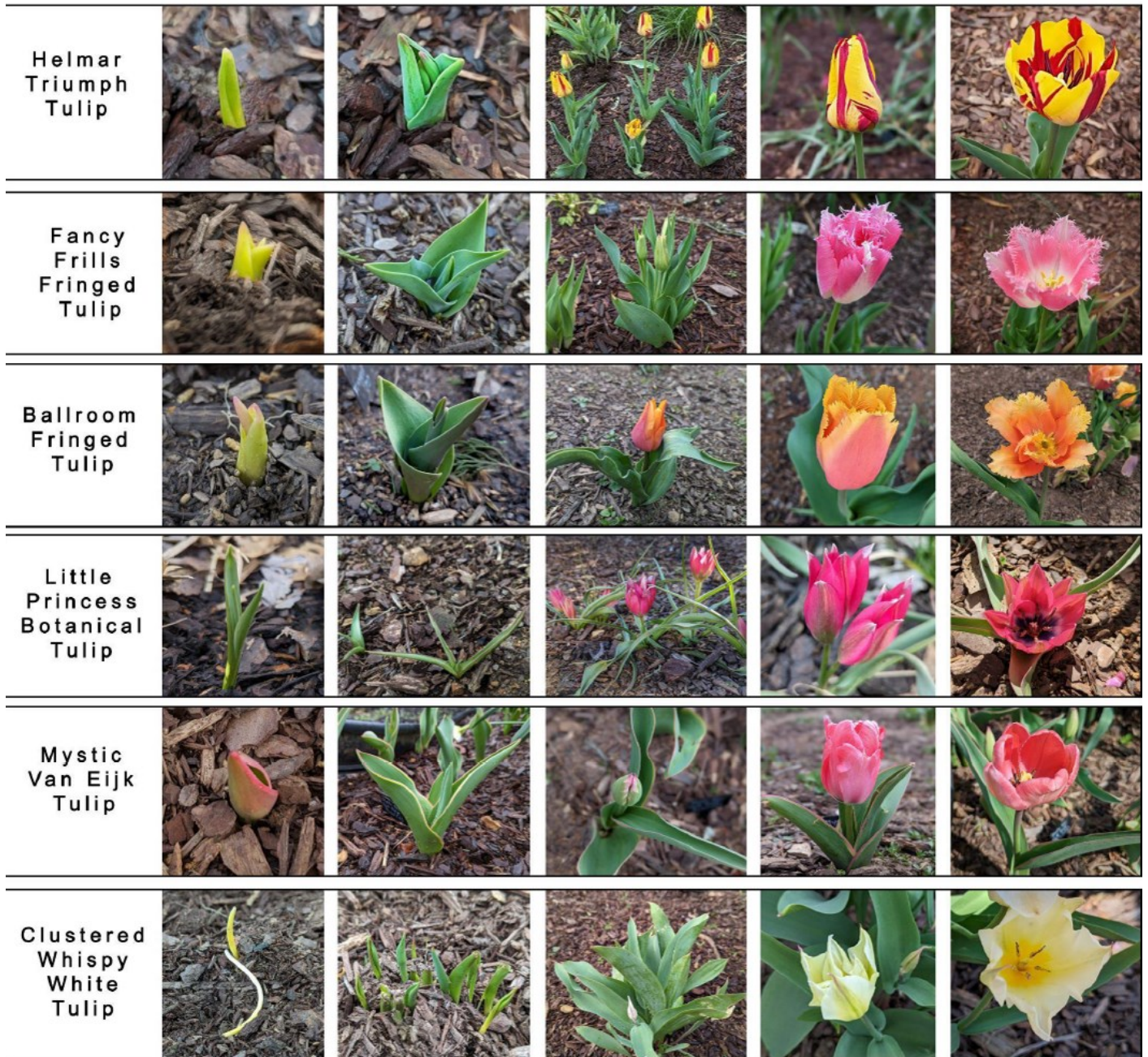
Tulips come in an astounding array of shapes, sizes, and colors. From classic single-flowered varieties to exotic multi-petaled blooms, there is a tulip to suit every taste and garden style. Here are some noteworthy tulip varieties and how each variety of tulip is distinct from the moment it first breathes in fresh air to its final moments.

**Triumph Tulips:** Known for their classic tulip shape, Triumph tulips offer a wide range of colors and are reliable bloomers. They make excellent additions to borders and flower beds.

**Fringed Tulips:** Characterized by delicately fringed edges, these tulips exude a touch of whimsy. The fringed petals add an extra dimension to the visual appeal of the flowers.

**Little Princess Botanical Tulips:** Miniature Tulip Flower Bulbs 'Little Princess'. Nothing could be cuter than this little tulip with its orange-red petals with distinct yellow markings outlining the almost black centers of each bloom.

**Mystic Van Eijk Tulips:** Mystic by its soft pink color and white blush. A very popular tulip among growers because it grows very easily.



Photos by Tennille Melcher

# THE VINE: News

In November, our 2023 Master Gardener class graduation and potluck was a success! The food was fantastic, as always! Thank you to WCMGA members who provided yummy selections. And, a special thanks to the Hospitality Committee led by Vice President Rachel Fortuna for the table decorations and floral arrangements.

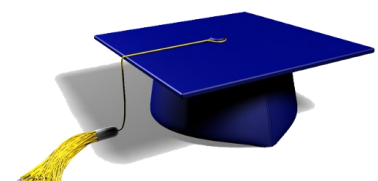


There were twenty-three graduates this year (plus one posthumous award). Before the certificates were awarded, several interns entertained and educated us with their presentations about their experiences as Williamson County Master Gardener interns. As of February, eleven of these graduates have joined our association. We expect great things from them!

We appreciate all of the hard work that went into graduating. Thank you to Taylor Reeder for leading the program, Kristy Bergstrom for stepping up to help coordinate after we lost the Hortons early last year, and all of the mentors who guided our students. It is certainly a group effort!

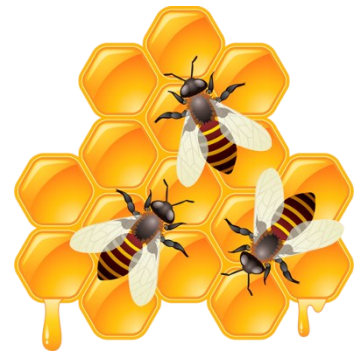


**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO OUR  
2023 MASTER  
GARDENER  
GRADUATES!!**



Our January speaker was Tammy Cherney, discussing “Bees, Beekeeping, and Honey.” Her husband, Jase, managed the slideshow and provided entertaining commentary. They are the owners of Beehaven Apiary in Brentwood, TN.

It all started when Jase became interested in beekeeping as a hobby with his son. Tammy joined to assist with the workload and quickly realized the incredible impact that bees have on our ecosystem and knew she wanted to share that with others. Beehaven Apiary promotes sustainable chemical-free beekeeping practices and educates the public about the importance of bees.



She brought several visual aids including honey for us to sample. The honey was so good! They offer “single hive” honey and flavored honey. Members could purchase honey to take home and many did just that.



Maggie Blake shows off her honey selection. This photo and the photo to the right provided by Maggie.



For more information about Beehaven Apiary and The Bee Haven products, please follow the links below:

[Beehaven Store \(thebeehaven.com\)](http://thebeehaven.com)

[The Bee Haven - Apiary Tour - Tennessee Honey Festival \(youtube.com\)](#)





Photo by Rachel Fortuna

Our beautiful bee-inspired table arrangement was created by Cherrie Liddell.



In January, our own UT Extension Agent Taylor Reeder and Master Gardener Kristy Bergstrom were interviewed by News Channel 5's Hannah McDonald at the Bergstrom's garden in Franklin, TN (AKA the Bergy Garden) about the approaching winter weather event and how it compared to the killing cold weather in 2022.

Click the link below for the full segment:

[Should we expect this winter weather to damage plants like December 2022? \(newschannel5.com\)](https://www.newschannel5.com/news/2022/12/28/should-we-expect-this-winter-weather-to-damage-plants-like-december-2022/)

As of the end of 2023, we had 128 members (plus 23 interns) complete their volunteer and CEU hours and certify.

The signed MOA and dues must be turned in for 2024 by the April 8th meeting. PLEASE submit them on or before that date. For legal reasons, your MOA must be turned in BEFORE you can volunteer on any project. Please see Matt's emails for a link to the MOA.



We have formed a Care Committee to help any of our fellow Master Gardeners who

are in need, like sickness, family tragedy, etc. New 2023 graduates, Angela and Duane Park, have stepped up to lead this committee.

If this is something you would be interested in joining or if you know of a WCMGA member in need, please reach out to them at [wcmgacares@gmail.com](mailto:wcmgacares@gmail.com).

Some members have expressed interest in a seed swap this year. While we may not be able to facilitate anything large-scale, we will have a table set up in the back of the room during the next few meetings where members can bring and take seeds. Any seeds not claimed by the end of a meeting will be taken to the library for the seed bank. Please label seeds well so we know what we are growing.





**Special Note:** The March meeting will be on **March 18** at the Ag Center due to a scheduling conflict. This is the third Monday of the month instead of the usual second Monday.

The statewide Master Gardener’s conference is scheduled for October 8-11, 2024. Stay tuned for more details and how you can attend and help.

**REMEMBER TO LOG YOUR HOURS!!**

WCMGA members, please log your 2024 hours promptly after earning them. To certify, you will need to complete 25 Service hours and 8 CEU hours. (Anyone with 10 or more years of service only needs to complete 15 Service hours and CEUs combined).

Reporting volunteer service hours is essential in providing Tennessee Extension, the University of Tennessee, and the USDA with data about the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener (TEMG) program’s impact, progress and needs. Our task of reporting is critical to the success and continued support of the TEMG program because quantifying time invested and the number of people reached through program activities are essential measures that demonstrate the worth of the TEMG program. The ability to document impact enables successful competition for funding that is critical to the program’s survival. (TENNESSEE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK [W0992023revision.pdf](#) )

Jack Melnick has stepped down as the leader of the Period Slave Garden at Carnton. We appreciate his years of hard work in leading the team recreating and maintaining this important historical garden. See his article in this issue of *The Perennial* (on page 6) about growing the tomato his Aunt Gladys grew and his journey to get the seeds accepted and distributed by Victory Seeds. Sunny Sargent and Melody Hall have volunteered to take over as co-leaders of the project.



We are looking for volunteers to lead the Period Gardens at Carnton project at the main garden. Mary Loftus has been leading the team that takes care of the main gardens at Carnton, but has had to step away at this time. We appreciate her many years of leadership and stewardship. She has a loyal group of hard-working volunteers making sure the garden stays beautiful for visitors to Carnton. If any members are interested in

leading or co-leading this project, please contact Wayne Galentine, our Director of Projects and Volunteers. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve the community in a historic setting, helping educate the public about gardening in the 1800’s.

# National Parks Series: Enjoying the Unique Flora and Fauna of Saguaro National Park

By Lisa Hagenbuch, WCMGA Member

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

Saguaro National Park is located within a desert, but contrary to what you might expect, there is an abundance of life. Plants here are adapted to drought; during long, dry periods, they are able to go dormant in order to conserve their water. At these times, many plants appear lifeless. However, shortly after a rainfall these plants are able to come to life sprouting new green leaves.

As a gardener and desert enthusiast, I was eager to explore Saguaro National Park near Tucson, Arizona and observe its distinctive plants and animals adapted to the arid Sonoran Desert. Spending several days hiking among the park's two sections, I gained a deep appreciation for this unique landscape.



Saguaro cactus - (Photo by Lisa Hagenbuch)



Prickly pear cactus - (Photo by Lisa Hagenbuch)

Entering Saguaro, I was immediately struck by the iconic giant saguaro cacti. These massive cacti can grow over 40 feet tall and live up to 150 years. Their white blossoms appear in spring, opening to the desert sun to produce vivid red fruit. I learned saguaros rely on just the right amount of rainfall for successful pollination and propagation. Too much or too little and they cannot thrive.

Beyond the saguaros, I discovered many more fascinating desert-adapted plants. Spiky barrel cacti, flowering cholla, and prickly pear cactus added texture. Palo verde trees bloomed bright yellow, their tiny leaves adapted to prevent water loss. Delicate ocotillo plants seemed dead - until tiny green leaves emerged after a rare shower. Each plant showed specialized

adaptations to surviving heat and drought.

Animal life manages to flourish here, too. I caught sight of Gambel's quail foraging in the shade of a mesquite tree, their mottled brown plumage blending into the scrub. Small lizards darted through the brush, while hawks surveyed from above. One memorable evening, I glimpsed a coyote trotting by followed by two young pups. Even in harsh conditions, all types of creatures find their niche.

The most fascinating life reveals itself at night, when the desert comes alive. Kit foxes prowl, sidewinder rattlesnakes hunt, and kangaroo rats bound through the underbrush. With a flashlight I could spot spiders, scorpions, and tarantulas emerging to avoid daytime heat. Quietly observing these nocturnal creatures was a highlight.

As the sun dipped behind the mountains and bat silhouettes appeared overhead, I reflected on the day's discoveries. Saguaro gave me an appreciation for the specialized plants and animals that manage not just to survive, but thrive in the Sonoran Desert's extremes. It was rewarding to observe their strategies firsthand – and to consider how we too can adapt and live resiliently even in harsh conditions. I look forward to returning to Saguaro again soon.

[Saguaro National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/saguaro)



Nature has many scenes to exhibit, and constantly draws a curtain over this part or that. She is constantly repainting the landscape and all surfaces, dressing up some scene for our entertainment. Lately we had a leafy wilderness; now bare twigs begin to prevail, and soon she will surprise us with a mantle of snow. Some green she thinks so good for our eyes that, like blue, she never banishes it entirely from our eyes, but has created evergreens.

~Henry David Thoreau,  
Nov. 8, 1858

Garden Quotes

([The Quote Garden](#))



# Starting Seeds Indoors

By Jill Wright, WCMGA Member

It's that time of year again! Time to start thinking about our spring and summer gardens, finally! We have a couple of options for getting our gardens started, but my favorite is to start my seeds indoors 6-10 weeks before the last frost. We can, of course, wait and buy started plants or direct sow seeds after the last frost has passed, but I like to get a big jump on eating those delicious tomato sandwiches!



If you want to start seeds indoors you will need to think about a few things first. The most important questions to ask yourself are as follows:

- Do I have an indoor space for plants to grow for 6-10 weeks?
- What do I want to grow in my garden this year?
- How many plants of each kind do I have garden space for?
- Which seeds can I start indoors, and which are best direct sown?
- When should I sow my seeds?

The amount of space that you will need depends on how many plants you want to start and for how long; some can get big, so plan accordingly. You do not have to spend a lot of money to be able to start seeds indoors. I use metal shelf units from the hardware store with standard Daylight LED shop lights hanging on each level and they work very well. Seed heat mats are very helpful as well, especially when starting peppers, so you may want a couple of those.

When thinking about what you want to grow, remember to keep your garden space in mind and only grow things you will eat or give away, except for flowers of course (a must have in every garden!). Be sure to think of your family size when planning the number of plants you want.



Be sure to know dimensions of your garden space as well as the space requirements for each of the plants you'd like to grow so you can decide how many you'll want to start indoors; I typically start a few extra just in

case some don't germinate or grow well.

Most things can be started indoors but there are a few that really prefer to be direct sown. Most root veggies, onions, and garlic do better if they are planted once and left there to grow big and strong.

Last but not least, when do you start your seeds? To answer this, you will need to have your list handy and determine how fast or slow the plants will grow. For example, pepper plants grow rather slowly so you'll want to start them sooner than faster growing things like tomatoes. Most seed packets will tell you to start indoors either 6-8 weeks or 8-10 weeks prior to your last frost. In Middle Tennessee ours is April 10, 2024.

You will need some supplies which I have listed below for you. Seeds starting trays and small pots can be found on Amazon for a good price. Shelves and lights can be found on Amazon as well as Home Depot or Lowe's.



### **Supply list**

- 1020 trays without holes for setting pots in (I always bottom water using a tray)
- Small pots for starting seeds and potting up
- Seeds
- Shelves or table to set up growing area-be sure you can hang lights in this space
- Grow Lights
- Good seed starting medium- I mix my own (recipe below)
- Good quality fertilizer-use once plants have first set of true leaves

### **Seed Starting Medium Recipe**

2 parts peat moss or coco coir

1 part vermiculite

1 part perlite

\*You can add in a granular all-purpose fertilizer if you want but its not needed until the plants get their first set of true leaves. At that point, I use a water-soluble food.

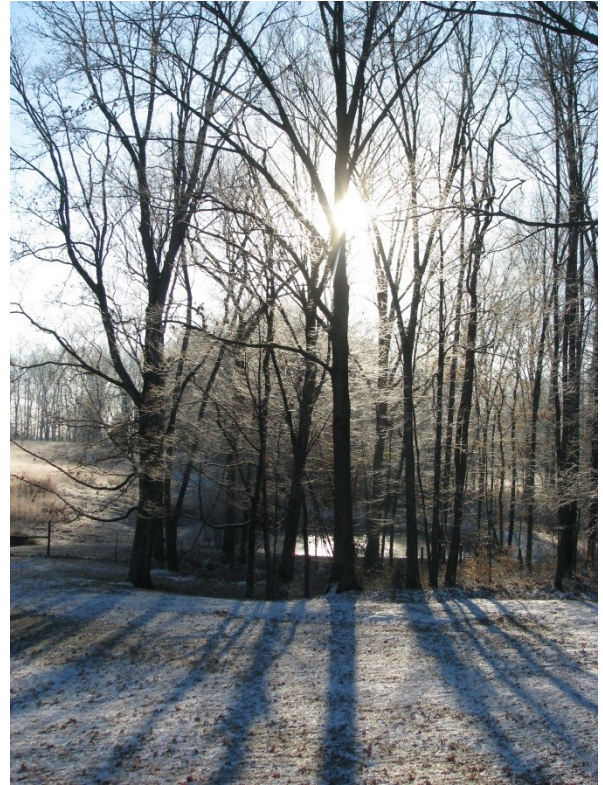
Seed starting is an easy way to get a jump on the garden and therefore your harvest much sooner. It can be done on a very small scale or large scale. Using inexpensive racks and lights have been very effective for me for the past seven years and I'm happy to share more with anyone interested. Happy growing!

(Photos provided by Jill Wright).

# THE BARK: Monthly To-do List

## FEBRUARY

- **Plant now:** Sow seeds of radishes and cold-hardy lettuces. When daffodils appear, plant spinach, turnips, and peas. Cover the pea bed with clear plastic until sprouts begin to emerge; then, immediately switch to a floating row cover to protect the seedlings from weather and birds.
- **Indoors under lights:** start seeds of herbs and annual flowers—such as ageratum, petunia, and snapdragons—that need 8 to 10 weeks to reach transplant size
- **Buy now:** Watch for garden sales and order seeds from catalogs
- **Cut back monkey grass (Liriope) before new growth appears**
- **Green/English and sugar snap peas can be direct sown in the garden in February**
- **Start chitting early potatoes by standing them on end in an egg carton and place them in a bright, cool, frost-free place**
- **Build any new raised beds**
- **Winter prune apple trees and pear trees while they are still dormant**
- **Shred or chop any disease-free woody prunings before you add them to compost bins to help speed up decomposition**
- **Extend the life of Valentine’s Day cut flowers by changing the water daily and recutting the stems every couple of days, making sure foliage is kept above the water line**
- **Remove dust from your house plants by rinsing them in the shower**



# MARCH

- **Plant now:** In mid-March, sow hardy vegetables, such as carrots, beets, kohlrabi, radishes, leaf lettuces, and turnips
- Transplant onions, shallots, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, white potatoes and asparagus crowns to the garden
- Set out herbs, such as rosemary, chives, and thyme—but not tender basil!
- When night temps get above 40 degrees, feed your pansies with a water-soluble fertilizer such as 20-20-20



# APRIL

- Pass by broccoli and cabbage on sale at garden centers—hot weather will soon arrive, causing plants to go to seed instead of forming edible heads
- Thin crowded carrots, chard, and lettuce
- Remove floating row covers from peas early in the month and provide trellis support



- Mulch around the base of cool-season crops to keep their roots cool and moist
- **Buy now:** Select new azalea and rhododendron bushes while they're in bloom to make sure that the color complements your landscape
- Begin purchasing transplants of warm-season crops
- Go to our WCMGA plant sale!!

For more information, see flyer on the following page or click here: [Garden Festival and Plant Sale \(wcmga.net\)](https://www.wcmga.net) .

Another good resource is the [2024 Tennessee Home Vegetable and Fruit Garden Calendar](#)



2024



# Spring Garden Festival and Plant Sale

Saturday, April 13, 2024 - 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

The grounds of Williamson County Ag Expo Park - West Side  
4215 Long Lane, Franklin, Tennessee 37064 (Rain or Shine)

- Beautiful perennials, annuals, vegetables, herbs, and more
- Many plants grown by Master Gardeners
- Garden Shed area featuring new and gently used items for your home and garden
- University of TN Plant Diagnostics information
- Vendors and Food Trucks
- Educational Speakers
- Crafts

**FREE Admission**



Come join us for this annual fundraiser for Williamson County Master Gardener Association (WCMGA), a 501c3 organization. The mission of the WCMGA is to provide research-based horticultural education, while promoting environmental stewardship, via community volunteerism delivered by a dedicated and skilled volunteer network. The WCMGA is part of the UT/TSU Williamson County Extension Office. For more information about WCMGA and our projects, please visit our website at [wcmga.net](http://wcmga.net).

WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
**UT EXTENSION**  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

COOPERATIVE  
**EXTENSION**  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



## We need VENDORS!

Do you make and/or sell garden related items?

We are looking for garden related VENDORS for our upcoming Garden Festival and Plant Sale!

We will be outside, under cover and booths are available!

If you are interested in being a vendor, please email us at [wcmgagardenfestival@gmail.com](mailto:wcmgagardenfestival@gmail.com).



For more information:

[Garden Festival and Plant Sale \(wcmga.net\)](http://wcmga.net)

## We are looking for donations of garden related items!

Do you need to declutter or get rid of used garden tools, potting supplies, lawn and garden power equipment (in working order), garden related housewares or knick-knacks, yard art, etc.? We are looking for garden related donations for our upcoming Garden Festival and Plant Sale!

We would love to include your items to sell in our "Garden Shed" area. Proceeds from our sale will be used to support our various horticulture and educational projects in Williamson County. We can pick up items, if needed.

If you are interested in donating any items, please contact us at [wcmgagardenfestival@gmail.com](mailto:wcmgagardenfestival@gmail.com).



# Member Gardens



Mid-summer perennial garden - I really only grow perennials with a few annuals thrown in for late summer color. I love my yarrow, Shasta daisies, cone flowers, balloon flowers, and phlox to name the dominant flowers. My husband was in charge of the hardscape wall almost fifteen years ago. We began with a flat acre lot that we fenced for our Labrador and I've slowly

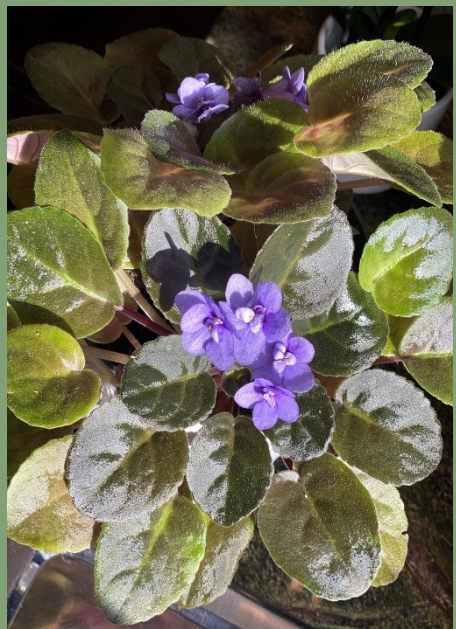
added beds, building the soil up every year with top dressing, mulched leaves, and compost. It's a work in progress as all our gardens are. Hope you enjoy my pictures.

Beth Jolley,  
WCMGA Member,  
class of 2020

From Angela Park,  
WCMGA Member:

I bought this beautiful African violet at last year's plant sale. When I woke up this morning, the sun was hitting it so beautifully, I wanted to thank whomever it was that grew this lovely plant for the plant sale. I have been caring for it and thought that I would share its beauty.

Thank you!



**We need photos!**

**If you would like to have your photos shared or your garden featured, please contact us!  
ThePerennialWCMGA@gmail.com.**

Master Gardener Keara Harp shared photos from her travels to Washington DC.



An Irish rose, also known as tree aeonium, growing in a greenhouse at the Washington Botanical Gardens.



An orchid growing at Washington Botanical Gardens orchid greenhouse in Washington D.C.



A hedge of inpatients at Arlington Cemetery.



A cactus growing in the desert greenhouse at Washington Botanical Gardens.



A marigold growing at Washington Botanical Gardens.

# Continued Growth



## UT INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE HANDS-ON CLASSES

Learn a new skill, try a new method, develop a new passion, or connect in a new way.

The Williamson County Extension's hands-on classes provide opportunities to experience agriculture, horticulture, and much more. There's nothing like doing it yourself!

Agriculture  
Horticulture  
Craft Products

Mechanics  
Preservation

[Hands-On Classes Williamson County](#)

### Grafting

**Description** – In this class we will discuss various grafting techniques for fruit trees. You will also get to try your hand at grafting your very own fruit trees!

[Grafting | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



### Native Plants for Middle Tennessee

**Description** – In this class you will learn about how you can easily incorporate native plants into your landscape. We will discuss popular native plants that can add beautiful elements to any home!

[Native Plants for Middle Tennessee | Williamson County](#)



### Fruit Pruning

**Description** – In this class you will have the opportunity to practice fruit tree pruning on live specimens. We will focus on apple and peach pruning techniques, but will discuss other forms of pruning.

[Fruit Pruning | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



### Lawn Selection

**Description** – In this class we will discuss warm season vs. cool season lawns. You will be able to determine which turf suits the needs of your landscape!

[Lawn Selection | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



### Cover Crop Spring Prep

**Description**– In this class you will have the opportunity to see cover crops at work and how they are terminated for spring planting.

[Cover Crop Spring Prep | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



### Irrigation

**Description** – In this class we will discuss several different irrigation methods and the best ways to implement them in your garden, lawn, and landscape.

[Irrigation | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



### Raised Bed Soils

**Description** – Raised beds are a wonderful way to grow in tight spaces or in areas where you wish to have a little height to your garden. In this class we will discuss how to build the perfect soil for a bumper crop in your raised beds.

[Raised Bed Soils | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



## Fruit Pest Management

**Description** – In this class you will have the opportunity to look at live specimens of common disease and insect pests on fruit crops in Middle Tennessee. We will discuss control methods that can help you have a better harvest!

[Fruit Pest Management | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



## Lawn Maintenance

**Description** – In this class you will learn the best techniques to maintain a healthy lawn. We will discuss fertilization, mowing, aeration, and much more.

[Lawn Maintenance | Williamson County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



Preregistration and payment is required for all classes.

Classes may be purchased as a series or individually.

For questions, please contact Taylor Reeder at [treeder2@utk.edu](mailto:treeder2@utk.edu).

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

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



## Did you know...?

Master Gardener classes are held in the mornings on even years and in the evenings on odd years to accommodate students' schedules. This year we have morning classes!



And, if you are a current WCMGA member (who has paid dues and turned in your signed MOA), you may audit the Master Gardener Classes and attend any classes free of charge!

Subjects include: Environmental Stewardship, Soils and Cover Crops, Botany and Propagation, Landscape Design and Herbaceous Plants, Entomology and IPM, Woody Ornamentals and Trees, Pathology (Plant Disease), Turf and Weed Management, Fruits for Tennessee, Vegetable Gardening, and Pollinators and Wildlife.

If you are interested in becoming a Tennessee Extension Master Gardener in 2025, you can read more about the program here: [How do I become a master gardener?](#)

[\(wcmga.net\)](#) or here: [Home | Master Gardener Program \(tennessee.edu\)](#).

You can find information on other programs there, too, or at [UT Hort - Horticultural information and resources for Tennessee gardeners!](#)

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program trains and engages with volunteers to provide the public with research-based information on lawn and garden topics. TEMGs are volunteers who have a love of plants and horticulture coupled with Extension training to equip them to teach and assist Tennessee residents.

# TENNESSEE TREE DAY

MARCH 16, 2024

[Tennessee Tree Day - TENNESSEE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL](#)  
([tectn.org](http://tectn.org))



## THE PERENNIAL PLANT SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

# 2024 ANNUAL PLANT SALE



**MORE PLANTS. FREE ADMISSION.**

Saturday, April 6, 2024  
The Fairgrounds  
Nashville  
9:00 a.m. to Noon  
Expo 3



**PLANTS AVAILABLE :**

- Perennials, Ferns, Shrubs, Vines and more!

*\*Plant availability may vary depending on the growing conditions of the winter.*

No Pets Allowed - Carts Welcome - \$5 Parking

*This sale is organized by The Perennial Plant Society of Middle Tennessee. All profits are used to fund horticultural education in our state. More information is available at [www.ppsmtn.org](http://www.ppsmtn.org)*



## Save the Date

UT Gardens  
Spectacular Spring  
Plant Sale

April 5th  
& 6th  
2024



UTGARDENS  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE GREAT PERENNIAL GARDENS OF TENNESSEE

Sumner County  
Master Gardeners  
Plant Sale  
April 19-20, 2024

[Plant Sale 2024! | Sumner County \(tennessee.edu\)](#)



# GARDEN SHOW



APRIL  
26 & 27  
2024



www.ccmga.org

Cumberland County Community Complex

2024 Flower, Lawn and Garden Show  
April 26 & 27, 2024  
Cumberland County Community  
Complex, 1398 Livingston Road,  
Crossville, TN 38571  
9:00am - 5:00pm both days  
\$5.00 admission good for both days  
with saved ticket (12 and under, free)  
For more information,  
please see the CCMG website at  
[2024-garden-show-ccmga](http://2024-garden-show-ccmga)

## Maury County Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale



©BMoss

Trees, Shrubs, Perennials,  
Annuals and Edibles

Cash or Credit Card  
Flower Arrangements  
beginning at \$5

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Saturday, May 11, 2024  
8 am - noon

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

**UT EXTENSION**  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Sponsored by Maury County Parks and Recreation

For more information check out our website at  
<https://maurycountymastergardeners.org> or our Facebook page

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences,  
and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.  
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.



[Maury County  
Tennessee Master  
Gardeners  
\(maurycountymast  
ergardeners.org\)](http://Maury County Tennessee Master Gardeners (maurycountymastergardeners.org))

# THE DIRT

## Upcoming WCMGA Events

### February

**February 12 - 1 p.m.-3 p.m.** - Library Garden Talk Series: Rainwater Harvesting - Every Drop Counts - VIRTUAL - [INFO](#)

**February 12 - 6 p.m.** - WCMGA meeting - Speaker Matt and Kristy Bergstrom - Seed Starting - Williamson Co. Ag Expo Park

### March

**March 11 - 1 p.m.-3 p.m.** - Library Garden Talk Series: Gardening for Pollinators - VIRTUAL - [INFO](#)

**March 18 (NOTE: Third Monday instead of second Monday) - 6 p.m.** - WCMGA meeting - Ashley Kite-Rowland - Urban & Community Forestry Program Coordinator - Williamson Co. Ag Expo Park

**March 21 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** - Ready. Set. Garden: Fairy Gardens & Succulents - Brentwood Library - [INFO](#)

### April

**April 6 - 1 p.m.** - Wildflower Hike - Timberland Park in Franklin (stay tuned for details)

**April 8 - 6 p.m.** - WCMGA meeting - Projects presentations

**April 11 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** - Ready. Set. Garden: Hostas and Ferns - Brentwood Library - [INFO](#)

**April 13 - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.** - WCMGA Garden Festival and Plant Sale - Grounds of Williamson County Ag Expo Park - [INFO](#)

**April 22 - 1 p.m.-3 p.m.** - 2024 Library Garden Talk Series: Selecting Native Plants For Your Home Landscape - Williamson County Public Library - [INFO](#)

### May

**May 9 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** - Ready. Set. Garden: Native Plants for Home Landscape - Brentwood Library - [INFO](#)

**May 13 - 1 p.m.-3 p.m.** - Library Garden Talk Series: Packages of Promise - Plants That Grow From Bulbs - Williamson County Public Library - [INFO](#)

**May 13 - 6 p.m.** - WCMGA meeting - Speaker Susan Ramsey - Shade Plants - Williamson County Ag Expo Park



## Newsletter and Website Articles Wanted

Our members really outdid themselves on articles and photo contributions this time!! We have some fantastic content! Special thanks to Matt Bergstrom, Taylor Reeder, Tennille Melcher, Jack Melnick, Jill Wright, Lisa Hagenbuch, Maggie Blake, Beth Jolley, Angela Park, Keira Harp, Rachel Fortuna, and Holly Gardner for their contributions to this issue.

We cannot do this without you!!

If you have photos or stories to share, you can get volunteer hours!

Keep contributing!

Keep reading!

Keep sharing!

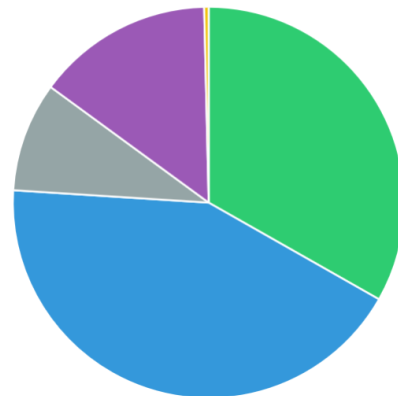
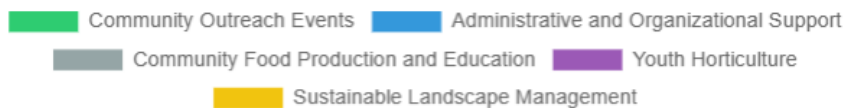


### WCMGA by the Numbers

Volunteer hours reported for **2024** so far: **271**

Based on values determined by Independent Sector Website:  
Hours Value: **\$6,004.25**

#### Project Hours by Category



### WCMGA Mission

The mission of the Williamson County Master Gardener 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

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