

Leaves of Wisdom

Master Gardeners of Wilson County Newsletter

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

Taking a Cue from Nature

By Tonya Gardner

Each January I find myself facing a familiar mental struggle. Not a struggle that I put on myself necessarily, but one that societal expectations force upon me. It's the New Year obsession with a fresh start, lofty resolutions, and a brand-spanking new calendar. If I am honest, this really assaults my psyche. December is packed so full of holiday activities, merriment and family celebrations that by January, I am worn out and ready to slow down. I want to take a breather for a minute - NOT hurl myself headlong into a "New Year New You" campaign!

Work is our default. Getting things done is our obsession. This New Year pull to be hyper-productive and insanely driven to fill up our calendars has hijacked our attention and energy in an unhealthy way. Don't misunderstand me. I love a fresh start and a "set life in order" mentality. I'm a fan of organization and checking things off a list. However, this year I felt the pull to go about it in a different way. I could still plan and prepare. I could still be intentional and productive. I could still meet my family, church and work responsibilities. I just pushed pause on society's influence to hop into a hustle and bustle mindset.

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A peaceful and inspiring respite from hectic life....this beautiful photo is from the winter garden of our own MGWC member Joeleen Davis

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Taking a Cue from Nature
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I gave myself permission to slow down. It just felt right, necessary even, to do so. As I thought about it, I began to see the correlation between my frazzled mind needing to decompress, and nature's cues to take a rest. Why I had never paid attention to this parallelism before is a mystery to me! January is dark and dreary. The winter days are short and often cold and gray or blanketed with snow. Nature is dormant. It has to be so in order to flourish and bloom in the spring. Everything needs a break, even from what it enjoys. The natural world has to rest so it can spring back to life when warmer weather comes. I guess I just needed nature's permission to ease back into the daily grind.



With this deep longing in my mind for a bit of a respite, I began to notice articles and photos at every turn of others feeling the same way. I was not alone in my need to reset and reflect. So many people around me were also weary and resisting the tug to dive into a buzz of activities. They desired a moment of tranquility and quiet ... just like nature has modeled for us.

I don't know who said it, but I saw a quote that resonated with me: We have to fill up the tank before we actually have a full tank. I've enjoyed filling my tank this January. I've taken my cue from nature and have accepted the beautiful gift that the slow rhythm of winter brings. Look out spring – by then I'll be rested and rarin' to go!



The beautiful photos accompanying this article are courtesy of MGWC member Joeleen Davis, showing that even in the cold of winter your garden can be a peaceful and inspiring place.

President's Note

Dean Jones, MGWC President

Tired of winter yet? Got cabin fever? I'm sure you're like most gardeners in winter.... waiting, dreaming, planning, ordering....

As the new incoming president for WCMG, I'm excited about the possibilities for my own property, as well as the potential for all of us collectively as a group. Having grown up in rural southern Illinois (actually the middle of a 40-acre corn field), I was surrounded by farms, gardens, orchards, a rose-growing grandmother and a neighbor with a greenhouse. I planted my first seeds as a small boy, helped my grandfather till his garden, learned about growing plants in a greenhouse and fell in love with soil and plants.

Fast forward 50+ years, and I took the plunge to formalize a 'master gardener' education during the craziness of a pandemic. It was actually to my benefit because my travel schedule had never allowed me to participate in a formal class schedule, so the online format worked well for me.

While the education was invaluable, the people are the real asset! Fellow, like-minded Wilson County Master Gardeners, have, over the decades, contributed thousands of hours of volunteer labor, helped to beautify numerous areas of our great county, and collectively have hundreds of years of gardening and landscape experience. The volunteer spirit is alive and well among our membership. I'm thankful for the friendships, wisdom, and camaraderie we share together.

As we move forward, there are so many good things at play in our future –old and new projects, collaborative opportunities with historic homes and churches, growing the largest native plant sale in the state, helping distribute

thousands of trees to area residents, teaching the next generation, and the list goes on.

But all of this takes people! Currently, about 27% of our membership are doing the bulk of the work for all our projects. You may maintain your membership with the Master Gardeners as an opportunity to grow your knowledge, to hang out with really cool people, or to have a great potluck every month! All of those are great, but if we are to continue to accomplish great work, in a great county, with great residents, we need more active participation.

Here are some goals I shared during our January member meeting, that I trust you'll take to heart:

- ♦ Increase participation among all members
- ♦ Increase awareness in our county of the work that Master Gardeners do
- ♦ Promote Master Gardener projects via social media, Garden Show, other avenues
- ♦ Offer classes to the county residents at least 2 times a year

As we begin our next year together, let's commit to improving the beauty of our county, educating our fellow residents and making sure our county knows the value the Master Gardeners contribute to their lives!

Growing together,

Dean Jones



special guests Brooke & Brice Gilliam
MAKING MODERN
with Brooke + Brice
MAGNOLIA NETWORK, DISCOVERY +, MAX

 Member
LENDER **FDIC**


PRESENTED BY
WILSON Bank & Trust
FEBRUARY 9 & 10

2023 Highlights & Membership Awards



Pam Pulley Award Recipient



300+ Hour Leaf Award Recipients

The Master Gardeners of Wilson County wrapped up an amazing and eventful 2023 with the annual Christmas party and awards night held on Tuesday, December 5. There were many master gardeners in attendance to enjoy the delicious meal and festivities. It was a wonderful night to reflect on the successful projects of the year, as well as to enjoy the fun that the master gardener friendships bring. We said thank you to our outgoing president, Maryann Hicks and treasurer, Ed Jacobs, as well as greeting our new President Dean Jones, Secretary Sara Chodl, and Treasurer Carol Stroud. We missed those who could not attend this event. We are thankful for a productive 2023 and look forward with anticipation to 2024.



200+ Hour Leaf Award Recipients



100+ Hour Leaf Award Recipients

2023 Member Awards & Recognitions

- ⇒ 10 Years of Service: Michael Hagans, Lawana Nelson, Edwina Reeder, Laleta Shipper, Patti Stein, Frances Strausburg & Mike Svolto
- ⇒ 15 Years of Service: Sandra Daum & Marianne Pelletier
- ⇒ 20 Years of Service: Fay Huddleston, Flo Moore, Linda Robertson
- ⇒ Pam Pulley Award: Jason West—this award recognizes the MGWC member who performed the most volunteer hours in current year
- ⇒ President's Award: Mark Holysz & Barbara Nissel— chosen by current President to recognize a significant contribution to our organization
- ⇒ 100+ Hour Leaf Awards: David Bates, Tina Benson, Karla Clark, Vicki Folsom, Tonya Gardner, Carol Hofer, Ed Jacobs, Dean Jones, Linda Kovacs, Linda Lauthern, Lawana Nelson, Barbara Nissel, Mary Jo Shockley, Alex Scott, Laleta Shipper, Gina Stayshich, Patti Stein, Carol Walenga & Deb Williams
- ⇒ 200+ Hour Leaf Awards: Suzanne Dunn, Maryann Hicks, Deanna Jackson, Rosemary Marshall, Shene Scott & Joni Wohnrade
- ⇒ 300+ Hour Leaf Awards: Mark Holysz & Jason West



Presidents Award - presented by Deanna Jackson

Photos on this page courtesy of
Deb Williams, MGWC Newsletter Staff



Conservation Conversations...

A series featuring land stewardship, sustainability, and related topics and spotlighting organizations and individuals dedicated to natural resource conservation

by Lauren May

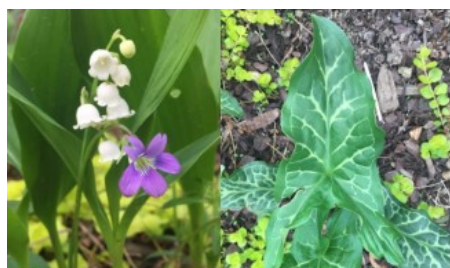
Are Countertop "Composters" All They're Cracked Up to Be? Great or greenwash? Fabulous or fad? Revolutionary or redundant? I was recently introduced to these compact food waste processors and the manufacturers' marketing claims that they automatically create compost from food scraps...in hours.... sitting on your kitchen counter.

Wondering how this feat could even be biologically possible, let alone in a consumer appliance, I did a little internet research. I discovered that there are lots of heartfelt opinions on the matter among gardeners, composting aficionados, and other interested parties - most of whom haven't actually used one. However, it doesn't seem that much scientific research has been done on the horticultural value of the output or ecological cost/benefit tradeoffs of using these machines to keep methane-producing food waste out of landfills. Or at least there's not much that's found its way online.

But some folks have written about their own experiences with them. I love [The Promises of the Home "Composting" Machine: A new crop of techy appliances wants to help fight the food-waste crisis. How virtuous should we feel using them?](#) by Helen Rosner in [New Yorker's Annals of Gastronomy](#) (May 9, 2023). She captures one aspect of these machines that most others don't: They're really fun to use! (Really!)

And then there's [Electric Composters – An Eco Win or Unnecessary Appliance?](#), an undated entry in the [Garden Myths](#) blog, that looks at environmental pros and cons.

So, what's your take? I created [a quick opinion poll for WCMGs](#) - just for fun. Even if you have never used one of these machines, share your impressions, considered or otherwise, of the concept. I'll present the survey results in a future issue.



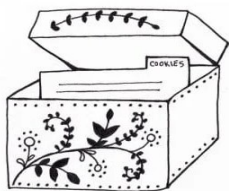
Left to Right: *Convallaria majalis*, Lily-of-the-valley;
Arum italicum, Italian Arum

PLANNING AHEAD.....BULBS FOR THE GARDEN

Looking to expand your knowledge of bulbs for the garden? This article is a great resource to get your spring, summer and fall bulb garden off to a great start.

[CLICK HERE—BULBS FOR THE GARDEN](#)

The Recipe Box



Minestrone Soup

From “Taste of the Good Life”
Assistance League of Omaha, NE

Recipe submitted by Lori Bornholtz

Here’s the story behind my favorite winter soup recipe. I’ve been making this for years, and have made many personal “tweaks” along the way. Then a dear friend was diagnosed with breast cancer, and after her surgery I wanted to take a meal that would be comforting. Admittedly she and her family are meat and potatoes people and not keen on a lot of vegetables so my soup delivery was greeted with skeptical eyes. Later I received a call that not only had everyone gone back for seconds...and thirds....but that her husband had officially dubbed the dish “Minestrone on Steroids” and they begged for the recipe. So here we go—I’m giving you the original recipe, but adding all my personal comments / changes that I’ve made over the years. Enjoy!



- 4 slices of bacon, cut in small pieces
- 1 1/2 lbs ground beef (sometimes I do 1/2 Italian sausage)
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 6 cups boiling water plus 6 beef boullion cubes (here I always just add 6 cups beef stock instead)
- 2 cups (I use one 24 oz jar) of your favorite spaghetti sauce (my choice is Ragu sauteed onion & garlic—I like the sweetness)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (I always add more)
- 1-2 stalks celery sliced thin
- 1-2 carrots sliced thin (you want them small so they cook down)
- 1 cup zucchini (cut in small bite-sized chunks)
- 2 cups chopped cabbage
- 1 15oz can kidney beans with juice
- 1 15oz can green beans (drained)
- 1/2 cup (or more to taste) broken spaghetti, small pasta or cheese tortellini (use whatever pasta you like but here is MY mandatory tweak—I never put the pasta in the soup itself. I cook it separately and each person can add it to taste. The reason? This recipe makes a big batch and the pasta then soaks up all the liquid and gets gummy in any leftovers. Kind of a hassle to prepare separate but worth it! Unless you opt for broken spaghetti, that doesn’t absorb as much)
- Grated or shredded parmesan cheese for garnish

Directions: Saute bacon, ground beef and onion in large soup pot until beef is lightly browned. Dissolve the boullion cubes in the boiling water (or add prepared beef stock) and add to pot. Add spaghetti sauce, celery, carrots, cabbage, zucchini, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Bring this mixture to a boil. Cover and simmer 30 minutes or until carrots are soft (I find I need longer to make sure carrots are fully cooked, it’s not a pleasant texture if they are still crunchy!) Add kidney beans and green beans, and here is where the recipe tells you to add the pasta but again, but I still say it’s best to cook separately and add (not to mention my hubby is low carb so he passes on the pasta all together and it is still delish!!) At this point, feel free to add more beef broth if soup is too thick for your taste. Boil for another 10 minutes. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and great served with a crusty bread.

Do you have a favorite recipe you would like to share for our newsletter? We welcome submissions and if they feature items from the garden that’s a bonus! Be sure to credit the source (cookbook, a family recipe, etc) and pictures are great! Send to: WCMGNewsletter37087@gmail.com. Thank you!



Wilson County Master Gardener 2024 Intern Class

Times
6:00 pm
to
8:00 pm

James E Ward Agricultural Center
945 East Baddour Parkway
Lebanon, TN

All classes held in Gentry Building,
unless otherwise noted

JANUARY 29	INTRO TO MG COURSE/COOL SEASON VEGETABLES
FEBRUARY 5	SOILS
FEBRUARY 12	ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
FEBRUARY 19	NO CLASS
FEBRUARY 26	BOTANY/PROPAGATION
MARCH 4	ORNAMENTALS
MARCH 11	WOODY'S
MARCH 18	ENTOMOLOGY/WARM SEASON VEGETABLES
MARCH 25	TURFGRASS
APRIL 1	FRUITS/GRAFTING
APRIL 8	PATHOLOGY
APRIL 13	MASTER GARDENER - GARDEN TOUR
APRIL 26	WILDFLOWER TOUR - TENTATIVE
MAY 7	GRADUATION



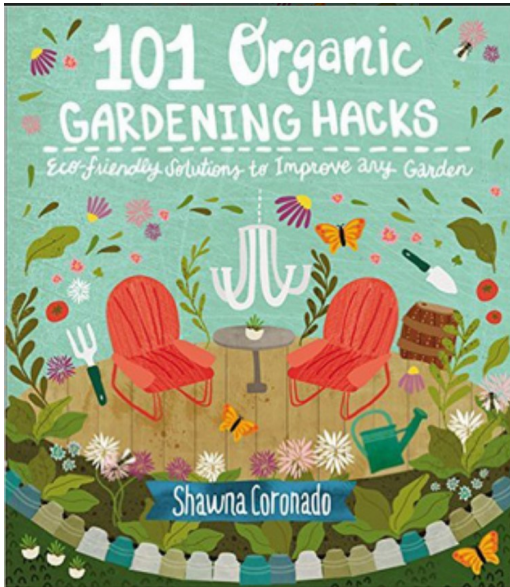
* UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST *

- ♦ **6 February 2024 6:30pm** WCMG Members Meeting – Education Building
Speaker: Troy Marden
Theme: Chili Cookoff
- ♦ **9 February 2024 4:00—8:00pm** Southern Home & Garden Show
Farm Bureau Expo Center
- ♦ **27 February 2024 6:30pm** WCMG Executive Board Meeting – Master Gardener Building
All WCMG members are welcome
- ♦ **5 March 2024 6:30pm** WCMG Members Meeting – Education Building
Speaker: Jeremy French – Interior Low Plateau Ecoregion Coordinator
Topic: Southeastern grassland Initiative -Austin Peay State University
Theme: St.Patty's Day Celebration
- ♦ **16 March 2024** Tennessee Tree Day
- ♦ **26 March 2024 6:30pm** WCMG Executive Board Meeting – Master Gardener Building
All WCMG members are welcome
- ♦ **2 April 2024 6:30pm** WCMG Members Meeting – Education Building
Speaker: Amy Dunlap, Davidson County Agent
Theme: Comfort Food - Income Taxes Due!!
- ♦ **30 April 2024 6:30pm** WCMG Executive Board Meeting – Master Gardener Building
All WCMG members are welcome



101 Organic Gardening Hacks

Eco-Friendly Solutions to Improve Any Garden, by Shawna Coronado



Book Review submitted by Tonya Gardner

Organic gardening enthusiasts and novices alike are often seeking new ways to cultivate healthy plants. In her book, "101 Organic Gardening Hacks", green-living advocate and author Shawna Coronado offers a variety of simple tips, affordable tricks, and time-tested techniques aimed at promoting sustainable gardening practices.

"101 Organic Gardening Hacks" offers a wealth of practical ideas, all curated to enhance organic gardening experiences. The book covers an array of topics, including composting, pest control, plant propagation, tool hacks, water conservation, and much more. Each hack is presented in a concise and reader-friendly manner, ensuring both seasoned horticulturists and beginners can easily incorporate these methods into their gardening practices.

Shawna thoughtfully categorizes each hack, making it a breeze to navigate the book and locate tips relevant to particular gardening challenges or preferences and styles. Her step-by-step instructions ensure that even readers with limited gardening knowledge can successfully implement these hacks.

The book is replete with visually engaging illustrations and photographs, enriching the reading experience and aiding comprehension. From photographs showcasing inventive vertical gardening solutions to explanatory diagrams on seed starting, Coronado's attention to detail fosters a deeper understanding of gardening. Her passion for using creative garden solutions and time-honored techniques is evident throughout.



Ask Lucas...

Lucas Holman, Horticultural Expert and Director of Wilson County Extension

QUESTION: This one of my October Glory maples.....just over a year old. Deep split running up the base of the trunk. Any idea what would cause this and is it a goner? It is huge and healthy looking otherwise!

LUCAS SAYS: Ouch, that is rough. Maples have a tendency to do this since they are thin barked. I've seen trees live a long with open bark spots like that though! It's usually caused by water in the stems and then we have a freeze causing the water to freeze in the bark. I wouldn't chop it down, let it ride!

FOLLOW UP QUESTION: is there anything I should put on the split areas to protect the inside? Someone at a nursery suggested spraying paint or clear coat on the areas to seal them?

LUCAS SAYS: Nope, they need to heal naturally.



If you have a question for Lucas and believe others would benefit from his words of wisdom, please send to WCMGNewsletter37087@gmail.com and we will do our best to publish in an upcoming issue.

Master Gardener Projects & Leads:

(as of January 2024)

- ♦ Demo Garden – Barbara Nissel
- ♦ Labor of Love Garden – Deb Williams & David Bates
- ♦ Charlie Daniels Monarch Way Station – Patty Hoag
- ♦ Cedars of Lebanon Butterfly Garden – Rosemary Marshall & Deb Shields
- ♦ Fairgrounds Demo Flower Beds – Marianne Pelletier
- ♦ Baddour Parkway Arboretum (BPA) – **Leader**
NEEDED
- ♦ Mt. Juliet Library – Patti Stein & Ronnie Gammons
- ♦ Native Plant Sale – Debbie Williams
- ♦ Springfest – Marianne Pelletier
- ♦ Wilson County Fair Activities – David Greer, Joni Wohnrade, Barbara Nissel, Dwayne & Mary Smith
- ♦ Wilson County Farm Days – Vicki Folsom
- ♦ Fiddler's Grove Monarch Way Station – **Leader**
NEEDED
- ♦ Tennessee Tree Day – Tina Benson & Maryann Hicks
- ♦ Pickett Chapel Peace Garden – Tina Benson



Thought for January....

Mnemonic

Thirty days has September, April,
June and November.
Unless a leap year is its fate,
February has twenty-eight.
All the rest have three days more,
excepting January, which has six
thousand, one hundred and eighty-
four.

-Brian Bilston
@brian_bilston



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We welcome your ideas!