



2025 MGWC YEARLY AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

December's Meeting always brings a celebratory spirit as we wrap up our year and reflect on our successes. As always, you shine in the selfless ways you serve our organization.



Pam Pulley Award for most volunteer hours: Marianne Pelletier

Year Service Awards:

15 Year Pin
Marilyn Holysz
Connie Greer

20 Year Pin
Margaret Ann Trail
Sondra Bishop

25 Year Pin
Sally Swain
Roseann Beasley White



Presidents Award presented to: Debbie Williams



Margaret Ann Trail



Sally Swain



Connie Greer



Mark Holysz accepting on Marilyn's behalf

..... Continued on page 2

Receiving 100 Hour Pins

Theresa Brown - 101 hours
 Susie Butler - 128.50 hours
 Carla Covell - 104.75 hours
 Patrick Fannin - 162 hours
 Peggy Fannin - 157 hours
 Vicki Folsom - 166.50 hours
 Debbie Franek - 112.50 hours
 Maryann Hicks - 150 hours
 John McAllister - 175 hours
 Barbara Nissel - 161.50 hours
 Cheryl Puhl - 122 hours
 Amy Ritter - 186 hours
 Nancy Savard - 133.50 hours
 Shene Scott - 175.50 hours
 Alex Scott - 110.75 hours
 Julie Smith - 160 hours
 Gwen Stahnke - 102.75 hours
 Gina Stayshich - 103 hours
 Patti Stein - 114 hours
 Julie Wharton - 110.50 hours
 Debbie Williams - 127.50 hours
 Deb Williams - 121 hours



Receiving 300 Hour Pin

Joni Wohnrade - 322.5 hours

Receiving 400 Hour Pins

David Bates - 460.5 hours
 Carol Stroud - 411 hours



Receiving 500 Hour Pin

Marianne Pelletier - 561 hours

Receiving 600 Hour Pin

Tonya Gardner - 606.5 hours



Receiving 200 Hour Pins

Karla Clark - 231.25 hours
 Mark Holysz - 250.50 hours
 Deanna Jackson - 209 hours
 Linda Lauthern - 231 hours
 Rosemary Marshall - 269.4 hours
 Linda McCain - 236.25 hours
 MaryJo Shockley - 279 hours
 Connie Williams - 271 hours



GARDEN MEDIA REVIEW

Joe Lamp'l is the host of the podcast, "The Joe Gardener Show" as well as the PBS show "Growing a Greener World," now available on YouTube. Joe's passion for practical gardening, using organic procedures while maintaining ecological stewardship, is evident as you listen to him speak and interact with his guests.

His guests are experts in their areas of gardening and share helpful suggestions, as well as interesting facts. The topics run the gamut - from gardening as we age to native plant swaps for popular plants to preserving what you grow in your garden. You will find something that interests and applies to you. He also has a popular series of courses offered on online called "The Online Gardening Academy."

In his podcast and videos, you'll find his advice is empirical. He seeks to take the some of the guesswork out of gardening. There is something for all levels of experience - from beginners to seasoned gardeners. He desires to inspire a younger generation of gardeners. Throughout his podcast and in his videos you'll hear Joe's purpose: More Gardens, More Gardeners. What's not to love about that?



IN THIS ISSUE

- 01 2025 Awards and Recognitions
- 02 2025 Awards and Recognitions
- 03 Garden Media Review and Table of Contents
- 04 President's Note
- 05 New Members Badges
- 06 Some Upcoming Events
- 07 Baddour Parkway Arboretum News
- 08 The Garden Buzz
- 09 More Upcoming Events
- 10 January Meeting Recap
- 11 February Meeting Recap
- 12 March Meeting Recap
- 13 Conservation Conversations
- 14 Native Plant Primer
- 15 Recipe and Volunteer Opportunities
- 16 Upcoming Events and UT Hort Garden Calendar
- 17 MGWC Committee Contacts





If I am driving alone in the car, going for a walk or working on a mindless task around the house, you can bet money that I am listening to a podcast or audio book. My gears are always churning and working on something - productively and nonproductively. If you ask some people what they are thinking about they might say “Aww... nuthin’ much” and that blows my mind! I can’t imagine my brain being so chill - must be nice! My answer would be, “What ISN’T my brain thinking about?” SO... listening to a podcast or an audio book seems to let my hyperactive mind settle down and be in the moment.

The exception to all of that is when I am working in the yard. I absolutely LOVE listening to the squirrels chatter as they leap from limb to limb, the insects as they buzz around the new blooms, and the birds as they chatter and call to one another. I hope one day I can be better at identifying the bird calls around me, but for now, I have to rely on the Merlin Bird ID app from Cornell Lab.

I enjoy taking a garden work break to sit on the porch swing with my app to see how many birds it identifies around me in 1 minute. It’s so disappointing when in one minute, it only identifies a few birds, like a mockingbird. Ugh - boring. I guess it also depends on what time of day I’m working. One morning last week, I was so tickled when in one minute, it identified ELEVEN birds!! It heard: Chipping Sparrow, Carolina Wren, Blue Jay, Osprey, House Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, Northern Cardinal and Carolina Chickadee.

Was the app accurate? I don’t know. Is that a lot of birds in 1 minute? I don’t know that either. But I was excited about it! I’ll just live in my Snow White fantasy that my little yard is magical and they were all there to sing to me as I work. I hope you feel that way about your yard too!

What’s has Tonya Listened To This Month?

- “Theo of Golden” by Allen Levi (I absolutely loved it!)
- “The Correspondent” by Virginia Evans (I just started it so can’t recommend yet.)
- All But My Life by Gerda Weissmann Klein (Very highly recommend but heavy.)
- The Plant Strong Podcast with Rip Esselstyn (Health podcast on the power of plants.)
- Chris Beat Cancer by Chris Wark (Health book - no, I don’t have cancer.)
- Dedicated with Doug Brunt Podcast (Talking to authors about their books - I like it but it might not be your thing.)

NEW MEMBERS/BADGES/PINS



Sonia Higgs is fully certified and received her Green Badge.

Congratulations!

Rebecca Pond is fully certified and received her Green Badge. Picture is unavailable.



Denise Honeycutt is fully certified and received her Green Badge.



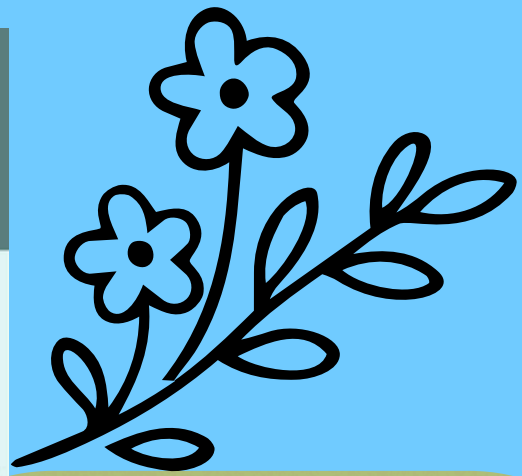
Diane Varnell is fully certified and received her Green Badge.

Community Volunteer Day Saturday, April 11th

8am - 11am at Cedar Creek Greenway in Mt. Juliet, TN



Sign up to volunteer in our link



MIDDLE TENNESSEE DAYLILY SOCIETY
presents:

CHARLES & HEIDI DOUGLAS

April 18, 2026 - 10:30 AM
Ellington Agriculture Center
(Edward Jones Building)
Nashville, TN
Pot luck, Hybridizers and Auction



Charles and Heidi Douglas will treat us to a review of their hybridizing program. They are one of the best in the country! We will view their program first to make sure they make a flight out of Nashville.

They will also be auctioning off some of their plants to offset their costs. Great opportunity to purchase some beauties! Please make plans to join us!

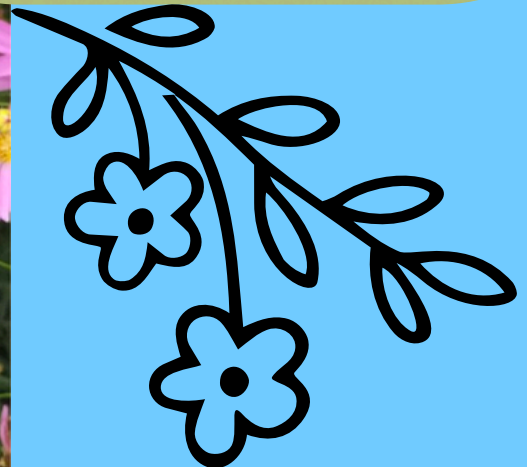
Save the Date

GARDEN TOUR

*An early season native plant garden tour
1 CEU offered*

April 11th • 3:00-4:30 PM

Amy Ritter's Garden
621 Creekfront Drive
Mt. Juliet, TN 37122



ARBORETUM NEWS

TREE STEWARD HIGHLIGHT:

Our featured steward this month is Mark Holysz. Mark graduated from the Master Gardener Program in 2021.

Mark is from Illinois and was raised in the Chicago area. He is a 1976 graduate of the Michigan State Grad School with a degree in higher education administration and an undergraduate degree in Mathematics from the University of Dayton. Before he retired, he worked as a student financial aid officer.

He and his wife Marilyn we're involved in the Morton Arboretum in Glen Ellen, Illinois before they moved here to Tennessee. They were both working in the Monarch garden when he decided to become a tree steward in the Arboretum. Mark is the Steward over the Common Persimmon, the Western Cedar also known as the Green Giant, and the Japanese Zelkova. All three are located near the Monarch Garden which made it very convenient for him to be the steward over these beautiful trees. He also said it sparked his interest because he was not familiar with the species of these trees because they were not familiar up north in Illinois and give him an opportunity to learn about them.



Mark Holysz

THE JAPANESE ZELKOVA

The Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*) is a large, deciduous tree, known for its vase-shaped form, attractive exfoliating bark, and tolerance to urban conditions. This makes it a popular street and shade tree, often used as an American elm substitute due to its resistance to Dutch elm disease. It features serrated green leaves that turn yellow, orange, or red in the fall. It is a tough durable tree that thrives in full sun, and can tolerate drought once it is established. The Japanese Zelkova grows to 50 to 80 feet and has a lifespan of 60 years. It is native to Eastern Asia, specifically originating from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and eastern China, including Manchuria.





A great crew turned out at Maryann Hick's home in mid March to receive, organize and tag trees for TN Tree Day! Over 1500 trees were delivered to their new owners! Hard work, fun friends and many new trees make our world a better place!



Master Gardeners of Wilson County & Fiddlers Grove
Present:

Spring Fest & Artisan Show

MAY 2, 2026 - 10AM-4PM

Follow us on Facebook @springfestinthegrove
Fiddlers Grove Historic Village
945 E. Baddour Parkway, Lebanon, TN 37087



MAY 16, 2026

8:30 AM - 1:00 PM

**CEDARS OF LEBANON
STATE PARK
ASSEMBLY HALL**

328 Cedar Forest Rd.
Lebanon, TN 37090

OVER 120 SPECIES OF NATIVE
TENNESSEE PERENNIALS, TREES
& SHRUBS!

WILSONCOUNTYMG.ORG



**TENNESSEE
NATIVE PLANT SALE**
Plant with a Purpose



General Membership Meeting Recap



The January membership meeting was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at the Arnett Education Building C. beginning at 6:00 pm. A chili cook-off was held with up to eleven participants entered in the contest. There were numerous sides including cornbread, shredded cheese, and various other foods to round out the meal. The decorations were bright and added just the right touch of hot and spicy. The first place winner of the chili contest was Linda Lauthern, second place to Eric Lay and third place to Nancy Savard.

The guest speaker for the January meeting was our own Sara Chodl. She and her family purchased land 14 years ago with the thought of Homesteading. Homesteading is a self-sufficient lifestyle focused on producing your own food, preserving resources, and reducing reliance on external systems. As her family had no prior experience in homesteading, she walked us through the journey of starting out with rocky, limestone land, planting raised gardens with plants suitable for the area, bringing animals to the farm, working with extension agencies and fellow farmers to understand and develop their resources, which include soaps, herb based remedies, and other products. Through this journey they have come to understand that they may never become fully self-sufficient, but have embraced the knowledge they have gained and the lifestyle they have learned to appreciate. 1 CEU

There were 75 members and one guest present and 31 zoom members for a total of 107.



Peggy Fannin presents Linda Lauthern with a chef's hat for her 1st Place chili winning recipe!



Recap by Karen Martin - Photos by Jay Martin

General Membership Meeting Recap



The February membership meeting was held on February 3rd in the East/West Building. The theme for dinner this month was “Italian Valentines Dinner”. Members provided a wide variety of delicious looking pasta dishes, salads and, as always, amazing desserts.

The guest speaker this month was David Hughes from Rockbridge Trees out of Bethpage, Tennessee. He started out by growing pecan trees and has branched out to a variety of other trees and plants since. He was well versed in trees that were especially good pollinators for bees, butterflies, moths and other insects. Some of the trees mentioned were the Catalpa Tree, Buck-eye tree, Basswood Tree, White Oak and Black Cherry.

There were 66 members present, 3 guests and 35 members signed in to Zoom for a total of 104 people.



David Hughes of Rock Bridge Trees



General Membership Meeting Recap

WE'RE ALL
A LITTLE
IRISH
TODAY



The March membership meeting was held on March 3rd in the East/West Building. The theme for dinner this month was “St. Patrick’s Irish Dinner”. Members provided some traditional fare such as Irish Stew, Cabbage and Potatoes. Some traditional Irish music and delicious desserts rounded out the meal.

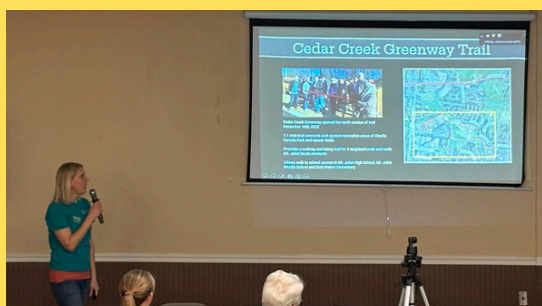
The guest speaker this month was Amy Ritter. She has been a landscape designer of Tennessee Native Plants for 11 years. She brings her expertise, energy and enthusiasm to a new project in the Mt. Juliet area called “Cedar Creek Greenway Restoration Project”. The trailhead begins at Charlie Daniels Park and continues for 1.1 miles. The goals of this project include removing undergrowth and debris to allow native plants to grow. Much of the undergrowth includes invasive species of plants and trees. Invasive species are plants not native to the region, have a high adaptability to different conditions, can out compete native species, have seeds that are prolific and disperse well, and have a lack of predators.

The greatest predators in this project are the beaver. They will eat the bark of trees and especially prefer the black cherry and oak trees.

The goals of this project include:

- Plant ID - Invasive plant removal - Wrap trees vulnerable to beaver - Monitor plants

There were 69 members present, 3 guests & 36 members on Zoom for a total of 108 people.





Conservation Conversations

A series featuring land stewardship, sustainability, and related topics.

By Lauren May



In these vernal seasons of the year..., it were an injury and a sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing.

~ John Milton, Tractate of Education



Earth Week outdoors



April 20-24 Join Outdoor Murfreesboro and our conservation partners and celebrate Earth Week in the Great Outdoors! Choose your own adventure from 10 fun, fascinating, nature-focused outdoor activities in and around Murfreesboro.

IDEAS ON HOW TO CELEBRATE EARTH WEEK:



- Go for a clean up walk in your neighborhood. Seeing you cleaning up the trash in your neighborhood or subdivision entrance, might inspire your neighbors to do the same!
- Visit a green space or state park. A walk outdoors away from traffic always gives an appreciation for the natural world and it's beauty.
- Plant a tree! It's the perfect time for planting a tree - plant one in memory of a family member or in honor of a special occasion or to mark the new life of a baby.
- Work on a water conservation plan for your garden. Install a rain barrel or drip irrigation system - or map out a rain garden for your yard.
- Support our pollinators! Plant some native plants and start a butterfly garden in your landscape.
- Celebrate Earth Week with your children/grandchildren by building a bird house, planting a tree, taking a hike, or planting some native plants. We have to inspire the next generation!
- Find ways to reduce, reuse and recycle in the garden. Build a compost bin - stop using chemicals in your garden and find natural ways to solve garden problems.



NATIVE PLANT PRIMER

NORTHERN BLUE FLAG IRIS

Iris versicolor



- Prefers moist, wet areas
- Part shade to full sun
- Grows up to 2-3 feet tall
- Blooms in May, June, July
- Spreads by self-seeding rhizomes
- Attracts butterflies, bees, birds & hummingbirds.
- Beautiful complex flower with sword-like leaves - provides visual interest.
- Deer resistant.

We will have Northern Blue Flag Iris available at the TN Native Plant Sale on May 16th - you NEED one!



RAIN GARDEN: Does YOUR landscape need one?

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A RAIN GARDEN IS A LOW-LYING AREA IN THE LANDSCAPE THAT COLLECTS RAIN WATER FROM A ROOF, DRIVEWAY OR STREET AND ALLOWS IT TO SOAK INTO THE GROUND.

- No mowing is needed! Saves you money!
- A beautiful and cost effective way to decrease runoff from your yard.
- Rain gardens help to filter out pollutants in runoff.
- Conserves water - recharges the groundwater.
- Pollinators will love it - increases diverse wildlife. It provides food and shelter for butterflies, song birds and other wildlife.
- No need to use fertilizer, herbicides or pesticides.
- Helps prevent water pollution and reduces flood risks because it improves your drainage.
- Increases your property value and helps you qualify for rebate and incentive programs.



The more you know... the more (native plants) you'll grow!



RECIPE : PASTA PRIMAVERA

from the kitchen of : Tonya Gardner

(I don't remember where it came from)

serves: 4 prep: 10 min cook: 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 10 oz box penne pasta
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 tsp minced garlic
- 1 zucchini, sliced
- 1 yellow squash, sliced
- 1 bunch of asparagus, chopped into 1 inch pieces
- 1 cup of cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 red onion, sliced thin
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 cup of frozen peas, thawed
- ¾ cup of grated pecorino
- 3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Fresh ground pepper
- Cup of fresh basil leaves

DIRECTIONS

- Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Prepare the pasta according to the package instructions, cooking until al dente. Drain and toss with a drizzle of olive oil to prevent sticking.
- Heat the oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic, squash, zucchini, asparagus, tomatoes, onion, salt, and several grinds of pepper and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
- Add the pasta, peas, cheese, lemon juice, and a pinch of red pepper flakes and toss to combine. Stir in the basil and tarragon, if using.
- Season to taste, garnish with more basil, and serve.

The Master Gardeners of Wilson County have many volunteer opportunities to allow you to earn your required hours each year. We also provide a way to get involved, make friends, learn, educate and serve!

PROJECTS

Projects are approved by the Executive Committee and may include funding.

MGWC Projects are led by Master Gardeners and are typically beds and gardens that we maintain and manage.

Projects should include education in gardening, horticulture or landscape management, be available in our communities, etc.

- BADDOUR PARKWAY ARBORETUM (BPA)
- LEBANON COMMUNITY & EDUCATION GARDEN
- CEDARS OF LEBANON BUTTERFLY GARDEN
- MONARCH WAY STATION FIDDLERS GROVE
- COMPASSIONATE HANDS HEALING GARDEN
- MONARCH WAY STATION CHARLIE DANIELS
- EXTENSION OFFICE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN
- MT. JULIET LIBRARY
- FIDDLERS GROVE DEMONSTRATION FLOWER BEDS
- PICKETT CHAPEL HERITAGE & PEACE GARDEN
- FIDDLERS GROVE DEMONSTRATION VEGETABLE GARDEN
- SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECTS & SCHOOL LESSONS
- LABOR OF LOVE GARDEN
- SADIE FORD GROWING FACILITY
- RAISING HOPE
- CEDAR CREEK GREENWAY RESTORATION PROJECT

ACTIVITIES

Activities include a broad range of MGWC committees and other volunteer opportunities that benefit the operations of our organization.

- AUDIO/VISUAL
- MASTER GARDENER COMMUNICATION
- EXTENSION AGENT SUPPORT
- MASTER GARDENER EXECUTIVE BOARD
- GARDEN TOUR & PROGRESSIVE DINNER
- MASTER GARDENER INTERN MENTOR PROGRAM
- GREEN THUMB WORKSHOPS
- NON-MG HORTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES
- HELP LINE
- OUTREACH PROJECTS
- HOSPITALITY/SOCIAL
- SCHOLARSHIP/ACADEMIC AWARD
- MASTER GARDENER COMMITTEE
- TECHNOLOGY

EVENTS

Events are managed and run by other organizations and MGWC primarily provides volunteer support or expertise, and in some cases funding for gardening-related items

- 4H DAY CAMP
- SPRING FEST IN THE GROVE
- BE HEALTHY KIDS SUMMER GARDENING CAMP
- TENNESSEE TREE DAY
- TN NATIVE PLANT SALE
- WILSON COUNTY FAIR ACTIVITIES
- SOUTHERN HOME & GARDEN EXPO
- WILSON COUNTY FARM DAYS



**Community
Volunteer Day**

Saturday, April 18th

8am - 10am

Cedar Creek Greenway
Mt. Juliet, TN



Use the link
to Sign Up
to Volunteer

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW FULL CALENDAR](#)



Real. Life. Solutions.™

The logo for the University of Tennessee Extension Institute of Agriculture. It features the letters "UT" in a stylized font, followed by the word "EXTENSION" in a bold, sans-serif font, and "INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it. At the very bottom, in a very small font, it says "THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE".



2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**PRESIDENT - TONYA GARDNER
PRESIDENT@WILSONCOUNTYM
G.ORG**

**VICE PRESIDENT -
CONNIE WILLIAMS
VICEPRESIDENT@WILSONCOU
NTYMG.ORG**

**SECRETARY - SARA CHODL
SECRETARY@WILSONCOUNTY
MG.ORG**

**TREASURER - CAROL STROUD
TREASURER@WILSONCOUNTY
MG.ORG**

**CERTIFICATION OFFICER -
LINDA MCCAIN
CERTIFICATION@WILSONCOU
NTYMG.ORG**

**LUCAS HOLMAN -
COUNTY DIRECTOR
925 EAST BADDOUR PARKWAY
SUITE 100
LEBANON, TN 37087
OFFICE: 615-444-9584
EMAIL: LHOLMAN1@UTK.EDU**

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

**CHAIR - Tonya Gardner
tonyagardner@wilsoncountymg.org**

**Lori Bornholtz
lamborney@gmail.com**

**Lauren May
lauren@andymay.com**

**Connie Williams
connie.g.williams@comcast.net**

**Fran Strausberg
frans37087@hotmail.com**

**Sherry Phillips
sherrylphillips@gmail.com**

**Karen Martin
martn5@aol.com**

**Jay martin
jay.martin5005@gmail.com**

**Questions, Comments or Article
Submissions? Email us at:
WCMGNewsletter37087@gmail.com**

We welcome your ideas!