

# Crossville Chronicle, Crossville, TN

*May 2, 2013*

## Discovery Gardens included as part of UT Gardens

### Staff writer

CROSSVILLE — The University of Tennessee Gardens have been officially expanded to include the Discovery Gardens located at UT's Plateau AgResearch and Education Center.

The announcement was made at the Cumberland County Master Gardener's Spring Flower and Garden Show at the Cumberland County Community Complex Friday afternoon by UT Institute of Agriculture Chancellor Larry Arrington.

"Good afternoon. It's a great day to be here in Crossville, and we have a truly great reason to be here. I have the pleasure of announcing that some wonderful community resources have come together to add a new dimension to the service that the UT Institute of Agriculture is offering to the citizens of Cumberland County," said Dr. Arrington.

"The UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center, with the help of the Cumberland County Master Gardeners, has managed a lovely public garden called the Discovery Gardens for the past eight years. The site is a popular educational venue for gardeners of all ages and the research at the Plateau Center has helped contribute to the development of new varieties of fruits and vegetables and the extremely popular no-spray roses," he added.

He continued, "Now the Institute of Agriculture is pleased to expand the role of the Discovery Gardens. Today, we're officially announcing that the gardens at the Plateau Center are third collection of gardens to be included in the statewide UT Gardens system.

"The original collection of UT Gardens is located on our home campus in Knoxville, which next month is celebrating 30 years of horticultural education and research. The second site of the UT Gardens, as many of you know, is in West Tennessee at the AgResearch and Education Center in Jackson. It's been a part of the UT Gardens system since 1989."

"The Discovery Gardens at the Plateau AgResearch and Education were first planted in 2005. So, this announcement has been a long time coming, but the third and newest UT Gardens is now officially located more toward the center of the state, here in Crossville. The Discovery Gardens will now be the UT Gardens, Crossville."

The UT Gardens' mission is to cultivate an appreciation of plants through horticultural displays, educational programs and research. Every year, more than 100,000 visitors travel to UT Gardens locations to attend one of the many special events and educational seminars or simply to explore the beautiful grounds. The gardens also serve as an outdoor laboratory where researchers evaluate the performance and

landscape appeal of each plant.

Dr. Arrington added, "This addition to our system of gardens, which truly makes us a statewide system, came with a lot of help and cooperation. I'd like recognize the efforts of Walt Hitch, director of the Plateau AgResearch and Education Center, who has tirelessly worked with the Cumberland County Master Gardeners, and Gregg Upchurch of the UT Extension here in Cumberland County to make the Discovery Gardens the community resource it has become.

"I'd also like to recognize the efforts of Dr. Sue Hamilton, director of the UT Gardens, whose vision of public horticulture, as both an educational and research resource for the state is literally blooming."

Dr. Arrington also announced Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill which designated the UT Gardens as the official state botanical garden, and this new Gardens site here in Crossville will also enjoy that statewide recognition.

"We appreciate the support of State Senator Massey from Knoxville and State Representative Eldridge from Jackson, for supporting that bill, but also locally State Senator Charlotte Burk and State Representative Cameron Sexton for their support, as well," he added. "Also, the support of all the Cumberland County elected officials is appreciated."

Dr. Hamilton, who was elated about the statewide recognition, added, "Everyone associated with the gardens, from faculty, staff and student interns, to the many volunteers, Master Gardeners and donors, has worked hard to present an outstanding collection of public gardens. To be recognized as the state botanical garden is a great honor."

The gardens are also recognized as a certified Tennessee Arboretum.

Also attending the announcement were Sara Seneft, president of the Master Gardeners, several UT officials, Crossville Mayor J.H. Graham III and Cumberland County Mayor Kenneth Carey. State Representative Cameron Sexton was unable to attend the ceremony.

All UT Gardens locations are open to the public and free to visit, although some events are fee based. Plans for additional displays, as well as additional locations are in the works. For more information about the UT Gardens, including events, visit [utgardens.tennessee.edu](http://utgardens.tennessee.edu) or follow them on Facebook.

The UT Institute provides instruction, research and public service through the UT College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, UT AgResearch, including its system of 10 research centers, and UT Extension offices in every county in the state.