



THYMES  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY MASTER  
GARDENERS  
JUNE, 2024

President: Mike Barron

Fair Winds Lavender Farm field trip turned out great. I never knew there were that many types of Lavender, from Munsted to Hidcote to Phenomenal (pics). All of their plants are culinary, and those folks are really crafty about how to use lavender. We had some excellent lemonade, shortbread and ice cream, all made with lavender; and on the other side, we found that lavender makes good bug spray and you can buy it there too. There is an association of lavender growers where they get lots of their ideas. If in Jamestown, it is worth the time to visit.



For the Meeting in July, we will be on our evening schedule. The July 2nd Member Meeting will begin at 5:30 in the Country Store. Our speaker will be the butterfly lady, Lenore Stancenk. The theme for our July potluck dinner will be *an old fashioned country picnic*. I hope to see you all there.

Sue Partch: Moles vs Voles



Vole

Mole

I saw them when I was at PDG recently--those rounded mounds that wind around like Route 30 on the way to Sparta. Especially noticeable in the pathways, I stomp them down as I walk along. They are the tops of tunnels made by moles, but also sometimes used by voles.

Which brings up the often asked: *Which is which and which one is destroying my plants?* Actually, both damage plants but in different ways. More importantly, how does one get rid of them?

**M = mole = meat.** Moles eat insects, grubs, and earthworms; however, by tunneling close to the surface, moles may break off plant roots or leave them dangling with no way to get nutrients or water. This is aside from making unsightly humps in your lawn. A mole is 4 to 7 inches long with paddle-shaped feet and prominent digging claws. It has an elongated head and snout, small eyes, and no external ears. The short, black-to-brownish-gray fur has no grain, which allows the mole to move easily forward and backward in the tunnels. Moles are most active in the early morning and late evening on cloudy days during the spring and fall. They are solitary animals, so ridding the landscape of one or two moles will make a big difference.

**V = vole = vegetarian.** Voles eat the bark, roots and stems of plants. The smaller pine voles often use mole tunnels as passageways to eat plant and tree roots, but the bigger meadow voles are nocturnal surface creatures that feed mostly on shrub and tree roots and bark. Voles look like field mice with short tails, compact heavy bodies, small eyes, and partially hidden ears. Voles are 5 to 8 inches long and have prominent orange teeth for gnawing plant roots and stems. They dig characteristic golf ball-sized burrow holes near tree roots or in previously established mole tunnels. Trapping or habitat modification is the most effective way to eliminate voles, since they require cover and do not like to feed in the open.

Controlling these creatures requires different techniques for each. For both species, avoid poisons, as they may pose a hazard to humans and pets and may possibly enter the wildlife food chain. Also, due to their temporary residual nature, castor oil products for repelling moles and voles are not very effective.

Trapping is the most successful way to get rid of moles and voles when used in the fall and winter months. Several different types of mole traps, such as harpoon, impaling, choker, pitfall, or scissor-jawed, are available on the market. Traps should be placed over an active tunnel. While snap traps are not effective for moles they can work for voles when baited with apples or peanut butter and

oatmeal. Set the traps along runways or near the burrow holes, ensuring that the trap is placed with the trigger end toward the runway. Place a box or bucket over the trap, because voles prefer to take the bait from under cover.

From another angle, keeping lawns mowed and removing weeds, heavy mulch, or dense vegetation will aid in eliminating their food source along with their protection from predators. To protect a specific area from a vole infestation, a wire fence with a mesh of ¼ inch or smaller will help exclude them. It will need to be 12 inches above ground with 6 to 10 inches buried into the ground to prevent the vole from burrowing under the fence.

As both pests carry infectious diseases and parasites, it is important to wear disposable gloves when handling the dead animals. Either bury them or place them in plastic bags in the trash.

Garden coordinator, Shalena Durkot, says there are both creatures at the gardens but damage is minimal. Tunnel mounds in my lawn and gardens are proof I have moles. Grub control products have only moved them to other areas; but I can't bring myself to use traps, so I just randomly collapse the humps and live with it. I haven't noticed vole damage, but my rodent control (my cat) has presented me with creatures that fit their description.

Most information for this article came from the online source: *Clemson Cooperative Extension Home & Garden Information Center*

## Linda Ferris: Master Gardener Passing the Torch to Her Great-Granddaughter



Carol Burdett is the epitome of a *self-starter*. In 1998, she saw an ad in the local newspaper about a master gardener class. Every state in the United States has a master gardener program set up through their university's Extension Office. In Cumberland County, our first such program was started by Roger Thackston.

Rae Hozer actually spearheaded the first master gardener group, since Carol was still working full-time. Carol was curious, as were about 33 other people. They came together on a regular basis, got to know each other and threw ideas around about what they wanted to do.

At first, the classes were taught by University of Tennessee professors. Later, as knowledge and interest grew, some of the students would teach classes or take field trips to Carol's 40-acre homestead. She demonstrated her gardening ideas to many groups, teaching organic methods for 11 years. Now, speakers are brought in each month to the membership meetings.

Carol was on the State Board of Master Gardeners for several years and then became editor of our state newsletter, *Taking Root*, until the Master Gardeners gained a new state coordinator, Dr. Natalie Bumgarner.

Carol also had landscaped the Cumberland County Playhouse grounds before the classes began. She was instrumental in projects at City Hall, St. Alphonsius Church and the Art Circle Public Library. Carol's most memorable landscaping project was at Brown Elementary. She had a few teachers (and someone's husband!) as helpers. The class also upgraded plantings for the United Fund building – front, side & back!

In those days, students were on their own to find projects to get their volunteer hours. Later, we had the Discovery Gardens out Hwy. 70 at the Plateau Ag Research & Education Center, where each class was given a plot of ground. They came together to plan and plant a different garden each year. This eventually resulted in the Plateau Discovery Gardens becoming a part of the UT Botanical Garden system – one of three recognized gardens in the entire state of Tennessee.

In the 2024 Master Gardener Class, Carol's great-granddaughter was an intern. If Carol is the epitome of a self-starter, then her great-granddaughter, Mikayla Vanlandingham, is definitely following in her great-grandmother's footsteps.

Mikayla has always had an interest in plants, mostly as a hobby. While taking classes at the University of Tennessee during COVID, she found she was really only paying attention to her classes in plant diversity & evolution and ecology. These were the only classes which took her outside and to the greenhouses at UT – her favorite places to be. She also took a class in field botany (another outdoor venue) from Dr. Jessica Budke and loved it!

Mikayla saw that her dad (Carol's grandson) also had a green thumb and could amazingly bring sad-looking plants back to life. Mikayla realized that horticulture had a place for her, too, and she loved that idea!

Currently, Mikayla is taking online college courses, working part-time in a floral department and completing requirements for the Cumberland County Master Gardener class. She hopes to get into grad school at UT in the fall in plant ecology, natives and ecological systems. It's no wonder with Mikayla's background that she was chosen as the next summer intern for the UT Plateau Discovery Gardens. It looks like another generation in Carol Burdett's family is hooked on plants!

Cumberland County Master Gardeners actively recruit and financially support an aspiring horticulture/agriculture intern each spring. Fundraising events help to assure that young interns will continue the goals of acquiring and practicing sound plant knowledge.

**Alan Baker: Mixed Screen Project**



In the spring of 2021, a house foundation was started behind our property with a view right into our house. I started research on plant screenings and got convinced to try a mixed-evergreen screen. Following ideas from the UT Extension pub SP-517, I purchased 2 Leyland cypresses, one green giant arborvitae, an Oakland holly, a Canadian hemlock, an N.R. Stevens holly and a golden hinoki cypress and planted them in May of 2021.

During the big freeze of 2022, I lost the Oakland holly (also one that we had in front) and replaced it with another green giant arborvitae. The hinoki also took a beating, but I decided to let it be. Later, in the fall of 2022, we also added a river birch at the end for some variety. I inter-planted the trees with several varieties of evergreen ground covers, and with coaching from my wife, gave in and added quarry gravel mulch. The pictures are from 2021 along with those from just the other day.



So after three years, there is still some needed growth; and I'm sure that in 10 years it will look overgrown...but at my age, that probably won't bother me!!

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## Laura Riester: Daylilies in the Landscape

The UT Gardens has a huge daylily collection. Strolling through the gardens and observing how these daylilies perform on the plateau might be helpful if we want to add daylilies to our landscape. Normally, daylilies like at least one inch of water per week. The daylilies at the UT Gardens are proven survivors; they have demonstrated their ability to thrive with natural rainfall as their only water source. These daylilies have survived for years with hard rains as well as long periods of excessive heat and dryness. They thrive with minimal maintenance, suggesting that most of them are robust and adaptable. However, to look their best, some daylilies require more maintenance than others. For example, double daylilies with short scapes need frequent deadheading to prevent spent blossoms from falling onto new buds which can inhibit subsequent blooming. An example of such a plant is pictured in Fig. 1.b



Figure 1, Short double daylily



Figure 2, Carefree daylily

There are also truly carefree daylilies; they always look good. Their foliage is often grass-like and dark green. They tend to feature natural branching that supports multiple blooms at different heights and positions. Especially carefree are daylilies with trumpet-shaped flowers. Spent blooms on these daylilies naturally twist, dry and drop without requiring deadheading which makes them suitable for large-scale plantings. For example, see Fig. 2

Then, we have the very showy daylilies that produce a large number of flowers that open on the same day, creating a striking display. Often, this initial burst of blooms is followed by additional flushes, extending the flowering period. These cultivars are eye-catching and ideal focal points in the garden. Removing spent flowers daily prevents the plant from diverting energy into seed production, encourages more blooms and keeps the plant looking tidy. To prevent formation of seed pods, it is best to pinch off or cut the spent blooms at the base of the flower stem. This practice is especially important for cultivars with many blooms to maintain their appearance. Fig. 3 is an example of a showy daylily with a large number of flowers open on the same day.



UT Gardens offers a daylily workshop on July 13th in the outdoor classroom and the daylily plot. Hopefully, we will be blessed with some rainfall before then. Many early-blooming daylilies will have finished blooming, but the gardens have both late-blooming and re-blooming daylilies which normally put on a show in July. We may discover the perfect daylily for our own gardens.

Fig. 3, Daylily with large number of flowers open on the same day  
<https://utgardens.tennessee.edu/locations/crossville/classes-in-the-gardens/>



PLEASE NOTE: REGISTRATION FOR THE DAYLILY CLASS OFFERED ON JULY 13<sup>th</sup> HAS BEEN CLOSED. THE CLASS HAS BEEN FILLED. YOU MAY VISIT THE DAYLILY GARDEN TO VIEW THE COLORFUL DISPLAY ANY OTHER DAY.

### Kathy Limp: Pollinator Gardens

My project this year was to remove a Bradford Pear tree in our front yard and replace it with two small pollinator gardens. I included verbena, canna lily, yarrow, veronica, blazing star, lilac, cardinal flower, daisy plants, coneflowers, phlox and blanket flowers. Most of my plants came from the plant sale, and they were also the healthiest. On the other side of our driveway I planted lavender, bluestar, and anise hyssop.



Love all the color it brings along with the bees. Kathy Limp MG class '23

**WOW!! So much to share and so well done. THANK YOU!**