



THYMES
CUMBERLAND COUNTY MASTER
GARDENERS
MAY, 2023



A MOTHERS DAY TEA AT PDG: The weather cooperated providing blue skies over a blooming garden for our first tea. Guests arrived in beautiful dresses wearing their own hat or borrowing one of ours. Many had never been to the Gardens and were delighted (especially with Ernie's tour)! Sandwiches, scones, and many sweets paired with a variety of teas.

Solvi Thompson, 15-year old granddaughter of Sue Partch, was delightful as a Fairy explaining the Victorians' rather complicated "Language of Flowers". Guests delved a little deeper into the Language of Flowers by making their own Tussy-Mussy, a very small flower bouquet.

Many thanks to all the MGs who worked so hard to transform the Pavilion with lovely Japanese lanterns hung from the ceiling, dozens of roses in teapots, a gorgeous center piece, beautifully set tables plus so much delicious food and more. It was a wonderful day, making nearly \$1000 for the MG budget, too -- much appreciation to everyone.

FYI -- only 10 tickets left for the June 24th Day Lily Tea. Call 931 879 8980 if you'd like one. The Teas Committee

Kudos to Carol Lorenc and all the creative Cumberland County master gardeners who planned and presented the first Mother's Day Tea in the Gardens.

President: Mike Barron

Master Gardener volunteers have been amazing this year. The final class for Interns was great with so many MGs showing up and interacting. We've been eagerly awaiting a large, enthusiastic group to add to our vision of club and garden growth. The time has arrived!

The work at the PDG Plant sale was an incredible success, but I was also really pleased to see all the people touring the garden. In addition, Ernie, Shalena and others have been giving numerous garden tours to folks who have never been there before. Thanks to all for your interest and participation. It is really highlighting the PDG.

Things are looking up around our home, *Lantana*. Everything is getting green and those shrubs that are no longer getting green are no longer. Since our place is called *Lantana*, we have planted many examples of the namesake flowers, along with marigolds, impatiens and others. In addition, there are over 1000 sunflower seeds of three varieties planted, using all of the great ideas that came out of our home projects discussions in our members' meeting. The seedlings are popping through, and if Mother Nature is kind with moisture, I hope to see a field of beautiful sunflowers in a couple of months. We have also tilled a couple of full-sun spots and broadcast wildflowers to see if they will come up. Finally, we have decided to let our *hay* fields grow untouched with the hope of attracting wildlife and pollinators.

June 6 Member Meeting

For the Meeting in June, we will be back to our evening schedule, with a potluck dinner, beginning at 5:30 followed by a speaker and business meeting. After considering all of the feedback on night vs day meetings, the Board has opted for the following schedule: April through September—evening meetings; October through March—daytime meetings. As usual, we are always open to feedback on this or any other topic.

We look forward to a great turnout for the June 6th meeting at the Country Store—Extension Office area.

Vice President: Rhoda Hiller

I hope all of you gardeners are enjoying this spring weather. The nights are a little cooler; but we should enjoy this, because summer is just around the corner, and we will have warm nights. Our yard is looking lush and green and we have been mowing twice a week. I think most of my plants have survived the winter freeze. My Skip Laurel is coming back after trimming it back to the ground. My Fig tree and Aucuba are also making a comeback.



Fig Tree



Skip Laurel



Aucuba

Always look around the base of your plants before digging them up. I know it is tough to look at the bare stems or brown leaves or to keep our spouses from digging up the plants. Plants are very expensive, but they are also resilient, so give them a chance to recuperate. I love to walk my yard in the mornings and just take in the beauty and possibly find a new leaf or stem of a plant coming back to life.

Our June speaker is Fred Mullen. Fred is the go-to guy for learning about tomatoes. Get those pens and journals ready. You'll be glad to refresh your memory or get the details for the first time.

MASTER GARDENER ARTICLES

Sue Partch: Spring into Summer



It happens every year. One day in early May I look around and say, *when did it get so GREEN*. Gone are all the pastel leaf buds. Gone are the white and pink blossoms on trees. Fully-leafed-out underbrush covers up the trash, the leaf litter and sticks, even most of the ledges and rocky outcroppings. Field and roadside grass and weeds wave around at least 2 feet tall. Mowed lawns look like emerald velvet. The skyline has moved up significantly.

A closer look, though, reveals more colors. Patches of brown are newly turned gardens and plowed fields. Iris is blooming in purples and yellows. Peonies and early roses make big splashes of reds and

pinks. And, yes, there are still some bushes in whites and pinks: azaleas, rhododendrons, multiflora roses. Dandelion puffs look like white polka dots in unmown lawns. Daisies, yellow rocket and buttercups are sprinkled along roadsides and in fields.

And have those animals been there all along? I notice cows and horses in pastures--even some goats, sheep and chickens. Dogs are out. Raccoons, skunks and deer appear along or, unfortunately, sometimes in the road. I'm spotting rabbits and groundhogs although not in my own yard...yet.

Then there was the day I went outside to a soft breeze that made me lift my face to the sun and smile. It was really spring--full blown, beautiful spring. It even smelled green. But now, suddenly, over one weekend, and never mind what the calendar says, it's summer.

Robin Piacine: Herb Class

Herb class in the gardens was instructive and hands on with leader Robin Piacine. Robin demonstrated her skills with lavender-scented bath salts, using actual dried lavender. She provided participants with a recipe for the salts. She also demonstrated how to make an herbal wreath and lavender candles.

Herb class provided participants with basic insight about cultivating and making use of herbs.

Tammy Anzenberger: Nature's Sights

I am blessed to live on almost 20 acres of mostly forested land. There's 5 acres cleared around our home. This includes a one-acre pond that we've dedicated to my late brother David. On *Lake David*, as we call it, we recline in our treehouse and listen to the frogs and the whippoorwills. I am in awe of the natural beauty here in Tennessee.

Since becoming a master gardener, I have focused on learning more about trees and shrubs, and I've planted many varieties on the property. I've built two new gardens this spring, one filled with apple trees, azaleas, and roses. The other is full of shrubs and conifers.

I enjoy watching bluebirds perch on the branches, and dive into the grass for bugs. There are so many varieties of songbirds here! The woodpeckers are busy every day and *Peter Rabbit* has had a big family this spring.

One day I was lifting up river rocks for my pizza garden, and I found a bright red salamander. What a surprise that was! Every day I see something new. In fact, as I was writing this, I noticed my leg had a painful spot, and when I looked at it, there was some bug attached to me. So now I'm trying to identify it. The bite hurts like a fire ant, but it looks like a tiny tick. All-in-all, it's been a wonderful day in my plateau paradise.

Louise Grilley: TN Smart Yard in Practice



This is what I have been doing this spring:

I completed the 2022 Master Gardener Class and have reviewed the TN Smart Yard Principles and multiple chapters in our MG course.

I put together a packet of information regarding the TN Smart Yard program, including website resources which I shared while completing home visits with many families on the Plateau. The participants range in age from 2-92 year olds. Topics included the effects of the frost this past winter on a variety of plants, interest in starting a new backyard garden for children, and hardy natives to the plateau.

Patricia Briney: Sweet Summer Hydrangea

Unfortunately, my landscaping wasn't immune to the rapid drop in temperature this past winter. I lost my Slender Hinoki Cypress which was slowly turning brown. I had visions of it maturing into a magnificent specimen; and instead, its life was cut short by some miserable weather.

After a lot of debating (with myself), I replaced it with a tree form Sweet Summer Hydrangea and am hoping it will love its new home.

Wish me luck!



Landscaping

Lisa Dillard: New

I've attached a picture of a complete landscape re-do that my husband and I completed at the end of April. Between the December bitter cold killing of several bushes and 20 years of overgrown boxwoods, it was time! I'm just eager for it to fill back in!
Happy Planting!

On the Wing: Jewell Wilhoite

So, since the bird tales have been sparse, I'm prompted to fill in with my own observations. Fortunately, today brought a flock of Cedar Waxwings to my yard and I have something to report. These same families come every year around this time to gorge themselves on Serviceberry drupes (berries). The berries are far from being ripe, but the birds devour them anyway.

Waxwings are very attractive birds: grayish backs and red-tipped wings with a brown, fading to buff, underside; sleeker than a robin and smaller. They have a crest and black mask around the eyes. I've never seen individual ones in our trees. They always seem to travel in flocks—hence my assumption that they're family or, at least, close friends.

The entire group of Waxwings will swoop out by the end of the day. Other berry eaters will be happy.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the May newsletter!