

THYMES
CUMBERLAND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
SEPTEMBER, 2023



President: Mike Barron

Thank you to everyone who made the trek to the southern end of Cumberland County for our annual picnic. I know that the drive seemed long to some, but I personally enjoy cruising the country roads. My family really enjoyed the event and we hope you did too. Thanks for all the help getting things ready, and all the advice I received on the possibilities for Lantana. Knowing that I do not consider myself a *master* of anything, when someone told me *this is how a Master Gardener's yard should look*, it really made me smile.

In the month of October, we will be looking at the nominations for officers. There are some great candidates this year, but we are always looking for new people to get involved. In addition, there are a couple of other positions that we really need to fill. The first is a new one--a volunteer/event coordinator. This position would really help us with planning for events to ensure that we have people available to make them successful. The second position is for someone to learn and manage our emails and website. Alan Baker has done a fantastic job, but we need to find him some support. If you can't

serve, feel free to volunteer others, anonymously of course. Current Board members will also be around to help new officers learn what is needed to be successful.

NOTE: In October, we will be moving to our winter meeting schedule, beginning our meetings at 1 pm in the Country Store. Afternoon meetings will allow us to finish in time for happy hour and still get home before dark. The October 3 meeting will feature Mimi Barnes from the TWRA speaking on armadillos, opossums and coyotes in Cumberland County. We will use the business meeting to talk about the Flower, Lawn and Garden Show and introduce the committees needed to make it successful. There will not be a meal, but cookies always go great anytime.

The next Umbrella meeting will take place Oct. 5 at 1 p.m. at the PDG.

Herbal Tea in the Garden: A Celebration of Master Gardener Initiative



What a way to end a trifecta! The final 2023 Master Gardener Tea, held on Saturday, September 9, featured great decorations, appealing foods, and a variety of herb teas to learn about and explore.

Master Gardener volunteers, under the capable leadership of Carole Lorenc, brought color and creativity to the outdoor pavilion at the Plateau Discover Gardens. The well-executed decorations served as an invitation to the Garden's well-planted and tended herb garden, a site to be explored after refreshments and an informative speaker. Decorations and linens accentuated fall colors with herb and moss-filled centerpieces at each table. The central tea table further shone with an arrangement of bright, golden sunflowers.

Prepared and arranged by MG volunteers, refreshments continued the herbal theme with assorted tastes and textures which could be sampled in attractive, delicious sandwiches. While enjoying the lunch, guests learned about the Fair Winds Lavender Farm from owner and speaker, Steve Biedinger. Steve brought with him several lavender products which he described and made available for purchase.

Additionally, guests could buy small, window sill-size mugs, potted up by Master Gardeners as a take-home try out. Plus, attendees left with complimentary, unique china tea cups, each holding a flavored tea bag and a small spoon.

Finally, guests could choose a tour of the PDG herb garden with Janet Coe, long-time herb garden tender, or to be lead in decorating a small herbal wreath.

The final tea of the season was sold out **again**, and, in spite of a short rain shower, all seemed to enjoy the afternoon, expressing gratitude and positive feedback.

The Tea committee thanks all who contributed in any way to the first ever Teas in the Garden. Looking forward to 2024.

We, the Master Gardener membership, applaud all the planning, creativity and execution of such a novel endeavor!!!

Janet Coe: Fall Festival Decoration Recognition

To the wonderful group of ladies who spent many hours under the pavilion, wrapped in chicken wire and burlap....THANK YOU!! You are the BEST!

- Linda Glenn
- Jan Rice
- Leslie Mullican
- Vicki May
- Janet Russell
- Deni Martin
- Margo Carroll

We made a great Fall Gardeners Festival decorating team!

I appreciate each of you and could not have done it without all your help and support. The hundreds of pounds of pumpkins and gourds, and truckload of cornstalks to carry in the 90° heat was quite a task. Walt and his hardworking PREC crew had a bountiful harvest for us to use to make the PDG even more beautiful this year. Without them, none of it would have been possible.

I also greatly appreciate the decor donations from master gardeners, mums from PDG Umbrella Committee and three, specially made, huge cornucopia frames and supplies from Walt Hitch. So many wonderful gifts to be thankful for this season!

Margo Carroll: In stock, Available Master Gardener Clothing

- 1-Small Ladies Light Pink Polo Shirt (\$31)
- 2- Medium Grey Ladies Fleece Vest (\$44 each)
- 3-Large Grey Ladies Fleece Vest (\$44 each)
- 1-Large Burgundy Red Ladies Fleece Vest (\$44 each)
- 3-XLarge Grey Ladies Fleece Vest (\$44 each)
- 1-XLarge Royal Blue Ladies Fleece Vest (\$44 each)
- 9-Green Aprons (\$26.50 each)



Clothing IN STOCK NOW



Aprons \$26.50

Pink Polo Small
\$31

Ladies
Grey, Blue,
Burgundy Vest \$44

Fleece vest \$44

More Margo Carroll: Adopt A Spot

We are looking for plant area adopters for the Plateau Discovery Garden. The adopting individual(s) commit to maintaining their adopted area once every two weeks for 6 months (during the growing season) of the year. Your name at the site will identify you as the honored cultivator.

For more information please contact Shalena Durkot, 931-484-0034, sdurkot@utk.edu or Margo Carroll, 931-202-4438, margosky2012@gmail.com

- Americana Bed (flagpole)
- Entrance Gardens
- Mixed Screen Demonstration
- Composting
- Daylily Bed
- Tree and Shrub Garden
- Celebration of Life – Conifers
- Conifer Garden (Expansion)
- Bulb Garden
- Hardy Hibiscus Trial
- Rose Garden
- Mary's Trial
- Water Feature

Master Gardener Features

Sue Partch: September Musings

As a child, September meant a Labor Day picnic with dad home on a weekday, school starting, the end of going barefoot, new stiff Buster Brown lace-up shoes, clothes with skirts, a rush to preserve the end of the garden vegetables, the start of leaves turning color, end of summer flowers...and, a highlight of the year, the fair. At this age and time, some of that has already happened in August (school, the fair) or



doesn't happen at all these days: (Buster Browns, skirts for school, putting up garden produce for the winter). But, my Septembers still have the start of fall colors and end-of-summer flowers.

A few trees, maples and dogwoods are already showing a bit of color, but the real sign of impending autumn is the appearance of leaves on the ground. They're what make you look up and take notice. Scarlett sumacs and fields of dry brown cornstalks or the stubble left from harvesting say fall is coming, too.

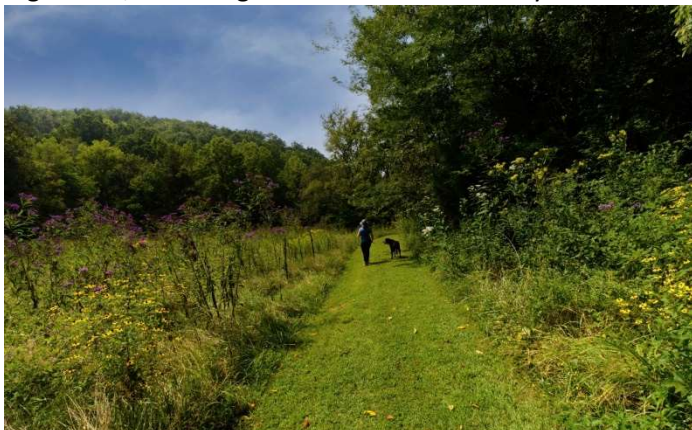
As for the roadsides, yellow is the dominant color and tall the prevailing height. Final mowings have left some roadsides with small mounds of weed hay, but unmown edges have dense vegetation anywhere from 3 to 7 feet tall. The bright yellows of goldenrods, tickseed, and various wild sunflowers are everywhere. There are white flowers like boneset and the apparently-never-ending Queen Anne's lace. For contrast, the pink of Joe-Pye weed and thistle plus the purple of ironweed catch the eye. Thick patches of fuzzy mist flower (looks like ageratum) provide a soft blue, while tangles of jewelweed are covered with little orange dots.

Mixed in with all this vibrant color are the greens and neutrals. Spent plants with dry curling leaves and stiff stalks are yellowing into tans and browns. Unnoticed drab green ragweed grows right next to the goldenrod that gets blamed for ragweed's allergy-rich pollen. All sorts of grasses both green and brown are waving laden seed heads around, including extra-tall show-offs plume grass and switchgrass. In swampy spots, cattails look like furry cigars on long sticks, and milkweed now has fat green seedpods.

As if all this isn't enough to convince you that it's September, take note of the honking geese in their flying Vs. And, the tell-tell addition of a blanket on the bed. Nights are now a bit nippy.

Kristi DuBois: The Beautiful Wildflowers of Fall Called *Weeds* Photos by David Clark

Right now, blooming on the unmown country roadsides and fields of the Cumberland Plateau and



Sequatchie Valley are a multitude of species of cheery yellow asters and sunflowers, backdropped by splashes of sunny goldenrod and majestic pink Joe Pye. To my eyes, this is a breathtaking sight to behold. And yet, all the flowers in these beautiful *unkept* wild areas are called *weeds*.

Wildflowers grow in the spring. Weeds grow in the fall, quips Stephen Lyn Bales, ironically. Bales, an author and naturalist at the Ijams Nature Center in Knoxville, recently gave a presentation for the UT Butterfly Festival entitled *All Weeds are Not Weeds. Just Ask a Butterfly!* In his talk, Bales highlighted a long list of beautiful wildflowers that are considered weeds, so much so, that many even have weed in their names. Think swamp milkweed and butterfly weed.

According to Merriam-Webster, a weed is *a plant that tends to grow thickly where it is not wanted and to choke out more desirable plants*. But to wildflower lovers and pollinators like butterflies, many weeds are not undesirable at all, but beautiful and life-sustaining. Bales points to the stately Joe Pye weed, with fragrant lavender-pink clusters, sitting atop tall, majestic stalks as the host for three dozen species of butterflies and moths. The similarly attractive common milkweed is anything but common, serving as the preferred host of the endangered monarch butterfly which migrates to Mexico over 4 generations. (A host is a plant that provides shelter for butterflies to lay their eggs on and a food source for their larva, or caterpillars.) Joe Pye and common milkweed are also two of the most popular nectar plants for butterflies, bees and other pollinators because of their long bloom period.

Walk through any meadow in late summer/early autumn and you will be greeted with a tapestry of wildflower weeds buzzing with pollinators. A recent stroll through the newly opened *Head of Sequatchie* state park revealed a spectacular meadow full of showy, dark purple flowerheads on top of towering stalks, delicate clusters of lacy white flowers, and masses of bright golden flowers shining against the bright blue sky. These wildflower beauties—ironweed, frostweed, and goldenrod—are fit for every cottage or naturalizing garden and, yet, they are all considered *weeds*.

But they are not weeds to butterflies. Ironweed, says Bales, is the host for the American lady butterfly and frostweed for the rare, bordered patch butterfly; while the 31 species of goldenrod are host to a whopping 100 species of butterflies and moths. These magnificent clusters of flowers provide a backdrop for shiny, pink swamp thistle, a host for the painted lady butterfly, and many species of yellow composites like the yellow and black coneflower and the lanceleaf tickseed--unfortunately named simply because of someone's impression of the cheery flower's seeds.



On the forest edge of the *Head of Sequatchie* meadow are bushy plants with sweet little cornucopia-shaped flowers in mottled orange and red. These precious plants are called jewelweed, which seems like

a complete contradiction in terms. The jewelweed's unique tubular flowers are a favorite of wildflower lovers and a nectar source for hummingbirds, says Bales.

When I see all these beautiful autumn wildflowers, I ask myself, *Why are they called weeds? I want some in my garden!* and so do butterflies, bees, and hundreds of other tiny pollinators. Unfortunately, along many roadsides and in many communities, these lovely and life-giving wildflowers are being sprayed and mown into oblivion. In the words of the incomparable Joni Mitchell: *Don't it always seem to go...That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.* Isn't it ironic that many gardeners are now buying and planting these wildflower *weeds* when nature has graciously given them to us all along?

Rita Riali: Gardening Gone Animal

Admittedly, I've never been much of a gardener, but I've had some extraordinary success this year with a new type of planting. In fact, I'm so proud of the results, I've attached two pictures that show the progress of my gardening efforts.

First is a just-potted multi-colored Maxine seedling. The second image is shortly after transplant into a window box on the side of the garage.



I'm amazed at how quickly these things take root! When cultivating this particular variety, it's important to keep the new plantings amply watered and regularly fertilized with plenty of poached chicken. (A little feline humor. Please, no more cat pictures. I know how these stories can get out of hand.)

Jewell Wilhoite: For the Birds

How often do you see a Gray-Cheeked Thrush taking a bath? Not often if you live in my patch of the woods. In fact, these members of the thrush family rarely show themselves, itchy underwear or not. So, I've been thrilled (close to the sound thrushes make) to see two this week enjoying the small birdbath in our back yard. One was a bit aggressive and took a hop toward his companion (or so it appeared) to hurry it along. Then, he jumped in to splash and ruffle his feathers in abandonment.

Do birds feel joy? I think they do, knowing that this momentary indulgence is just where it was last year. It's surely cause for song and maybe even dance. Remember, I printed *The Tennessee Bird Walk* once before. How do you think those lyrics came about??

Thanks for all the great news this month. I doff my hat.