



Rhea County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Native to China, winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) is a vining, deciduous shrub that grows 3 to 4 feet high and twice as wide. It will climb a trellis, but it looks best cascading over the top of a retaining wall or tumbling down a bank or hillside. Its arching, willowy stems root wherever they touch the ground and form a thick brow of leaves and stems. Hundreds of waxy, bright-yellow flowers open all along the stems in the dead of winter. While not as gaudy as those of forsythia (a shrub with which it's often confused), its blossoms appear over a much longer period. Another advantage this shrub enjoys over its rival—its stems stay green year-round, bringing even more color to the winter garden.

Happy New Year!

Please pay careful attention to the notice from Thomas Greenlee. I hope to see everyone on January 18, 2018 for our annual pot luck dinner.

Pennie Kendrick

President, Rhea County Master Gardener Association

[Update on 2018 Master Gardener & Home Horticulture Activities in Rhea County](#)

Hello Everyone! I hope you are all cozied up in the house during this cold weather! I would like to give you an update on the activities coming up from the Extension office in 2018. As you all know, Jerry Lamb has been serving as the Interim Region Director for East Tennessee since July 1, 2017. Recently, the new Eastern Region Director was named and Jerry will be rejoining the office sometime late spring.

Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, our Master Gardener intern class numbers have been declining each spring and our 2018 Master Gardener class has had a lack of interest. I feel that one thing that can be attributed to this is the timing. In an effort to achieve higher numbers and revitalize interest in the program, I have made the decision to move the class to later in the year. We will start the class in May of 2018 when, hopefully, more people will have gardening on their mind.

If you have been through the Master Gardener course in previous years and would like to get new information, please feel free to come to the classes we will have this spring. We will be glad to have you! As many of you may know, there is a new Master Gardener book. It has been in the works for three years but has finally been released! If you are interested in purchasing the new book, please let me know, and I will be glad to order it with the books for the class.

In an effort to market the class, I am going to approach Lowe's Home Improvement about setting up a Master Gardener booth in their store on a few Saturdays and Sunday afternoons in the spring. This will be an excellent time for you to gain service hours by attending these days and manning the booth to help answer questions about the class or gardening in general.



On January 18th we will still have our annual dinner at the Ag Center in the Master Gardener Building. The dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. and will be Italian themed. It is covered dish and I would like for all of you to bring an entrée (or salad) and a dessert. I would like to encourage all of you to attend that evening for food and fellowship with your Master Gardener friends. A guest is welcomed and encouraged at this event! Please call myself or Kelly at the office at 423-775-7807 if you plan to attend.

Something new that is being offered this spring in Rhea County is a Small Scale Orchard Short Course. This program is a new offering unlike anything we have done in the past. This particular program will cover planning an orchard, variety selection, management plans, grafting and more! I will have the full brochure to e-mail out by the end of the week and I encourage many of you who are interested in fruit trees to take advantage of the course. It will be a great opportunity to get continuing education credit and learn about a growing industry for those selling at farmer's markets.

I look forward to seeing all of you on January 18th as we start off our new year!

Thomas Greenlee