



Rhea County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Greetings to All!

The 2016 Rhea County Fair is now in the history books, and the Master Gardeners were amazing! Thank you to all that took the time to volunteer and make our presence at the Fair so successful. No matter how small or large the contribution of volunteer hours, it took everyone that participated in the building project, tomato trials and manning activities at the fair to make this year one of the best ever. The testing for the tomato trials has been done for the American Legion along with one of the Garden Clubs, and at the Fair we had 75 participate. Our Silent Auction brought in a bit over \$400.00 and "Pass the Hat" netted \$475.00. Eighteen names were entered into the drawing for a scholarship to the 2017 MG Intern class.

Our next projects will be a taste testing at Lowe's and a short program to wrap up the trials presented by Thomas Greenlee. Farm/City Day at the Housley Farm will be on October 4 and Pumpkinfest at the end of October. Bruce Pfeiffer will be leading Farm/City Day and Paulette Bitner will be leading Pumpkinfest. We will present tomatoes at Farm/City Day, and Paulette has some great ideas for our booth at Pumpkinfest. Please check your emails for info on these upcoming projects as volunteers are needed and final prep will be at the September MGA meeting on September 15, 2016.

Planning is underway for a one day short course taught by Diane Pfeiffer. This course will teach how to create a small fairy garden and will be offered for "Mothers and Daughters"! Christine Ralph of the United Way here in Dayton loves the idea and suggested Master Gardener ladies "adopt" a daughter for the day. We have many children in need in the community, and this is a great way for Master Gardeners to reach out.

Stay cool and I hope to see you all in September at the monthly meeting.

Pennie Kendrick

President, Rhea County Master Gardener Association

Rhea County Master Gardener Association
meeting July 21, 2016
at the Rhea County Ag Center

The Rhea County Master Gardeners met for their July meeting at the Ag Center and had a pot luck dinner to start out the evening. The meeting agenda was planning and preparing Master Gardener presentations for the upcoming county fair. Dianne Pfeiffer had an exhibit of her Fairy Garden. She will be teaching a Fairy Garden class that is open to the public for \$10 that is to be scheduled after the fair.

President Pennie Hendrick called the business meeting to order.

*Pass the Hat donations were taken by Diane Bolt or Pennie Hendrick.

*Tomato Trial status- The tomatoes are looking good but need some weeding as soon as possible in the far north east corner. Concern about damaging the plant roots was discussed and cutting the weeds or making sure the ground was thoroughly saturated before weeding was suggested. Staking of plants can also be evaluated for improvement.

A web site, www.Tomatodirt.com, is very helpful for information sharing about growth, usage, and benefits of tomatoes. Pennie has copied much of this which will be available at the fair and during tomato testing activities. Lowe's and other stores in town have been contacted about holding tasting trials. A date will be scheduled at Lowe's and volunteers will be needed at that time.

A "Tomato plant" wooden, cut-out display with detachable tomatoes will be used at trial tastings at the fair and in the community. The tomatoes all have questions on the back, and Pennie has the answer sheet. During the fair, a kiddie pool will be filled with ice to hold the bowls of cut tomatoes for taste testing. The tomatoes will only be identified by number, and Thomas is providing the response grid for tracking purposes. (Pennie has a great cutting tool for the tomatoes.)

*Master Gardener Building-The building is scheduled to be completed by the fair date which is August 12th and 13th. Work is continuing this coming week and inside painting will need to be done as soon as the sheet rock is finished. The building colors are green trim with light yellow walls. Members can volunteer to provide lunch for the workers and several days are already covered. Pennie has a list of open lunch provision opportunities.

Landscaping for the building was discussed with the agreement that construction is the first priority. Perennials were mentioned along with containers for planting. Planning the landscaping will be in the future.

FAIR ACTIVITIES:+Activities in the Master Gardener Building: 1) A Silent Auction will be held as a fund raiser from donations made by the gardeners and from the community. 2) The Tomato Trial tests will be done by the public with documentation of the responses maintained. 3) Shelia Ray will have her Bee Booth display in/at the building with honey for sale as well as education about raising bees. 4) The Garrett's may also have a display on roses with the Rose Society. (This is to be confirmed.)

1) Silent Auction-Dianne Pfeiffer suggested getting donations of dinner, boat rides, etc. from local businesses. Master Gardeners were urged to bring crafts, homemade items, baskets, etc. for the auction. The silent auction should be announced at the fair, signs should be up and fliers giving the time frame and location at our building can be handed out at the ticket booth. The silent auction will go on until the end of the fair at which the highest bidders will be notified of their "winnings".

2) Tomato Trials-Volunteers will need to work with gathering information from tomato taste-testers. The tomato gardens will be available for the public to see the various growth mediums and discuss tomato "farming". Tomato recipes will also be given out, and Master Gardeners can send these to Dianne Pfeiffer.

3) Sheila always has a great booth and this helps generate interest in the area. Signage will be most important for attendees to be aware of the Master Gardener Building in view of it's location away from the main fair area. Parking in the back area would be helpful for visibility of the resource. Debbie Ward has some sign holders that can be placed around the fair grounds, and Eddie Starring is looking at road front signage possibilities. Dianne Pfeiffer may do some signs.

4) The Rose Society participation will need to be confirmed with Jeff and Cindy Garrett.

Discussion: Something needs to draw attention to the door for fair goers to be drawn into the Master Gardener building. Pennie has a plant stand that can be used, and balloons were suggested to be added to all the Master Gardener directional signs. The old Master Gardener banners need to be located for use at the building and area.

Publicity for the event would help. Elmer Harris with Rhea Review was mentioned, and FM radio 97.1 with Bernie Ruben was mentioned. Kris Bancroft is planning to submit an article to the Rhea Herald News, and signs will be done for the fair ground area.

Volunteers are needed to sign up for time at the fair. Pennie Hendrick has the list, and the days are August 12 and 13, a Friday and Saturday. Saturday has the chili contest, and this year they are having a carnival again.

*Debbie Ward is donating a copier to the association for use in the Master Gardener building.

*President Hendrick announced that the officers, President Hendrick, 1st Vice President Caren Ruffner, 2nd Vice President Eddie Starring, Treasure Diane Bolt, Assistant Treasure Debbie Ward, and Secretary Faith Young will need to all go the First Bank of Tennessee for check signing signatures. The Rhea County Master Gardener Association check book will be held in the Extension office with Kelly Grant.

The meeting was adjourned.

Present: Pennie and Jim Hendrick, Bill and Debbie Ward, Dianne and Bruce Pfeiffer, Diane Bolt, Eddie and Patsy Starring, Harry Jones, Kris and Judy Bancroft, Sheila Ray, and Faith Young.