

July 2015



Rhea County Master Gardener News

President's Corner

Our next Association meeting will be held on Thursday, July 16 at 7:00 p.m. This will be a dinner meeting. The Association will provide a grilled entrée and each Master Gardener is asked to bring a covered dish AND a dessert. Please bring your spouse or significant other. For the fair, we will be providing an educational demonstration on winter gardening. We will be starting seedlings in the raised beds and also at home in containers that we will display at the fair.

At a previous meeting, we voted on a "No Bake" sale instead of baking items for the fair. This means that instead of buying ingredients and baking sweets, we would instead save the time and simply donate the saved money to the Master Gardeners. If you feel so led, please bring an appropriate "No Bake" donation to the meeting.

Winter gardening is a pleasure in East TN because we don't have to deal with as many pests and weeds. We can enjoy kale, collards, spinach, Swiss chard, cabbage and turnips all winter long. We will be selling seed packets at the fair that contain seeds for each of these delectables so that fair goes

may buy one packet that contains all the seeds they may be interested in planting for winter. I enjoy potato and kale soup on a cold winter day about as much as any meal.

After dinner, we will be stuffing the packets with seeds. We hope to prepare about 100 packets and use them as a fundraiser at the fair. The packets will also include a little description of the Master Gardener program and brief instructions for winter gardening. Please think about seedlings you would like to start, especially decorative cabbage, because we will need a lot at the fair for the winter garden demonstration. We may be at two locations at the fair. The fair is coming up on August 21, so we need to start planting soon. If you will email me with the plants you are going to plant, I can publicize the ones that are still needed.

At the meeting, we will also discuss the raised bed preparation, signs, volunteer schedule and other details. Jim Hendrick is bringing a camera and will take photos of everyone for their bios if they wish.

John

John Kueck

Master Gardener Association President

July Master Gardener Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, July 16 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Ag Center & Fairgrounds. This will be a covered dish meal. Master Gardeners are asked to bring a side dish AND dessert. Please bring your spouse or significant other.

Building Project Update

Just a quick update from the building committee. First of all, thanks to all who have supported this project with labor, materials or lunches! We broke ground on the 30' X 60' pavilion on April 23 and had it dried in by April 28. The month of May was spent working on picnic tables, raised beds and trenching and installing pipe and conduits for water, electricity and power to the pavilion, bath house and raised beds.

We started on the 20' X 10' bath house on June 3. The bath house has a 5' X 10' bathroom; a 5' X 10' shower room and a 10' X 10' storage room. The outside of the bath house is complete, the bathroom is ready for final sanding and painting and the shower room is in the process of tile work and should be complete in the next week.

The remaining work on the bath house includes installing the water heater, sinks, toilet, light fixtures and heaters after final painting is done — hopefully by the end of July. We also have to trench and install several hundred feet of sewer pipe to connect the bath house to a new septic tank so we can use the facility.

Remaining work on the pavilion includes forming and pouring the concrete floor, finishing the open gable ends and installing light fixtures and wiring. We also expect to complete this by the end of July.

Come out to the potluck on July 16 and take a look at the progress. Your building committee and volunteers have worked many hundreds of hours to get us to this point. We now have a place to call our own that will eventually become the Master Gardener permanent classroom and learning facility. Thanks again for everyone's help!

~Larry Bryant, Building Committee Chairman



Agent's Corner

Hello again everyone! I hope this finds you all enjoying the beautiful sunshine and sipping on sweet tea! Summer is finally here and with it comes lots of activity within our gardens and our Association!

First of all, I would like to congratulate our most recent Master Gardener intern class on completing the training portion of the Tennessee Master Gardener Program! They will now join the ranks of our veteran Association members in getting service hours to complete their certification.

The Master Gardener Building Committee report can be found in other portions of this newsletter, but I would like to extend a person Thank You to all of those who have been involved with this project! The amount of effort and dedication this group has shown to the project has been staggering! The amount of work done in so little time is truly amazing!

Next in line is fair time. The 2015 Rhea County Fair is scheduled for August 18-22 at the Rhea County Ag Center and Fairgrounds in Evensville. The fair is slightly different this year compared to years past. We will be starting on Tuesday and running through Saturday. I would HIGHLY encourage all of you to attend the fair and see what all is going on. We have several new events this year including the first hog show and sale in Rhea County in almost 40 years!

As for our involvement in the fair, we will have an educational display set-up on Friday and Saturday in our new pavilion. We will be discussing our plans for the fair, including the volunteers we will need, and the educational exhibit we plan to do at our meeting next Thursday evening.

Please make plans to attend the meeting on July 16 at 7:00 p.m. at our new pavilion. I look forward to seeing you then!

~ Thomas Greenlee, Extension Agent

UT Gardens Plant of the Month: Dahlia



Dahlias offer gardeners a seemingly infinite array of possibilities. They are available in many different sizes, bloom types, foliage colors and bloom colors—even multicolor combinations. All will provide a spectacular display of blooms from midsummer through fall. Whether your main interest is a beautiful garden or you are interested in bringing that beauty indoors in a cut flower arrangement, there are numerous dahlias to choose from. Best of all, they are easy to grow when you keep just a few things in mind.

Shorter varieties of dahlias, ranging from 1-3 feet, look great used as a border or planted in mass in the garden. Try planting them near complementary foliage plants such as coleus or colocasia for an effective combination. These varieties can also be used in containers for a showy display. Larger dahlias, which can reach 4-6 feet, are perfect for small groupings or as a standalone specimen in the garden.

Dahlias are tuberous tender perennials, meaning they grow from a fleshy thickened root that resembles a carrot. Above zone 8, gardeners should typically dig up the tubers in the fall after the plant has died back and store them through the winter in a cool, dry location. In milder areas, the tubers can be left in the ground with a thick layer of mulch to help protect them. Whether saved or new, tubers should be planted in late spring, after all danger of frost has passed and the ground has warmed.

Dahlias perform best in full sun and in a rich, well-drained soil. All but the smallest varieties will benefit from being staked as the blooms can be quite heavy and can pull the stems down. Consider a site that offers some wind protection. Tender new growth can be a target for slugs, but dahlias don't usually have many issues with pests. In the warmer parts of Tennessee, dahlias will do best with some afternoon shade, and smaller flowering types will perform better than the larger forms. Also, in the heat of the summer, flower production is slowed but will pick back up when the weather cools.

There are currently 12 official categories of dahlias, based on the size of the plant and the form of the blooms. Don't let the dizzying number of varieties stop you from trying this easy-to-grow garden favorite. Pick one or two and give it a try!
