



President's Corner

This is my last note as President, and I really appreciate the good work that has been done, and the friendships that have developed. What a spring we have had! We made great progress on the building and on the tomato trial. A great number of skilled, arduous volunteer hours were worked over the last year, and we can see the results. Larry Bryant and Pennie Hendrick have done an incredible job in designing and constructing the building and coordinating the educational activities. The building is going to be a tremendous asset to the program and to the county

for decades. Larry and Pennie have made my job simple, and I know I will be leaving the program in capable hands with Pennie.

The 500 tomato seedlings have arrived! Please come over to the planting day on **May 9 at 8:00 a.m.** to help out. Also, please be sure to check the schedule below and make sure to check the seedlings on your scheduled day.

John

John Kueck

Master Gardener Association President

May 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Kueck 1/2 C. Urea per bed and water bales thoroughly	2 Bancroft 1/4 C. Urea per bed and water bales thoroughly	3 Pfeiffer 1/4 C. Urea per bed and water bales thoroughly	4 Winters 1/4 C. Urea per bed and water bales thoroughly	5 Morris Water Bales	6 Blevins Water Bales	7 Harrison Water Bales
8 Off	9 Master Gardener Workday Peggy Harrison Lunch	10 Silvia Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	11 Career Day Ward Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed,	12 Ruffner Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	13 Hendrick Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	14 Kueck Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests
15 Off	16 Greenlee	17 Celebrate the Earth	18 Bancroft Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed,	19 Pfeiffer Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed,	20 Winters Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed,	21 Morris Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed,
22 Off	23 Greenlee	24 Blevins Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	25 Harrison Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	26 Silvia Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	27 Ward Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests	28 Ruffner Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests
29 Off Day	30 Off Day	31 Kueck Check Board, Check Moisture, water as needed, scout for pests				

UT Gardens Plant of the Month: Peony



The garden peony is an excellent perennial addition to your landscape. Its boldly textured foliage is paired with striking, often fragrant, blooms that can be any color except blue. Peonies (*Paeonia* hybrids), native to Asia, have been cultivated for many years for their ornamental displays and are often classified by the type of bloom they exhibit. Flower types range from the fairly simple to increasingly complex: single, Japanese, anemone, semi-double, double and bomb-double forms.

Each peony variety blooms for a week or two in the spring, but it is easy to extend the bloom time in your landscape by including varieties that bloom earlier or later in the season. Peonies can be propagated by division, just be sure to get 3-5 buds in each piece. Depending on the size of the start, your new peony may take several years to get established before it begins to bloom. Although new peonies are started from seed, you should deadhead your peony to prevent seed development. This allows more energy to go back into the root system, ensuring vigorous growth next year.

Site selection can be critical for peonies, but once established in the right spot, they can bloom for years with very little care. They do require full sun for best flowering. They have a fleshy root system that does best in fertile, well-drained soils and can be prone to root rot in a heavy, poorly drained site. A location that offers wind protection can be helpful. Staking may be required for best display as the blooms can be very heavy and are prone to lodging (flopping over) or stem breakage, especially after it rains. Look for varieties that carry the blooms close to the foliage or that are simpler form to minimize this problem.

The tree peony (*Paeonia suffruticosa*) is very similar, but it has woody stems that persist in the landscape. It is propagated by grafting. An Itoh, or intersectional hybrid, developed by Toichi Itoh of Japan, is a cross between a garden peony and a tree peony. Its foliage is similar to that of the tree peony, but its stems die back each year.

While traditional peonies are beautiful spring flowering perennials, their short blooming season and heavy blossoms have made some gardeners wary. An Itoh hybrid offers good height and strong stems, plus numerous blooms in an array of colors. A cross between the big-flowered tree peony and the daintier herbaceous kinds, these hybrids offer the best of both worlds. But the really impressive characteristic of these hybrids is that they develop more than one bud per stem. This means you get at least a month of bloom as one flower opens after another. Each mature peony can produce 30 to 50 blossoms over a single season!

Beth Willis
Trials Coordinator, UT Gardens

April Master Gardener Meeting Minutes

The Rhea County Master Gardeners met with the current intern class on Thursday, April 21 for a program on trees presented by Gregg Upchurch with the Cumberland County Extension office. During the class break, a business meeting was held. There were 17 Master Gardeners and Interns present.

Vice-President Pennie Hendrick led the business meeting in the absence of President John Kueck. Several issues were discussed including some opportunities for work and education.

Bloom Days is set for Saturday, May 7—Sunday, May 8 on the UT campus in Knoxville. This is a possible field trip.

May 17th is the presentation at Celebrate the Earth for 4th and 5th graders. Posters will be printed that are age appropriate, laminated and sized to be portable. Pennie has an idea about a visual aide/game that would involve a wooden frame of a tomato plant and Velcro'd tomatoes that would have facts and questions behind them. Volunteers are needed for that date. Thomas will send out information via email.

Thomas is still working on the Nashville trip, but is having a hard time getting in touch with the General Jackson to determine their group rates. The date will be sometime in June.

Master Gardener graduation is set for Thursday, May 19 and will probably be in Spring City at the Kinzalow farm with a potluck dinner. The Extension office will provide plates, utensils, drinks, etc. Fishing will be open for early comers. Those who have their 40 hours completed and put into the computer will be certified as Master Gardeners. Others will have a year to certify before the next graduation. Some will receive an intern certificate and others will get a certified certificate at graduation.

The Master Gardener intern test will be sent out soon and it is an open book, open neighbor, open internet exam. There will be one trick question on the test to see if all are paying attention. The test will be 50 questions with a few more that will be short answer. The purpose of the test is to teach all to use resources for research.

A workday will be held at the Ag Center on Monday, April 25 and will involve cleaning out the roots around the garden area, continuing work on the building and looking at the soil sample results for fertilization.

With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith

Faith Young
Master Gardener Secretary
