



Rhea County Master Gardener News

President's Corner

October is a busy month for Master Gardeners. Here is a quick summary of what has been going on and future events.

FARM CITY DAY

Farm City Day was held at the Housley Farm in Dayton, and we had the opportunity to discuss Fall and Winter gardening with about 300 kids from area schools. Bruce Pfeiffer and Robin Howell made the presentations and enjoyed the time with the kids. We answered a lot of good questions and hopefully germinated some interest in fall gardening. Pennie Hendrick and Karen Massengale brought seedlings and flowers for our booth. Bruce brought some native tree seedlings that he is growing, and we used the fall gardening posters from the Fair. At the end of each session, we asked a question and the winner received a fall gardening seed packet. It was a lot of fun.

WOODEN'S APPLE TOUR

We will have a tour of Wooden's Apple Orchard on Saturday, October 24. We will meet at the Extension office at 9:30 a.m. and then drive up the mountain. We will have lunch at the Apple Barn after the tour.

PUMPKINFEST

Pumpkinfest is on October 30-31. We will have a booth where we will be painting cans with the kids and also starting a fall plant. Here are some updates and answers to questions on the Pumpkinfest.

- If you would like to bring candy to hand out to the kids you certainly may but it is not required.
- We need more help on Saturday, October 31. Please contact Pennie at greytacres@gmail.com if you can help.
- We need more cans for the kids to paint and start seedling. Please drop off clean cans at the livestock barn at the Ag Center.

NOVEMBER ASSOCIATION MTG

If you are planning to attend the November meeting on November 19 where we will be learning how to make apple butter, please let Anna Johnson at the Extension office know. You may email her at ajohns41@utk.edu or call the Extension office at 775-7807. She is making a count to know how many supplies to purchase.

Fall is a busy time in the garden. Included in this newsletter are some timely reminders from Jason Reeves at the University of Tennessee that you may want to consider.

John

John Kueck
Master Gardener Association President



Tips for October

- ❁ Collect the seeds of any annuals you would like to grow again next year. Allow them to dry completely before storing. A paper bag is great for containing the seed and allowing it to dry.
- ❁ You still have time to order bulbs, but be swift about it and get them in the ground by early December.
- ❁ Before the first frost, dig up caladiums and shake off soil. Allow them to dry completely and store in a warm, dry place for the winter.
- ❁ October is a good time to plant trees and shrubs since dormant plants will be under less stress. Newly installed deciduous plants require almost no watering during the winter months, but don't forget that a thorough initial watering is paramount. Monitor evergreens, such as junipers, hollies and arborvitae, for watering needs if rain is sparse. Even in winter, a plant with leaves on it will transpire. Winter wind desiccation can hurt an evergreen tree that lacks sufficient moisture.
- ❁ Wash your pumpkins, gourds and winter squash in a mild bleach solution before displaying or storing to help prevent rot.
- ❁ October is a good time for you "yardeners" to control broadleaf weeds, such as white clover and wild garlic. Check with your county Extension office for specific recommendations.
- ❁ Don't forget to bring in your tropical plants and houseplants before frost. Many plants don't fare well when temperatures drop into the 40s.
- ❁ After frost, you can cut back your deciduous herbaceous perennials to lessen the chance of disease or insects overwintering in your beds. Hardy lantanas and salvias are perennials that are borderline hardy and may benefit from retaining their stems through the winter. Any tender plants, such as cannas and elephant ears, appreciate a layer of mulch for extra winter protection.
- ❁ Other perennials can be mulched with a thin layer of organic material, but keep the mulch away from the crown or it could hold too much moisture and rot the plant.
- ❁ Pick off any bagworms from your plants to help eliminate the eggs that will hatch next year. Dispose of them in the garbage, not the compost, or they may hatch and survive.
- ❁ To make leaf removal less of a chore, rake them before they accumulate deeply. If you have a fescue lawn or moss garden, it is even more important to keep the leaves off of it. Compost or use them as mulch in your beds. You can also till them into your soil, and by spring they will be composted. Leaves on the lawn can be chopped with the lawn mower and left in place if not too deep.
- ❁ Remember that season mums are more valuable as compost than as "keep around plants" after they've faded and split. Don't be tempted to plant them! Even if they establish them, they rarely live up to your expectations the following year.
- ❁ October is the preferred time to plant ornamental kale, Swiss chard and pansies. These plants are lovely additions to the fall and winter landscape. Plus they are edible. Look for the winterbor and Russian kales as they are more reliable in cold weather than the kales known commonly as "flowering cabbage."
- ❁ Warm-season ornamental grasses such as *Miscanthus* and fountain grass (*Pennisetum*) resent being dug, divided and replanted in the fall. It is best to wait until early spring. As a general rule, avoid planting even container-grown warm season grasses in the fall. There isn't sufficient time for the roots to establish, and the plants may be lost over the winter.

Jason Reeves, Curator
West TN AgResearch and Education Center
UT Gardens—Jackson

Master Gardener Meeting Minutes

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Rhea County Master Gardeners was called to order by President John Kueck at 7:05 pm at the Ag Center & Fairgrounds in Evensville, Tennessee. John introduced himself as well as those from the UT/TSU- Rhea County Extension office, and welcomed new and returning Master Gardeners. He expressed deeply felt appreciation for all those who worked and or contributed in any way to the 2015 Rhea County Fair and reiterated all the positive experiences from the fair that he had formerly outlined in the President's Corner in our newsletter.

Minutes: there were no available minutes from the last meeting

PumpkinFest: a safe alternative celebration held in downtown Dayton for children and families as opposed to traditional "door-to-door trick or treating" will be held on Friday, October 30 and Saturday, October 31st. It was discussed that many of the members would like to have a presence there and be involved with the children. Diane Pfeiffer had suggested two activities: first painting gourds and second the idea of recycling cans (size of canned vegetables/soups) and having them painted orange and having the children decorate the front with eyes, mouth, etc with paint or markers. It was also discussed to have the cans with some potting soil and give the children seeds to plant in their "pumpkin". The group suggested bringing as many cans as possible to the next meeting on October 15, 2015 in order to have them painted in time for PumpkinFest. A sign-up sheet was circulated for members to pick times to man the MG booth.

FARM CITY DAY: Past President Larry Bryant will coordinate this fun and educational day for all 3rd graders to be at the Housley Farm on October 6. This is a field trip for students who might not have the opportunity to see how a farm works. Master Gardeners will utilize our posters and the same basic program offered at the Fair. This "controlled chaos" is really a great way to teach fall gardening. A sign-up sheet was passed for volunteers from 8 am until about 2 pm on October 6.

Thank You Lunch at Ag Center for all Fair workers: Thomas Greenlee announced an appreciation lunch to be served on Saturday, October 3 from 12 noon until 2 pm with BBQ plates to be offered. The BBQ will be from champion and reserve hogs from the 4-H Pig Show at the Fair. Should be fun and delicious.

State Master Gardeners Association: We may be eligible for some awards for all our projects and hard work. We will know more later.

Work Days: Next Thursday the 24th, will be a day for repairs, work on sink and water hydrant, etc. Starting at 8 am and should only need a half day if enough workers. Wednesday, the 23rd, we will need helpers at the Rhea Medical Center garden to weed and cut back those plants and shrubs that have become overgrown. Following this we will put out an email for those who have helped on this project to be in a picture for the Herald News and the Medical Center's newsletter thanking the Master Gardeners and Lowe's for their support (article and picture to be in a mid-October issue of the Herald News.)

PAVILION: There is still much work to be done but there are some financial constraints: \$ 10,000 may be the cost for the green house, depending on how much automation will be incorporated. Larry is to bring his list of necessities and prices. To finish the pavilion we need to finalize the list such as windows, roll-up sides, basically all materials we feel we need and may need to put out to bid. Jerry will check on this. \$1650 is owed from the Master Gardeners to the UT Extension account for supplies and materials for the Master Gardener building. This is ½ the cost of supplies and materials. At this time there is approximately \$2500.00 in the Master Gardener account. This is to be resolved at the next Board or regular meeting of Master Gardeners on Thursday, October 15, 2015.

2016 Master Gardener Classes : Classes will begin on Thursday, January 14 and continue into late April or first of May. There will be a Pot Luck dinner during one of the classes at which time we can show/discuss the raised bed project and meet/greet the new interns. We can discuss involvement in PumpkinFest, the RMC courtyard garden, Farm-City Day, the Rhea County Fair, etc. Please encourage anyone you know that might be interested in the class to get in touch with Thomas. We did get names from our booth at the Fair which should be a good start on the class. There will be new topics and slightly different emphasis than last year to include shifting interest in more natural/organic gardening and the training of trees and shrubs in the style of Espalier, etc.

"Third Saturday Class": a Third Saturday class will be offered in spring/summer 2016 (April, May, June and July). We need to do a better job advertising/publishing this class that was well received and could really grow. IDEAS???? Hopefully we will also have fruit trees soon and be able to incorporate them into our classes for this program and Master Gardener classes.

Novel Ideas: more "field trips" such as to UT Gardens in Knoxville; Gaylord-Opryland Conservatory; new programs such as "Taste Trials" next year for new varieties of tomatoes; etc. Again ideas are welcome, please let Thomas know.

Website: **Thank you, thank you** Penny for all your work.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm and the program on COVER CROPS was led by Jerry Lamb. The program was directed to the various types of cover crops: their advantages, disadvantages, and the goals of using cover crops.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blevins, acting secretary
