



# THE LEAFLET



February 2010

A NEWSLETTER FOR, ABOUT AND BY ROBERTSON COUNTY GARDENERS

## UPCOMING GARDEN EVENTS

Feb. 25— MG Club Meeting 7pm

Mar. 4-7—Nashville Lawn & Garden Show

Feb. 27 — Pruning Workday 9am-1pm @ Ridgetop Park

Apr. 9-11—Williamson Co. Lawn & Garden Expo

Apr. 10—Organic Gardening Workshop @ Eaton's Creek

Thursday 7:30pm or Sunday 9:30am on NPT Channel 8: "Volunteer Gardener"

Saturday 5-5:30am on WTVF Channel 5: "P. Allen Smith Gardens"

Saturday 7-8am 1430 on WPLN-AM: "You Bet Your Garden"



## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

By Ursula Otto

After a two-year tenure as your president, it is time to turn the duties over to a new leader. It has been my honor to be the president of the Robertson county Master Gardeners. Together we have accomplished a lot.

- We started The Leaflet, our monthly newsletter.
- We had two successful fundraisers.
- We gave Springfield the gift of a Garden Walk.
- We staffed a booth at the Robertson County fair, and we were rewarded honors for the design of our booth.
- We planted flowers around the courthouse, library, and other public areas. Several of you have worked many hours on projects that are close to your hearts.

All this was only possible because of your dedication and hard work. I could not be more proud to be associated with the Master Gardeners of Robertson County.

## MASTER GARDENER MEETING

Thursday, February 25, 7pm @ Ag. Ext. Office

Program: Election of Officers and Garden "Show & Tell"

Bring your favorite garden product or gardening tool.

## MASTER GARDENER COOKBOOKS AND TEE SHIRTS STILL AVAILABLE

Need a hostess gift or a home-cooked meal? A large number of Master Gardener cookbooks, one of our fundraiser projects are at the Extension

Office. The books look really great and have some yummy recipes. The cost is \$7.00 each, and all proceeds now go to our Robertson County Master Garden projects.

We have three (one medium, one large, one extra large) Master Gardener tee shirts available. They are bamboo green with the MG logo over the shape of the state of Tennessee on the front and the "Master Gardeners of Robertson County" on the back. Shirts are \$10 each.

See Judy Bryant at the County Extension Office to get the cookbooks or a shirt.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE

The 2010 Robertson County Master Gardener membership fee of \$10 can be paid at the February meeting or mailed to the County Extension Office, 408 N. Main Street, Springfield, TN. 37172.



## WELCOME MASTER GARDENER INTERNS!

(CLASS OF '09)

Pictured above: Dorothy Briggs, Mary Adkins, Denise Arnold, Laurie Hinkle, Carolyn Donoho  
Not Pictured: Lonnie Gezley, Catheryn Henning, Kitty Kimbro, Rachel King, Robin McFarlin, Tammy Reeves, Trisha Tipton

## **HONEYBEES: THEY'RE BAAAACK!**

*By Doug Buck*

Let's hope so! It's been estimated that the number of managed honeybee colonies in the U.S. has declined by as much as 50% due to a number of factors including mite infestations, pesticide poisoning and Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).

Keeping a beehive or two on your property can increase yield in your home orchard or garden with the added benefit of a harvest of honey and wax.

Beekeepers and those interested in starting up this invaluable pursuit are invited to attend meetings of the Robertson County Beekeepers held at 7:00 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Robertson County Extension Office.

Some of you may have noticed an increase in honeybees around your gardens in the last couple of years. So let's all hope this is a trend in Robertson County!

### **LEARN TO GROW ORGANICALLY**

Located just outside of Robertson County in Joelton, Eaton's Creek Organics is a certified, organic community-based farm where you can learn to grow organically in your vegetable and flower gardens. There are still a few openings in their workshop on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. You will learn:

- How to build a permanent raised bed and keep the soil vital
- What attracts the good insects in a garden and how to avoid the pests
- Learn how to use non-mechanical tools: wheel hoe, broad fork
- How to harvest and store the produce

The workshop costs including materials is \$25 and is limited to 20 participants. Access [www.ecorganics.net](http://www.ecorganics.net) for further details.

### **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UT Extension Service**

*2010 is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of Tennessee Extension Service. To celebrate, Master Gardeners will be awarded a pin when they enter 100 hours of volunteer service this year—just one more reason to enter your volunteer hours!*

### **USING HORTICULTURAL OIL SPRAYS FOR PEST CONTROL**

*By Paul Hart*

A horticultural oil spray in the late winter is one effective control for many pests of numerous

ornamental plants. Pests such as spider mites, scale, pine bark adelgid, and mealy bugs can be controlled with an oil spray mixture in late February to early March. Since these pests affect many different plants and are often difficult to control when populations build up during the summer, a dormant spray can be very helpful in suppressing these pests. Plants such as euonymus, juniper, poplar, flowering fruit trees, arborvitae, spruce, yew, lilac, pine and many others can benefit from horticultural oil spray.

Horticultural oil applications can be made in late February to early March before these pests become active. Oil sprays are exceptionally safe to humans (the pesticide applicator as well as others). They have little if any effect on wildlife and non-target insects in the environment (lady bugs, parasitic wasps, honey bees, etc.) Oil sprays are less toxic because of the method by which they kill target pests. Oils are not poisons. Instead, the thin film of oil covers the target insect or mite and plugs the spiracles or pores through which it breathes. The cause of death is primarily suffocation. Large, motile insects and animals that breathe by another method are not affected by these oils.

Since oil sprays only work by contacting and covering the target pest, thorough application is essential. Missed leaf undersides or small cracks in tree bark provide a safe refuge for pests. Usually more than one application is needed for control.

Horticultural oil such as Sun Spray Ultra-Fine Spray Oil is mixed at a rate of 2.5 to 5 tablespoons per gallon of water, resulting in a 1-2% oil in the finished spray mix. Always check the label directions on the product that you purchase. The "Superior" type horticultural oils can also be used throughout the growing season, but do not make over one application per week. For more information check the UT Extension website for publications on pest control for homeowners: [www.utextension.utk.edu](http://www.utextension.utk.edu).

### **TRAIN & VOLUNTEER AT GRASSMERE**

Davidson County Master Gardeners are holding free mini-classes at Grassmere. Located at the Nashville Zoo, Grassmere is a "pre-organic" 1830-1880 era demonstration garden and a Tennessee Search for Excellence winner. The mini-classes are held each Saturday

morning in March and April at 10am for all zoo visitors, staff, and Master Gardeners working in the gardens. Each session will last no more than 30 minutes; a gardening Q&A period and a tour of the Gardens discussing work in progress follow each class. Topics include everything from “You’ve made your bed, now plant in it” (Site Preparation) to “Before Walgreen’s” (Medicinal Herbs). Check the Grassmere web site for dates and details.

Barbara Sullivan, Grassmere’s “master Master Gardener”, welcomes volunteer Master Gardener workers in the Grassmere herb, rose, vegetable gardens. Volunteers normally work in the gardens Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings and on Saturdays after the mini-classes.

**NOW, REPEAT AFTER ME:  
“GO WINTER SCHOOL”!**

*By Lynn Stenglein*

Every Robertson County Master Gardener who has talked or emailed me in the last few weeks has heard about Master Gardener Winter School: preparation for, contacts made, information learned. While it does not have the panache of the Jackson “Summer Celebration” that several of us enjoyed last July, Winter School is “The Place” to network with other Master Gardeners, to learn about the Master Gardener organization structure and direction, and to celebrate the accomplishments of fellow Master Gardener county associations.

As well as touting Winter School, I hope to share information that I learned in future Leaflet articles and at meetings. Meanwhile, a few items gleaned at Winter School include:

- We have (Tennessee Master Gardener) advocates! Our Middle Tennessee advocates offered to attend one of our meetings, discuss M.G. issues, and answer questions.
- Metro (Nashville) means Composting: Winter School M.G.s learned about Metro’s composting program in the schools, Master Composter

classes, and many nifty composting products that you can obtain at reasonable cost at the Metro Compost Center in Nashville.

- Master Gardener associations in every county have many of the same challenges, such as volunteer retention, reporting and burnout. Problem resolutions are likely to be found in counties of similar size and resources, rather than large, highly experienced counties, i.e. network with many county associations.

Sumner County Winter School Display



**STARTING SEEDS NOW**

It’s late February, and spring is in the air...occasionally. Most serious gardening is a few weeks away, but consider starting some seeds indoors in case you just cannot wait for warmer weather. There is ample information on starting seeds on the web, but here are a couple of the most interesting tips:

- Use willow tea to help prevent damping off and promote good root growth. Collect willow branches, break them into small pieces, place in a milk jug, pour boiling water over them to fill the jug and let it set for a few days. Use the water periodically to water your plants.
- Experiment planting according to the moon signs based on the Old Farmer’s Almanac. A Northwestern University ten-year study found that plants absorb more water when planted by the full moon and that a variety of seeds respond well when planted according to zodiac signs.



**CONTACT LIST**

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