

# The Leaflet

February 2016



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## Work Day at Habitat for Humanity House

Habitat Volunteer Spencer, Home Owner LaTonya, and RCMGA Volunteers are pictured below. Plants (Alberta Spruce, nandinas, and butterfly bushes) and mulch were provided by our RCMG Association. Thanks to Bella Nursery for help with plants and mulch. Special thanks to Tony Cantrell for hauling the mulch and all his help!



## Garden Excursions Made Available to RCMGA Members

To commemorate their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Master Gardeners of Davidson County are offering a variety of field trips throughout 2016. They are extending these trips to certified Master Gardeners and interns in counties surrounding Davidson County. The field trips are wonderful opportunities for Master Gardeners to explore gardens, shop nurseries and plant sales, and enjoy fun and fellowship of others who enjoy gardening.

The trip schedule includes the following:

- **Sat., April 18** Huntsville Botanical Garden in Huntsville Alabama, including a

visit to Bennett Nurseries and Across The Pond, cost \$36.

- **Sat., June 4** Yew Dell Botanical Gardens in Louisville, Kentucky, cost \$40.
- **Thurs., July 14** Summer Celebration and UT Gardens in Jackson, Tennessee.
- **Sat., October 29** (Tentative) Fall Foliage Train Excursion and Harvest Festival to Baxter, Tennessee. You can get further information including the itinerary for the Huntsville trip and register at [www.mgofda.wildapricot.org/fieldtrips](http://www.mgofda.wildapricot.org/fieldtrips).

### NEXT MEETING

**Feb. 25, 2016**  
**7 pm**

Program:

**Herbs**  
by  
**Karen Wortman**

The Robertson Co. Master Gardener Assoc. meets the fourth Thurs. of every month.

Meetings are at 7pm at the UT Extension Office, 408 Main Street, Springfield, TN

## Prepping My Vegetable Garden for Spring

By René Kriek

Spring is finally around the corner and it's time to get to work! I have awoken from hibernation, dusted off my brain, my green thumb is itching and now it's time to start planning my vision for this year's vegetable garden. What are my goals? Well, to have it all, right now, of course!! More flowers, more veggies, higher yields, exotic herbs, no pests, enough sun and rain exactly when you need it... At least I'm realistic enough to realize... that's not realistic! I have to *pace myself, work hard* and *plan, plan, PLAN!*

Since no two gardens are the same, I've decided to write about my own vegetable and herb garden, more specifically what I have to do to get it ready for planting and beyond. It would be difficult to write about gardens in general because there are such unlimited varieties that I would have to write a book just to cover the basics.

- I would start by *mowing the grass* and *weed-eating* around my beds; also *clearing out all clutter* from the previous season. There is no need to invite pesky wittle wabbits to come feast on your food by providing them cozy little hideouts. And remember, where there's a rabbit, there's sure to be a snake! Besides, nobody likes to cook in a dirty kitchen... so clean up!
- Since I have wooden raised beds, I would *check the wood for damage* and *repair* or *treat* it accordingly. When I built my beds last year, I chose non-treated lumber and stained them myself using simple vegetable oil. This year I will put another coat of oil on them. I will also check my wooden fence posts (which are treated) and all other structures for that matter, and repair where necessary.
- *Check the fence for holes!* Somehow, somewhere, the fort has been breached and a little furry friend found



René's garden resting under a blanket of snow.



René's thriving garden in summer.

its way into my garden over the winter and all but destroyed my winter fava beans. I purposefully used a fence with holes small enough so this wouldn't be a problem, but obviously there's a gap somewhere. That will be fixed, PRONTO!

- I love using *rain barrels for watering*. We are lucky that it's still legal in Tennessee to collect rain water! Check your barrels, hoses and fixtures for leaks, rust, dirt and critters. *Check all irrigation* for proper function.
- *Test your soil*. I used Holy Cow vegetable garden soil from Southern Nurseries last year, and I had great results. I will do a soil test this year because I didn't do one last year, just to see if I need to add any additional nutrients. If I need to, I will *amend* where necessary and use homemade compost to fill in low spots in the beds. Get some worms in there too!!
- *Create a garden plan*. Remember, just like humans, our vegetables like to have *companions*, and they like some more than others. Plan on which plants to plant with certain veggies, based on their certain benefits and needs. Some are insect repellents and some add nutrients. Some even provide necessary *shade*. Speaking of shade, design your plan according to the *sun*. Some like it hot, others... not so much. Don't forget to *rotate* your crops at least every couple of years. This minimizes the risk of diseases and will increase a successful yield.
- Finally, it's about that time to *start my cold season crop seeds indoors* if I want to get a jump start on harvesting. I'm planning on starting broccoli, spinach and lettuce indoors, and putting peas, beets and carrots directly into the ground. My summer crops such as tomatoes, zucchini, and peppers will have to wait a little while longer to get started. All in good time!
- So start preparing your garden now, whatever shape, size or kind it is. That way, when spring comes, you can play in the dirt and watch those little green babies grow. After all, you always reap what you sow!

## Show Time Begins Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup>

The 2016 Nashville Lawn and Garden Show is Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> through Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at the State Fairgrounds. In addition to the live gardens, demonstrations, and vendor market place, the 2016 lecture series is free with paid admission to the Show. Remember this is good way to accrue your continuing education units (CEUs). Speakers include Carol Reese, UT Ornamental and Horticultural Specialist; Rita Venable, author of *Butterflies of Tennessee*; Joe Willis, Lone Oak Farm Nursery in Madison, Rita Randolph, owner

of Rita's Rare Plants in Jackson; and Jeff Poppen, the barefoot gardener from Red Boiling Springs. You have the opportunity to learn about:

- Attracting butterflies with plants that work in small areas where a condo, business, or suburban space.
- Using vertical elements in the garden for both plants and structures.
- Water features and water gardens for small spaces.
- Incorporating food into your landscape.

- Choosing the best plants for your space.
- Successful containers for small gardens.

You can find additional Show details and lecture schedule at [nashvillelawnandgardenshow.com](http://nashvillelawnandgardenshow.com). The Nashville Lawn and Garden Show is produced by the Horticultural Association of Tennessee, who use the proceeds from the show to fund horticultural projects; since 1997, it has awarded more than \$100,000 in grant money to organization across Tennessee.

### LEAFLET 2016 CONTEST: Garden Related Sayings

“My favorite garden quote is an entire song, *The Rose*, for its extended metaphor comparing love and nature's cyclical pattern. At our 50th anniversary party, our daughter and granddaughter sang it. When my writing students heard it, they knew they could never again write about love in lesser terms. Here's the final verse:

When the night has been too lonely  
And the road has been too long,  
And you think that love is only  
For the lucky and the strong,  
Just remember in the winter  
Far beneath the bitter snows  
Lies the seed that with the sun's love  
In the spring becomes the rose.

(sung by Bette Midler in *The Rose* movie)

I have the recording in case we ever want it (I used it in seminars for writing inspiration)” Submitted by: JoAnn Slate

“You know you are a real gardener when you think compost is a fascinating subject.” *The Corporate Gardener: How Does Your Business Grow?* Submitted by Ann Rausch

“It all begins in the garden.”

Submitted by Dorothy Briggs

### Mark Your Calendar for Our 9th Annual RCMGA Plant Sale

Ursula Otto, project lead for our 2016 plant sale, has confirmed the date of Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> for our plant sale. It is not too early to plan to divide your perennials, root cuttings, start seeds to bring to the sale, make garden-related items, etc. We have heard rumors that several plant offerings are already prepared. At the end of the 2015 planting season, we secured and saved a large number of pots of various sizes which were donated and delivered by Quality Tree Service of Nashville. They will be at the March meeting or contact Lynn Stenglein if you need them earlier and arrange for a pick-up.

### Navigating the Perennial Divide(s)

RCMGA members are dividing perennials for our Plant Sale, to share with friends, and populate other locations in our gardens. Although perennials can be divided any time of the year if you give the plant appropriate care afterwards, some tips and best practices are listed below:

- Don't wait until a plant has become decrepit or monstrous to divide. Watch for smaller leaves, fewer flowers and weaker blooms that indicate signs of trouble.
- Start digging at the drip line to lift the perennial with minimal root damage.
- Divide in cool weather for best return and quickest reestablishment.
- Keep roots cool and moist (50 degrees, 50% humidity) if divisions do not go directly back into the ground.
- Replenish soil that you remove with the plant with compost.

While most perennials divide best in spring or in either spring or fall, plants that should only be divided in Fall include: Sweet Woodruff, Arum, Poppies, Siberian Iris, Peonies, Irises. It is best not to divide Alyssums, Delphinium, Euphorbia, Foxgloves, Rosemary, Lavenders, and Trilliums.

## Profiles in Gardening

Rene Kriek

Hello! My name is René Kriek and I am currently a Master Gardener Intern, class of 2015! It was really my dear husband's idea for me to take the MG course because he knows how much I love gardening. Personally, I wanted to become a Master Gardener because I knew that I would learn so much more being involved in the MG program and also being around and learning from people who have the same interests and hobbies as me. I am excited to be a part of the Leaflet this year as well as various other projects such as the Habitat for Humanity house and the Senior Center in Springfield.



Gardening is near and dear to my heart; both sides of my family have been involved in some sort of gardening or another, from owning nurseries to having beautiful show gardens. I suppose it's only natural for me to become a Master Gardener. I love anything green, especially if I had a hand in making it grow. Few things are more satisfying to me.

I am most interested in vegetable and herb gardening because I think it is extremely important to have the kind of skill where you can grow your own food and medicine, and of course then preserving it for later use. Being self-sufficient is important to me, and knowing that I can provide healthy, fresh food and safe and natural medicines for my family is priceless.

Two of my favorite plants are Cosmos and succulents. Both were my Grandmother's favorite and they remind me of her. She was my biggest inspiration and made me fall in love with gardening in the first place. I can just imagine how beautiful her gardens must be in Heaven...

Besides gardening, I love to forage for wild mushrooms, I hunt deer with a bow, and I'm an avid caver. Yes, I love crawling around in dark, tiny spaces! Put me in the woods or underground and I'm in my element!

Before moving to Springfield, TN we lived in Georgetown, KY where I attempted to have a garden, but we had so many trees and deer it was difficult to grow anything. I also knew a lot less then, than what I do now! Something interesting about me is that I teach karate to little kids, I was born and raised in South Africa and I am fluent in Afrikaans.

I am truly excited to be a part of the Robertson County Master Gardeners Association and I look forward to meet and work with, learn from and share tips and secrets from other plant loving people!!

## 2016 Robertson County Garden Tour Sites Explored

We are scouting gardens for a RCMGA garden tour which is (tentatively) scheduled for Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. We hope to secure gardens in the Cross Plains and White House areas. We want to include condos, flower gardens, home vegetable gardens, and working farms. We are very early in the search process but it is crucial that we secure several sites in the next couple of months. If you have suggestions, please contact project leaders: Lynn Cantrell, Gwen Day, or Lynn Stenglein.

### Taylor Hollow Wildflower Hike Planned

We have reserved 8-10 places in a wildflower hike(s) at Taylor Hollow State Natural Area, the "nirvana of wildflowers" located in Bethpage. As the hikes are part of the State Natural Areas Spring Celebration, activities are still being scheduled but will be the week of April 9—17. The hike, about 2 miles on easy-moderate terrain, will be lead by State naturalists. If you are interested, email Lynn Stenglein (lcsgts@hughes.net).

## Upcoming Events

Mar 3-6	Nashville Lawn & Garden Show	
Mar 4, 8 am	Seedling give-away	Dorris Milling, Springfield
Mar 17-19	Winter School	Knoxville
Mar 26	Herb Workshop	Diann's Greenhouse
Apr 9-17	Wildflower Hike	Taylor Hollow
May 7	RCMGA Plant Sale	Springfield
June 25?	Garden Tour	
Jul 14	Summer Celebration	Jackson

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