

The Leaflet

September 2016



Edible Landscaping

Contents

Edible Landscaping	1
Composting	2
The Nashville Rose Society to Host Rose Show and Competition	2
Fair Highlights	3
RCMGA Members Attend Mansker Station Class	4
Beautification Award Goes to Ms. Ramona Heavley	4
Arboretum Project Activity Reported	4
Upcoming Events	4
Contact List	4

By René Kriek

I recently watched a Ted Talk video of a man named Ron Finley, who calls himself a guerrilla gardener in South Central Los Angeles. He is making a positive change in his run-down neighborhood by turning city owned sidewalk strips into free vegetable gardens for the community. Not only is this providing free, healthy vegetables to people who otherwise will go without, it teaches people, especially children, how to work together as a team, how to help each other and come together as a community to accomplish something great based on someone else's needs. I am so inspired by this man and his fellow gardeners and I hope more people follow his lead. A link to his video is posted on our RCMG Facebook page, do yourself a favor and watch it.



Ron Finley

I absolutely love the idea of edible landscaping. Yes, I like to look at pretty flowers and shrubs and trees as much as the next person, but I think I like the idea of eating and providing for my family even better. So why not have both? Sure, if you have the space to have a proper vegetable garden then maybe the edible landscape isn't for you. But it's perfect for homes with smaller yards and gardens, or people obsessed with growing their own food, like me! Like any other garden, it's a personal choice. What works for you might not work for me, and vice versa.

I do have a large vegetable garden, fenced in for multiple reasons. One reason is so I *cannot expand!* It's an attempt at containing my gardening addiction... however I never seem to have enough space. So now I have my eyes on my relatively bare landscaping bed in front of my house. Be-

cause of tending to my veggie garden all summer long, I had all but forgotten about my "flower garden" that I worked so hard on creating. The grass and weeds had completely taken over, it was total neglect. I finally got tired of feeling horrible guilt and shame every time I walked by it (which was all the time since it's right by my front door!), and cleared it out. Now, minus the hidden spring bulbs, there's barely anything to look at right now. It's like a clean canvas – ready to be painted! I think you know where I'm going with this... edible landscape!!

Unfortunately we're at the end of our growing season, so my grand masterpiece will have to wait until next year. This is fine, because I'll have to plan around my bulbs anyway. But it gives me plenty of time to decide what I want to do. I'm excited just thinking about it!

continued on pg. 2

NEXT MEETING

Sept. 22, 2016
7 pm

Speakers:

**Nicole Adams and
Lynn Cantrell**

Program:

**Promoting
Ourselves**

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



Composting

By Paul Hart

One of the best things you can do for your garden is to add some of nature's best fertilizer—compost. Compost is one of the best mulches and soil amendments you can use.

Adding compost to your garden will help improve soil fertility, loosen clay soils and stimulate better root systems in your garden plants.

Waste materials from your yard and kitchen scraps are the best sources of organic matter for your compost pile. Kitchen scraps in particular are typically high in nitrogen, which helps heat up the compost pile and speed up the composting process. The organic matter in compost provides food for soil microorganisms, which is a vital part of keeping soil in a balanced, healthy condition, so few if any amendments need to be added to your soil.

The following are tips to help you get started composting:

1. Set up a compost bin in a discreet place in your yard. A bin will save space, quicken decomposition, and keep the yard looking neat. Many commercial bins are available; however, you can make one from a variety of materials.
2. Too much of any one composting material will slow down the decomposition process. If you have all grass, all leaves, or too much of any other single type of material, it can throw off the balance of the pile.
3. Do not add meat scraps and dog or cat manure to your compost.



4. Heat builds up with a big pile. Try not to get much bigger than one cubic yard (3 ft. by 3 ft. by 3 ft).
5. Keep your compost aerated. If you are using a compost tumbling bin, tumble it when you add new materials. If you are using a pile method, turn it with a garden fork when you add new materials.
6. A compost pile needs moisture to keep the composting process active. Don't let your pile dry out.
7. Just as too dry is bad, too wet is also something that you should avoid. Make sure your compost pile doesn't get so wet that it's soggy and stinks.
8. Compost is ready when it is dark brown, crumbles in your hand, and is fairly earthy smelling. Mix compost into your flower and vegetable beds. Work one to two inches of compost into the top three to five inches of soil.
9. If your compost pile's performance is less than you expected, check your moisture level and give it a good turn to encourage decomposition. Additionally, although normally not needed, commercial products are available that add beneficial microbes to your pile and can help speed things up.

For more information check the compost section in the Master Gardener Handbook.

Edible Landscaping continued p. 1

You might wonder why I'm so adamant about people growing their own food, whether it's in a few containers, garden bed or a full scale farm. If you know me, you'll know that I talk about it a lot. I just think it's so important to be self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-sustainable, whichever word you want to use. It's a cheap and healthy way to

provide for your family. How expensive is produce at the store? We all know the answer to that, especially organic products. I guarantee that friends, local farmers or gardeners would be more than happy to give you some free seeds or plantlings to start with. Make sure it's heirloom! If you have to buy, go to your local farmers' market if you can. Support local farmers.

So what does edible landscaping in your yard have to do with Ron, the LA street farmer? Maybe not much, but maybe to see the value of teaching and sharing a skill that is priceless, giving back to your community, sparking an interest in someone else and maybe that ripple effect might just change things for the better... even if it starts off small.

The Nashville Rose Society to Host Rose Show and Competition September 24 & 25 at the Franklin Marriott Hotel in Cool Springs

The Nashville Rose Society will host the Tenarky District Rose Show on September 24 and 25 at the Franklin Marriott Hotel in Cool Springs. This is one of the largest rose competitions in the South and it hasn't

been held in Nashville since 2012. Admission is free to the public.

On each day of the show, a Nashville Rose Society Consulting Rosarian will hold a free workshop designed to introduce rose growing to the begin-

ner or novice. The topic on Saturday will be "The Basics of Rose Gardening" and on Sunday, it will be "How to Build and Care for a Rose Garden". Learn how to properly prepare your soil, when and how to prune, as well as

Fair Highlights



Floral Competition



RGMGA Booth (above) and Table (below)



Pumpkin Contest



Farm Products Competition



Nicole and René package seeds



Honey Competition

Nashville Rose Society continued from p. 2

proven techniques for fertilizing roses and protecting them from damaging insects and diseases. The Nashville Rose Society will provide each show attendee with a complimentary information packet about growing beautiful roses.

Also included in the weekend festivities are free tours of three of the most beautiful public rose gardens in Nashville that feature hundreds of rose varieties that even the novice can grow: the Rose Study Garden at Cheekwood, the Belmont Rose Garden on

the campus of Belmont University, and the Nashville Music Garden located in front of the Country Music Hall of Fame.

For more information, go to The Nashville Rose Society's website at www.nashvillerosesociety.com.

RCMGA Members Attend Mansker Station Class

Having good intentions of attending several of the Sumner County Master Gardener classes at Mansker Station each year, Lynn Stenglein and Dorothy Briggs finally enjoyed an excellent presentation Saturday, September 10th about gardening with the native plants of Tennessee. Margie Hunter, who taught the class, is an environmentalist, nature enthusiast, and author of the book *Gardening with Native Plants of Tennessee*. You can get tips on native plants and events at her web site: www.gardeningwithnativeplants.com. Dorothy and Lynn also visited the butterfly garden, a certified Monarch waystation, located in the park just behind the visitors' center.



Beautification Award Goes to Ms. Ramona Heavley

If you travel South Main Street in Springfield to avoid traffic lights and construction on Hwy. 431, you will have noticed the yard at 1201 South Main Street, home of Ramona Heavley, recognized with this month's Beautification Award. Ms. Heavley, an octogenarian who is retired from the Springfield Hospital, say everyone identifies her place by the deer in the yard. Don't be disappointed if you have missed her yard when summer and spring plants were at their best, however. We admire the large bittersweet bush at the corner of her driveway that is covered in orange berries throughout the fall and winter months each year.



Arboretum Project Activity Reported

The Ridgetop Arboretum Team members inventoried the trees in August, adjusted the labels to accommodate tree growth, and identified a few trees needing replacement labels. As we are approaching the optimal tree-planting season, we are exploring the addition of a tree to the Arboretum. An update on the Arboretum was presented to the Ridgetop Park Board at their September meeting. The cost estimate for the items will be discussed at the RCMGA September meeting.

Upcoming Events

Sept 26	MG Class—Diseases	Joelton
Oct 1	Quilt Show	Fairgrounds
Oct 3	MG Class—Soil	Joelton
Oct 8	Growing Fruit in Mid.TN	Mansker Station
Oct 10	MG Class—Lawn Grass Management	Joelton
Oct 15 8am-5pm	GroWild Native Plant Fall Sale	7190 Hill Hughes Road, Fairview, TN
Oct 17	MG Class—Herbaceous Ornamentals	Joelton
Oct 24	MG Class—Vegetable Gardening	Joelton
Nov 7	MG Class—Landscape Design	Joelton
Nov 14	MG Class—Backyard Wildlife	Joelton
Nov 21	MG Class—Lawn and Garden Equipment	Joelton
Dec 8	RCMGA Christmas Party	

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