



# THE LEAFLET

August 2009



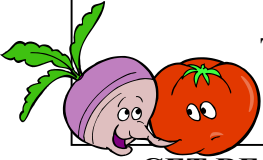
A NEWSLETTER FOR, ABOUT AND BY ROBERTSON COUNTY GARDENERS

## UPCOMING GARDEN EVENTS

Aug. 27— MG Club Meeting @ Robertson  
County Fair Education Building (7pm)

Aug. 31-Sept. 5—Robertson County Fair

Sept. 15—Master Gardener Classes begin @ County Ag. Extension Office  
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"



## GET READY FOR THE 2009 FAIR

By Michelle Adcock & JoAnn Slate

*Design an exhibit that showcases Robertson County Master Gardeners' past and current volunteer projects. With art and lettering, explain ACE (administration, community, and education) components and show how our group complies with these objectives. Create an unusual garden-inspired setting that attracts interest from prospective members and other fairgoers. Staff the booth with friendly members who entice browsers by offering free flower seed and information. Now, do all this in a one-square-yard space.*

This challenge, issued in 2008, was met admirably by our group, resulting in a first-place finish with funds for the treasury. The 2009 booth's theme, "Gardening is Family Fun," fits well with the overall fair theme. We are showing off photos of our volunteer projects and other activities by planning them on giant flower illustrations. As in years past, we will hand out free seed. Members should save, package, and label seed offerings from their gardens. Bring them to the next meeting, August 27<sup>th</sup> at the Education Building on the Robertson County Fairgrounds, when we will make final arrangements for our booth. Fair dates this year are August 31 – September 5; so all members may participate by staffing the booth for a few hours. A signup sheet will allow for time/day preferences.

## MASTER GARDENER MEETING

Thursday, August 27, 7pm @ Ro. Co. Fairgrounds  
Education Building to work on Fair Booth

## DO YOUR ROSES NEED THERAPY?

(HELP IS ON THE WAY)

Ron Daniels, an American Rose Society Consulting Rosarian, will present the program at our September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ron, whose Hendersonville garden has several hundred rose bushes, inspired both the experienced and novice rose gardeners at our June

2008 meeting, with practical, creative and entertaining advice about roses. Do not miss this meeting!



## CHANGING LANES CHANGING LANDSCAPES

By Tim Best



Gardeners, much like the plants they grow, come in different shapes and sizes. Bank managers, day traders, nurses, clerks, factory workers and truckers all have the same desire to create, nurture, and grow something on their own. Many have discovered their love for gardening by having a family garden when growing up or needing a hobby; so they try their hand at tomato growing.

My interest with horticulture, agriculture, and gardening mostly comes from the last twenty-one years of being an over-the-road truck driver. I started hauling and delivering plants for a local greenhouse in Springfield (South Central Growers) in February 1988. I was amazed at the variety of flowers and plants they grew. Deliveries went to different greenhouses and garden centers in several states. Eventually, I bought my own tractor-trailer and now deliver dry goods to all 48 states and Canada.

One of the things I like best about trucking is seeing the changing landscapes of this country. When you are a truck-driving gardener, you look for those special sights along the way such as the enormous rose farm in Tyler, Texas, the floral clock in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada and the different botanical gardens along the way. Many states have adopted Lady Bird Johnson's beautification ideas for the interstates. There are the lush landscapes of Lake Okeechobee, Florida, the tulip festival in Holland Michigan, I enjoy the endless miles of giant sunflowers swaying in the Kansas breeze; the majestic views of the Rocky Mtns. and Mt. Rainier; the New Hampshire foliage in October, the beautiful

sunsets on the Continental Divide in New Mexico; cactus of the Arizona desert; and the acres of gold tasseled corn in Indiana and Iowa. Entire city streets are engulfed in flowers all seasons Fairhope, Alabama. I love the pride that so many small towns take in their communities.

I always encourage people to turn off the TV, get off the couch and go out and enjoy their garden. And I also believe that we should enjoy our country and its beauty. In 1893 Katherine Lee Bates, an English professor at Wellesley College, took a train trip to Colorado Springs to teach a short summer school session. Several of the sights on her trip inspired her to write a poem, which later became nationwide hymn, "America the Beautiful". That song aptly describes how I feel as I drive along the landscapes of our country every day.

### **SHOW OFF YOUR GARDENS: BRING AN ENTRY TO THE FAIR**

Roses, zinnias, marigolds, wildflowers, sunflowers in arrangements and specimens (1 stalk, 1 blossom, and foliage): these are just some of the categories for the entries for the flower exhibit at the Robertson County Fair next week. Less beautiful, perhaps, but more edible entries by plant lovers include tomatoes, squash, carrots, beets, okra, and many other categories. Let's make a good showing by the Master Gardeners and bring home the ribbons. Rules, entry times, and entry categories can be found at [www.robertsoncountyfair.com](http://www.robertsoncountyfair.com).

### **KILL AND PREVENT WEEDS: SOLARIZIE YOUR SOIL**

*At the 2009 Summer Celebration in Jackson, attendees saw soil solarization in progress in the vegetable garden. While it is always prudent to consult your County Extension office to get the latest tips and cautions before beginning a new approach, soil solarization of your garden may prove effective, easy, inexpensive and "green".*

Solarizing your soil is one of the best nonchemical ways to get rid of weeds and some diseases and pests. Solarization captures the radiant heat and energy

from the sun and causes physical, chemical, and biological changes in the soil. These changes lead to control or suppression of soil-borne plant pathogens such as fungi, bacteria, nematodes, and pests along with weed seeds and seedlings.

Solarization consists of covering the soil with a clear plastic tarp for 4 to 6 weeks, usually during a hot period of the year. (The Jackson UT Extension farm covers their soil for only 2 weeks in the summer months.) When properly done, the top 6 inches of soil will heat up to as high as 125 degrees Fahrenheit. This is hot enough to kill a wide range of soil inhabiting pest such as wilt and root rot fungi, root knot nematodes, and noxious weed seed. In addition solarization stimulates the release of nutrients from organic matter present in the soil. It is especially effective for treating garden soils where the intent is to plant vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

How to solarize your soil:

1. Break up large dirt clods and remove excessive plant debris in the area to be treated. Remedy too hard (compacted) soils by adding organic materials. The soil surface should be raked smooth to allow the soil surface to be in close contact with the plastic covering. (If you have a weedy or grassy area that is out of control, cut down the weeds, get rid of the grass as best you can, and proceed with the next steps.)
2. Moisten the soil if dry but do not saturate it. The soil should be crumbly like it would at planting time.
3. Place a single clear plastic (1 to 4 mm) over the soil surface and bury the edges or place heavy objects on the edges to keep the plastic in place and so no heat can escape. (In the Jackson vegetable area they used boards to raise the plastic a few inches over the soil to build up additional heat.)
4. Leave the plastic in place for 2-6 weeks, depending on the time of year, clearing away debris and excessive rainwater that may accumulate on the plastic and block the sun's rays.
5. Remove the plastic, and plant shallowly in the top few inches of soil. Save the plastic to use again.

### **JUDY VISITS GARDENS OF OUR FELLOW GARDEN LOVERS (QUEEN ELIZABETH, KING LOUIS XIV AND MONET)**



**Buckingham Palace**



**Monet's garden at Giverny**



**Judy at Versailles**

## GARDEN OF THE MONTH UPDATE

*By Janice Thompson*

The Robertson County Times (August 19<sup>th</sup> Issue) printed a very nice article about the Garden of the Month project that launched August 1<sup>st</sup>. Photos were included and nice comments were written about both the Springfield Garden Club (The Late Bloomers) and the Robertson County Master Gardeners' Club. Debbie Davidson found the home in Adams that served as the "county pick" and I found the one in Springfield. We need help for the remaining two months of the "garden season". Remember that the gardens and landscapes must be visible from the roadway; we don't want homeowners to feel obligated to take folks on backyard tours. We would like to be able to contact people during the first few days of each month so that the signs can be displayed in their yards for the entire month. Suggestions can be sent to my email address [janiceelaine194@gmail.com](mailto:janiceelaine194@gmail.com) or you can call me at 521-4717. Thanks ahead of time for your help.

### ASHLAND CITY'S OPEN AIR MARKET IS A CONTINUING SUCCESS

*By Carol Davis*

A successful farmer's market must contain two things: good location and set hours, suggests Ronnie Barron, a Cheatham County extension agent who helped start Ashland City's Open Air Market. That market, in its sixth season, does very well on Saturday mornings, but Barron would like to see that success spread throughout the week. "On Saturday you can guarantee that people will be there, but if we make it where (sellers) can be successful during the week, I think we need to have set hours," he says.

The land where the market operates is owned by the town of Ashland City. Though it is designed specifically for the market, it's operated as a city park, which means it's open from daylight to dark seven days a week.

"It's a wonderful partnership because Ashland City provided the property, a rail fence, parking lot, planters and signs. The only disadvantage is because there are no set hours, people don't know when someone will be there at the market," Barron says.

The market was initiated by Renaissance Ashland City, a nonprofit that works to renovate and revamp the downtown area. Barron says, "One of the ideas was to have a market—an open air market, not just a farmer's market—where people could mix and mingle and sell produce and crafts. At our market, goods have to be grown, made, baked or whatever locally. Ours is open to surrounding counties, because we don't have enough people growing produce." Barron and a member of Renaissance Ashland City oversee a committee of five or six vendors who set the market guidelines. Growers from counties surrounding Cheatham, including Robertson, can sell produce but artisans who sell arts, crafts, etc. must reside in Cheatham County.

Ashland City collects a \$20 marketing fee from each vendor annually to help with the cost of signage and newspaper advertising. The fee is waived for vendors under 18 years of age, nonprofit groups, and churches.

Advertising and word-of-mouth have helped the market to grow. "Every Saturday is a big day down there," Barron says. "The vendors put up little canopies, which gives it a festive look and draws people in."

Ashland City's market has enabled some vendors to create small businesses. Barron says, "Some sellers developed enough of a customer base that they don't need the market any more; they're selling right out of their homes."

#### URSULA FOLLOWS UP ON MARKET PROJECT

*Carol Davis and I had a vision for a Springfield Farmer's Market at least two ago. Carol's article gives me the hope that some day soon Springfield can have a farmer's Market also. Organization is the key to success. Once we are past the Fair Booth commitment, we need to form a committee who will lay the foundation for a successful market. The Chamber of Commerce and the Robertson County Times can help with getting the message to the community. Although it is too late this year to organize a market, this gives us the time we need to think about this project in detail.*

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