

The Leaflet



June 2016

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NEXT MEETING
June 23, 2016
7 pm

Volunteering
with Speakers:

Paul Allen and
Paul Hart

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

Garden Tour 2016



The sixth RCMGA Garden Tour (years 2009-2012, 2014, 2016) was one of our best attended:

- most docent volunteers: 20 including 2 from Sumner County Master Gardeners
- most diverse: porches, gardens, farms
- most musical: guitarist, geese, calves, chickens
- and most fun: good weather, gracious and hospitable Cross Plains residents!

We will include more pictures from the tour in the July leaflet and will post them this week on Facebook and our web site. In the "Garden Tour 101" article (page 4 of this Leaflet) you can read some of the tasks that go into a Garden Tour project.

Thanks! . . .

- to the project leads: Lynn Cantrell, Gwen Day, Lynn Stenglein, and Jeanne Protsman. (Jeanne did not know at the

onset that the Association president is a de facto Garden Tour lead.);

- to our creative writers: JoAnn Slate who interviewed and wrote descriptions of tour stops along with Gwen and Lynn this year;
- to our gift creator: Ursula Otto acquires, creates, maintains owner gift baskets of plants for weeks;
- to our publicity team who posted and handed out flyers everywhere from family picnics to the Coopertown Barrel Festival, posted ads on Facebook and web sites, called and emailed friends and neighbors;
- to our volunteer docents and, most of all,
- to the garden, porch, and farm owners, who graciously shared their time, property, and knowledge with the community.

It takes an Association to have a Garden Tour!

Celebrate Summer at Jackson July 14th

“The Garden of Eatin’” is the theme of Summer Celebration 2016 at the West Tennessee Ag Research and Education Center in Jackson. You can enjoy the cool indoor classrooms and the following talks:

Groceries in the Fence Row: Carol Reese will take us on fence row forage, illuminating the many wild plants that can be eaten free.

Gardens of England: Jason Reeves brings the best British gardens to you with photos and stories from his recent travels.

Garden Eye Candy: The right combination of plants, hardscapes, and designs take your garden from good to gorgeous.

Herbalicious: UT Extension Kitchen Divas will show you when, where, and how much to use herbs as you sample tasty recipes. Limited to 40 attendees/hour. Cost: \$5.

Just a few of the outdoor talks that you will enjoy include **Gourmet Greens** (best way to grow your own and even taste a few); **Woodie Goodies** (beauty and benefits provided by woody landscape plants including

edible offerings for both humans and wildlife); **Banquet in the Berms** (mixing edibles with ornamentals), and **Cohabiting Vegetables** (vegetables that make great partners for ornamentals).

Plan to spend a little at the Madison County Master Gardener Plant Sale, the vendor tent; enjoy strolling the landscape of the AgResearch Center; take the Wagon Tour. Cost for the Celebration is \$5. Email a RCMGA officer if you are interested in forming a car pool from Robertson County.

RCMGA PARTICIPATES IN COOPERTOWN

by Ann Rausch

On June 4, the Robertson County Master Gardeners were invited by Jimmie Chappell to participate in the Coopertown Barrel Festival sharing a booth with Chappell Acres, an event venue. While hundreds wandered through and visited booths ranging from live entertainment and games for young & old alike to food vendors and an actual cooper (barrel maker), many stopped by the RCMGA table gathering information on becoming a Master Gardener, Bluebird nest box plans, gardening for pollinators, and native plants. Our table/booth area was decorated with houseplants large and small as well as annuals filling in some spaces. Quite a few people stopped by to ask about our upcoming Garden Tour. While our visi-



tors were looking at the information we had available, they were also offered free seeds and asked whether they were interested in becoming Master Gardeners. We had nine people sign up to be contacted in the fall regarding taking the Master Gardener class. Luckily, God kept all the plants well-watered.

Central Region Master Gardener Workshop Scheduled for June 30th

The Central Region Master Gardener Workshop, June 30th at Ellington Ag Center in Nashville is a good opportunity to acquire some of your continuing education hours, tour the Ag. Center grounds and demonstrations gardens, and

network with Master Gardeners from surrounding counties. The three morning education sessions include: hands on plant diagnostics; selecting and leading service projects; engaging interns; and tours. Troy Marden will address making

wise choices in the garden when it comes to plant selection. Although the “early registration” ended June 15th, you can still register by going to the UT TMG web site www.extension.tennessee.edu. Cost, including lunch, is \$25 per person.

White House Heritage Garden Project



By Douglas Buck

For the past couple of years students at White House Heritage Elementary School have been growing fruits and vegetables that are used in their cafeteria. Originally begun as a project of a student garden club and science classes, the project has expanded and received a number of grants for a rototiller, gardening implements, and a green house. This year corn, potatoes, tomatoes, broccoli, onions, sweet potatoes, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, squash, pumpkins and watermelon have been planted. In addition, apple and peach trees have also been planted along with a pollinator garden and herb garden. A butterfly garden was rehabilitated and grows milkweed for monarch butterfly larva. Produce is grown in raised beds as well as more traditional beds.

Numerous school classes helped in the hoeing, digging and planting. Students were required to measure seed, row spacing and fertilizer requirements. Many kids had many questions and enthusiasm was universal. Crops maturing in summer while school is out will be harvested and donated to the Hope Center for distribution to the needy. Produce that matures once school begins will be made available to parents for a donation and will be used in the cafeteria.



There is a definite need for help throughout the summer. Weeds and invasive grass are a merciless challenge; produce must be picked to continue growth into the fall. A schedule will be devised shortly.

This project is for sure something worthwhile to which we as Master Gardeners can contribute.

4-H Member's Butterfly Project at Ridgetop Park



The garden at Ridgetop Park, formerly a joint Ridgetop Garden Club/RCMGA project, has a new gardener and project lead. Analynn Jones has taken over the garden for her 4-H project to attract butterflies. RCMGA members have worked with Analynn to identify the existing garden plants. She obtained other butterfly "attractions" through a grant from the city of Ridgetop, from our South Central Growers donations, and from private RCMGA member donations. Analynn planted Goldenrod, Purple Verbena, Bee Balm, Cone Flower and Blazing Star bought from Bates Nursery. A sign will be placed in the garden explains what she's doing.

GARDEN TOUR 101 (How to accrue > 200 volunteer hours)

As we wind-down from our 6th RCMGA Garden Tour, let's think about some of the major tasks of this project:

Scouting—Finding the gardens (porches, farms, etc.) begins in February or March or even in October some years. You need imagination to visual the locations in May or June, mental GPS to map the tour, and local contacts for suggestions of tour locations. You walk about and drive by potential locations many times.

Owner contacts—Sometimes you meet garden owners on the scouting trip, but you seldom get a commitment to show their gardens. You continue knocking on doors and making phone calls long after the “Scouting phase”.

Letters of Intent—About a month prior to the tour, you send “letters of intent” to all owners who have verbally committed to tour participation. The letters confirm the tour date and time, explain the tour timeline and processes (publicity, cost, docents, visit/call for description, etc.) and, of course, thank the owner.

Garden Descriptions—While the RCMGA Garden Tours 1-3 included a color brochure that described each location, we replaced the brochure with a less expensive option that can be printed on any printer. We interview owners and write-up tour stops to hand out to each Tour visitor.

Ordering Flyers—We order flyers about the tour to hand out at the Plant Sale and other events (such as Kroger's Frost Free Weekend, Martha's Song booth, Taste of Country, etc.) and for RCMGA members to post in their communities. Along the way we modify the flyers as information changes (a dual flyer for both plant sale/garden tour, starting locations for the Tour, etc.).

Publicity—Along with posting flyers throughout the county (and beyond), we place advertisements on the web (Smokey Barn, Chamber of Commerce sites, Facebook) and in several publications (“shoppers”, local news, etc.). WDBL radio announces our event on their community happenings segment and, this year, a RCMGA member was interviewed about the Tour.

Docents—We use the formula of (number of gardens X 4) + 1 to determine the number of docents we need. We would like for the docents to have the opportunity to see the other gardens and to spend time with gardening friends (other docents and Tour visitors). In 2016 we reached out to Master Gardeners in Sumner and Davidson County to augment our volunteers.

Signs/banners—Tours are sign intensive. We have found that an important part of Tour publicity includes placement of signs or banners at each tour location and in strategic locations in the county.

Owner gifts and notes—We traditionally gift all of our garden owners with a basket or pot of flowers and a note. RCMGA members agree that selection, fostering, creating these gift is one of the fun tasks of the Tour.

Photography—We made photography a requirement for our Tours for flyers and postings, displays at county fair, etc.

Have suggestions or questions about future tour? Want to volunteer for our next tour (maybe 2018)? See one of the 2016 Garden Tour project leads or the RCMGA officer of your choice!

Don't forget to water the planters in front of the extension office! The plants are looking great but they will need lots of H2O this summer and fall.

See Judy Bryant to transport water from the side of the building.

Upcoming Events

Jul 9	Canning Tomatoes	Mansker Station
Jul 14	Summer Celebration	Jackson
Aug 13	Carnton Garden Tour	Franklin
Sep 10	Using Native Plants	Mansker Station
Oct 8	Growing Fruit in Middle TN	Mansker Station

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