

# MADISON COUNTY 2018 Master Gardener

The Bridge to Knowledge  
Volume 88, Issue 11

Madison County  
Master Gardener

U<sup>of</sup>EXTENSION  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

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## From The President

Well, Well it's Fall after all. The chill is finally in the air! Many of you love the crisp mornings with frost on the pumpkins. Give me a steamy Chai Tea with pumpkin spice creamer and a warm fire. I'm not a lover of fall - it is so much work to put a garden to sleep - cleaning, mulching and raking. Don't get me wrong; I love SEC Football, bonfires, hayrides and the blazing fall trees. It's the gray skies and lack of green that leaves me longing for spring.

MCMG have had some fun meetings lately. The September session on "Multiplying and Dividing" was informative and inspirational. Susan Luckey has done a fabulous job of finding speakers for the year. We received several comments from members who appreciated hearing the experiences of members. Vinnie Simeone was unique and entertaining for the October Plant Sale Lecture. His talk on "Sustainable Gardening" gave us many ideas to implement in our own gardens.

The November meeting will be the final one for 2018! Please do not miss it as we have our own David Sams sharing his and Carol's recent wanderings. Stunning photography of gardens and nature across the continent are sure to delight. Also we will vote to update our Bylaws and elect new Board Members. Please make it a priority to be there, the Board would like for as many as possible to attend the election.

Happy Fall,

Elizabeth Edwards  
President MCMG



# M G CORNER

At the November meeting we will be updating our Bylaws and elect new Board Members. Please make it a priority to be there, the Board would like for as many as possible to attend the election.

## MADISON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS PROSPECTIVE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Glen Fesmire
VICE PRESIDENT - Programs	Sue Ann Barnes
TREASURER	Mary Nenarella
BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE	Marie Kyper
	Stephen Pope
	David Sams

Returning Board Members:	
VICE PRESIDENT - PROJECTS	Vikki Bunch
SECRETARY	Mary Kay Havranek
BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE	Rob Johnson

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We have finally gotten our FIRST light frost, maybe this is our sign that fall (and cooler temps) are here to stay! I just wanted to send you all a few updates on upcoming workdays and events.

### Huntingdon Downtown Planters

*Saturday October 27<sup>th</sup> 10am-Noon*

We will be meeting at the court square in downtown Huntingdon

Please bring trash bags and any other hand tools/pruners that you may use in your own home gardening.

If you have questions, you may contact Peggy Allen at 731-431-9901.

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### Master Gardener Christmas Party

*Friday December 14<sup>th</sup> Time TBD at the WTREC*

-Optional gift exchange, with \$20 limit. Gardening theme (ex: Christmas ornament, magazine, containers, seed/bulbs, art, kitchen tools used for veggies)

-Fun Contests

1. Handcrafted Christmas Decoration
2. Cookies half dozen per entry (traditionally made in your family for the holidays)

There will be sign-up sheets for the gift exchange, contests, Food, & planning team at the November meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Trent at 731-614-6156.

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**For a wealth of knowledge check out this website ... [uthort.com](http://uthort.com)**

I have had several folks ask about options for earning continued education. Last week, I sent an e-mail listing several classes/seminars that will be taking place in the Memphis area. Many are FREE and all would count as

continued education. If you would rather stay around home, check out these webinars. They have been recorded and are available for viewing any time. If you have any other questions, please let me know!

**-Urban forestry series** <https://sref.info/news/articles/2018-urban-community-forestry-webinar-series-for-extension-agents>

(Just use your personal e-mail to register and then select "Extension" as the type of personnel.)

What's Bugging Your Trees?

Leaf Spots, Scorches, & Wilts

Gray to Green Infrastructure using urban forestry

Pollinator Habitats in Urban forests

Have You Checked Your Trees lately? A Routine Check-up

Storm Resilient urban forests: The Role of Species Selection & Maintenance Pruning

**-eOrganic Webinars by eXtension.** This collection of webinars is available to Extension professionals as well as the public and includes a HUGE list of topics!

<https://articles.extension.org/pages/68066/eorganic-webinar-and-broadcast-recordings-by-topic>

### **Mid-South Daffodil Society - Annual Daffodil Bulb Sale**

Sat Nov 03, 2018 10 AM - 1 PM

The MidSouth Daffodil Society will hold the annual Daffodil Bulb Sale on November 3, 2018, from 10am-1pm at Dixon Gallery and Gardens Catmur Horticulture Building (Potting Hub). Fifty different cultivars of daffodil bulbs that grow well in the Mid-south will be available. Experts will be on hand to answer questions. There will be new varieties as well as old standards and many will be fragrant. A price list will be posted on the Dixon website ([www.dixon.org](http://www.dixon.org)). Cash or checks only.

Location: Dixon Gallery and Gardens- Potting Hub, 4339 Park Ave, Memphis, TN 38117

Website: <http://www.dixon.org>



**October meeting and plant sale:** Vincent Simeone, the special speaker at the October meeting came across as highly educated and extremely well-traveled. Carol and I enjoyed his program on the better horticultural gardens of the world and marveled at how many of them we have seen in the company of Jason. Jason's sale had the usual assortment of the best plants for our area. The sale appeared to go well and again Carol and I were grateful to have been able to spend so much time in support of this master gardener group over the years.

**Weather:** October is frequently the driest month of the year in West Tennessee but apparently not this year. The days are shorter and cooler now (mid-October) and there is plenty of moisture so maybe we can get a few more of our neglected potted plants in the ground. Once again it is the middle of October and there is no frost in this ever-warming climate.

**Hypertufa:** Yes there is interest in hypertufa and no we can't find time or energy to lead a workshop. Someone remind me at the November meeting and we will see if we can't arrange a workshop at short notice on a reasonably warm day before the end of November.

**To do now:** The most important task which need to be done immediately is mulching those plants having questionable hardiness in Tennessee! Marginally hardy plants such as buddleia, loropetalum and even pansies and mums will do much better here if protected from severe cold by a 2-3 inch layer of mulch. Plants of hardy amaryllis, cannas, crinums, elephant ears, gingers and the more tender salvias are much more likely to survive if mulched so that their underground parts do not freeze. Mulch even if we have had a frost.

The easiest and cheapest way to acquire mulch in the late fall is to use the leaves which are falling. Avoid leaves of black walnuts which may inhibit plant growth. Run a lawnmower over fallen leaves to chop them up and they will blow around much less when applied to the soil near your plants. Use a 2-4 inch layer and weight them down with wire mesh or something similar if necessary. Sometimes nice people will collect their leaves, bag them and sit them by the curb for you to collect. Watch out for surprises in these bags.

Last year I tested to see whether imidacloprid would clean up the plants I overwinter in the garage and/or sunroom. It is systemic and legal on container plants. Aphids, whiteflies, thrips and other insect problems which I bring in are on the label. It controlled everything but spider mites. Plants must be cleaned up before they are brought in or treated to control insects as needed during the winter.

**Planting for spring sale:** We have not yet began planting for the spring sale but will in early November. We find that ferns and certain other plants do better if planted in the fall so that they can establish roots before they emerge in the spring. We hope to have our usual assortment of hardy ferns as well as a new plant or two. Would you like to help pot? Do you have pots to donate to the cause?

**November Program:** I will be doing our November program. Carol and I traveled to our west coast homeland this summer and took pictures of scenery, family and many impressive plants. I will show some of the more interesting of these photos at the November meeting (not the family photos) and hope to see many of you there. If not, happy holidays and may the next gardening year be better than ever for each of you!

# Organic Gardening - Soil Care

Mary Nenarella

November 2018 Newsletter

Having been an organic gardener since the early 1980's I felt relatively confident that I knew what I was doing. By making pretty much every mistake one could, from losing an apple tree due to poor planting technique, and being overwhelmed by weeds, I thought I had learned a lot about gardening organically. Then, this spring I took a class called Born to Grow and I found out there was so much more to learn.

I just need to insert here that organic gardening is not "designed" for those with instant gratification in mind....The results, however, are well worth the work and the wait involved for luscious tasting produce and beautiful ornamentals. Also there is the knowledge that you know there are no pesticides and herbicides contaminating your food.

Healthy soil is alive with life. One billion life forms exist in a teaspoon of soil. 1 ½ gallons of soils has over one trillion life forms. All organisms are part of the soil food web. Ecosystem = plants (organic matter), bacteria, protozoa, arthropods, insects, birds, and animals. Many herbicides and pesticides commonly used today eradicate many of these life forms in the top few inches of soil so the natural balance is thrown off.

As all gardeners know, creating and maintaining a healthy soil is the one thing that must be done to have a successful garden. Plants not only need sunlight and water to thrive but their roots must have oxygen.

## Compaction:

Stepping on wet soil compacts it to the point that the roots are not getting the oxygen they need to thrive and water will run off compacted soil instead of being absorbed. When you see a bare dirt path where people walk, it isn't just that they have killed the grass but they have compacted the soil so much that only the toughest weeds with strong tap roots can survive.

To overcome this problem, create garden beds that are no more than four feet wide so you can reach into the bed and never have to step inside it. If you need to step into a bed, lay down a board so it spreads out the weight and reduces compaction.

When you add organic matter, such as leaves, straw, and compost from your kitchen scraps to your garden beds, the worms will come and do the work of "de-compaction" for you. Worms cannot survive in compacted soil any easier than roots can so give them something they can work with and plenty of time to do it. There is nothing better for plants than worm castings. They are called black gold for a reason.



Broken down organic matter makes a light fluffy soil that water and air will penetrate and the minerals that plants needs to grow will be released to the roots as needed, including trace minerals that are not included in a 10-10-10 NPK mix.

## Organic Matter (OM) and Humus

OM is the waste product of any living thing that has died and is at any stage of decomposition. Humus is OM that has broken down to "earthy" soil. Humus is light and airy, easy to work and has good air circulation. It holds 80 to 90% of its weight in water. The microbes that help form humus leave behind the sticky glues that hold particles together. It holds on to nutrients so they are not leached away. It buffers soil pH. It can immobilize heavy metals and keep the plants from taking them up. It is dark in color so it helps soil warm up faster in spring.

Keep in mind that you must add organic matter each year to keep the system up and running. Never till bark chips, wood chips or sawdust into your soil. (It binds up the nitrogen) Green manures (cover crops) can be tilled in while still at the tender stage as they decompose rapidly and will not bind up the nitrogen.

Picture the soil on a forest floor where the leaves have been left to decompose along with fallen logs and animal droppings. It is rich and healthy, light and fluffy. That is our goal.

(Ed Note: This is the first of several articles on Organic Gardening )

# Wanted!!

## Articles for the Newsletter

You can earn volunteer hours by writing about some garden you visited, some technique you tried which worked (or did not), or share your enthusiasm for some special plant, or condensing a gardening article you read.

Keep contributing. Keep reading. Keep sharing.

Please send your contributions to:

Liz Whitsitt    lizv@tds.net

Pam Stanfield    pamstanfield@gmail.com

# November Meeting

David Sams

November 1, 2018  
West TN  
Research Center

Please bring a  
dish to share.



Check Out  
UT Gardens Jackson  
On Facebook!

Lots of great info being shared there, and you don't have to wait for a monthly newsletter!

### The Bridge to Knowledge

The University of Tennessee Extension

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Email cscott52@utk.edu (Celeste Scott)

## Board of Directors

President- Elizabeth Edwards

Board Members

Mary Kay Havranek

John Overby

Tammy Overby

Vicki Bunch

Rob Johnson

Wayne Gerler

Susan Luckey

Bill Wyatt

Master Gardener financial standing  
information is available upon request.