

# GardenTalk

The Official Monthly Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Davidson County and UT Extension

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# Mather's Musings

## News, wit and wisdom from Master Gardener Bob Mather, Class of 2000.

**Congratulations, Class of 2015!** You have completed your Tennessee Master Gardener course. The next step is to complete your 40 hours of community service and 8 hours of continuing education programs before submitting your hours to become a certified Master Gardener. I hope you have enjoyed your classes.

With classes now finished, you can also begin attending our monthly meetings and continue learning and enjoying the fellowship of being with others who have a like interest in the many aspects of gardening.

Our next monthly meeting on Thursday, May 14th will be held at the Harding Gardens at Belle Meade Mansion. Bring a covered dish, come early if you can, and enjoy looking at the gardens. Our meetings start promptly at 6:30pm and you'll enjoy good food and learn more about "Master Gardening".

Still working on your hours for certification? Our Urban Gardening Festival is right about the corner on Saturday, May 16th amid our Demonstration Gardens at Ellington Agriculture Center. This is a very big day for us as we host about 2,000 or so of our friends and neighbors, an opportunity to learn and share about many so many gardening topics.

## May: From the Harding Garden to Belle Meade's Table—A Culinary Tour

by Mariwyn Evans, Class of 2011

Any Nashville foodie will tell you that farm-to-table cooking and Southern food are two of the hottest trends today. Knowing your farmer, eating locally grown and, of course, anything with Benton's Bacon are touchstones of dining in Music City.

To tap into that interest, the Belle Meade Plantation has added a new Culinary Tour to its visitor offerings. The tour, developed by Belle Meade's Director of Food Services Mark James, includes a Southern cooking demo in the Plantation's kitchen, tastings of such traditional southern favorites as blackberry and red muscadine wines at the Belle Meade Winery, and a tour of the home. Best of all, it gives visitors a sense of what life might have been like for the family and friends who lived and ate at Belle Meade in the 1800s.

Back then, farm-to-table wasn't a trend. It was the way of daily life. With a few exceptions like salt and sugar, if you

We need volunteers from 7am to about 6pm (see the page X for more details). You will have a great chance to learn, mingle, and enjoy the day. Most of all, you will make a lot of new Master Gardener friends.

If you haven't already, google "Summer Celebration 2015 Jackson Tennessee". This is Jackson, Tennessee's version of our Urban Gardening Festival. We will be taking a bus early on the morning of July 17th and returning around 8:30-9pm that evening. They will have speakers and demonstrations as well as many plants for sale. We have been known to fill up the bottom of the bus!

It's also time to start thinking about officers for the next year as many of our executive board will not be returning in 2016. Look over our bylaws to see descriptions of each role. We always need fresh ideas and, with so much talent among us, look to you to accept the task of serving such a wonderful organization.

I hope you are finding time to work in your own gardens. April was a fun time (between the rains) to explore and see what plants made it through the winter months. Each day I would find a new plant poking its way toward the sun...and there were a few plants I didn't even remember! May will bring a lot of new life to your gardens. Take time to enjoy them! 🌱

didn't grow it, it just wasn't on the table. The gardens of Belle Meade filled the tables of the Harding family with Tennis Ball lettuce and Prince Albert peas in spring. Summer's bounty included Cherokee Purple tomatoes, corn, and pole beans. Fall crops of pumpkins, potatoes, cabbages and onions were preserved in root cellars for winter meals.

Today, the traditions of locally farmed vegetables and Southern hospitality are both carried on at Belle Meade.

The Master Gardeners of Davidson County grow many of the same varieties that fed the Hardings. And Belle Meade's new Culinary Tour gives visitors and Nashvillians alike a better understanding of the food that was prepared and enjoyed in a different era.

**Please join your fellow Master Gardeners at the Harding Garden for the May meeting on Thursday, May 14th.** You'll learn more about the Culinary Tour from James and get a chance to tour the Harding Garden. 🌱

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Cover: *Harding Garden surrounding the cabin at Belle Meade Plantation.*  
*Photo: Joy Kosarsky/MGDC.*

## Harding Garden at Belle Meade

*by Mariwyn Evans, Class of 2011*

The peas are twining, the Carolina jessamine is blooming, and all is right at Belle Meade. Despite the rain, we've rooted out the weeds—after all we are the Weedin' Women—and started crops of carrots, radishes, beets, and mustard greens.



*The historic Harding Garden at Belle Meade. Photo: Mariwyn Evans/MGDC*

With the frost date finally past, we hope to have tomatoes, peppers, and other warm weather crops set out before all you Master Gardeners come to the garden for the May meeting on Thursday, May 14th. By then, the poppies may be in bloom and the strawberries ripening. See you there! Or come help with the final spruce up on any Wednesday at 9am, weather permitting. 🌱

## Kitchen Gardens at The Hermitage

*by Laura Kraft, Co-Chairperson, Class of 2010*



*Thanks Tom Coulter (2015) for sprucing up our sign! Photo: Laura Kraft/MGDC*

We had a sunny yet chilly Saturday for our Seed Starting Earn and Learn Workshop. A special thanks to the Interns and Master Gardeners who attended. We learned about and worked on several spring planting activities, including how to plant seeds, soil blocking techniques, container ideas, and caring for seedlings.

A special thank you to Tom Coulter (Class of 2015) for refurbishing our MGDC Garden signs. Their new paint job looks great.

Join in the fun or just come visit—share your knowledge of heirloom gardening or learn more about it. Please contact co-chairs Laura Kraft ([lkraft1212@gmail.com](mailto:lkraft1212@gmail.com)) or Mary Langford ([langfordlaw@hotmail.com](mailto:langfordlaw@hotmail.com)) for details. We look forward to seeing you at the Hermitage! 🌱



*Terry Torre (2003) leading a garden tour during a chilly March morning Earn & Learn workshop. Photo: Laura Kraft/MGDC*



# May 2015

For a complete calendar of events,  
visit our website at [www.mgofdc.org](http://www.mgofdc.org).

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

## Save the Date:

★ Wilson County Master Gardeners Spring Festival — May 09, 2015

★ Urban Gardening Festival — May 16, 2015

|           |   |           |  |  |   |   |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|--|---|---|
| <p>1</p>  |   |           |  |  |   | <p>2</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere and<br/>The Hermitage<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Demo Garden</p>                                       |
| <p>3</p>  | <p>4</p> <p>Workday:<br/>Grassmere,<br/>8am-12pm</p>  | <p>5</p>  | <p>6</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Belle Meade</p>  | <p>7</p>   | <p>8</p>  | <p>9</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere and<br/>The Hermitage<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Demo Garden</p>                                       |
| <p>10</p> | <p>11</p> <p>Workday:<br/>Grassmere,<br/>8am-12pm</p> | <p>12</p> | <p>13</p> <p>Meet Me at the<br/>Market,<br/>10am-2pm<br/>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Belle Meade</p> | <p>14</p> <p>May Monthly<br/>Meeting 6:30pm<br/>at Belle Meade</p> | <p>15</p> <p>Urban Gardening<br/>Festival Setup<br/>3pm-7pm</p> | <p>16</p> <p>Urban Gardening<br/>Festival<br/>9am-4pm<br/>Takedown,<br/>5-6pm<br/>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere and<br/>The Hermitage</p> |
| <p>17</p> | <p>18</p> <p>Workday:<br/>Grassmere,<br/>8am-12pm</p> | <p>19</p> | <p>20</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Belle Meade</p>   | <p>21</p>  | <p>22</p>   | <p>23</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere and<br/>The Hermitage<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Demo Garden</p>                                      |
| <p>24</p> | <p>25</p> <p>Workday:<br/>Grassmere,<br/>8am-12pm</p> | <p>26</p> | <p>27</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Belle Meade</p>   | <p>28</p>  | <p>29</p>   | <p>30</p> <p>Workdays:<br/>8am-12pm at<br/>Grassmere and<br/>The Hermitage<br/>9am-12pm at<br/>Demo Garden</p>                                      |
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# Urban Gardening Festival 2015

*by the Urban Gardening Festival Planning Committee*

The sixth annual Urban Gardening Festival is almost upon us!

Held at amidst the 8,800 square feet of garden space at our Demonstration Garden on the campus of Ellington Agricultural Center, it's a wonderful and free event we host every year for the community.

**This year's festival will be held from 9am-4pm on Saturday, May 16th, rain or shine.**

Last year's event was well-attended, with over 50 booths and nearly 1,600 visitors...and this year looks to be even bigger (and better, too)!

The Urban Gardening Festival offers visitors opportunities to learn from Master Gardeners, discover neighborhood markets and gardens, shop local growers, suppliers, artisans and other vendors. Tell your neighbors and friends, and bring the family down to Ellington!

We are also very grateful for the generous support of this year's sponsors who help us make this a truly free community event. Please be certain to thank them for their commitment to the Master Gardeners!

Our presenting sponsors (\$500+) are the **Davidson Farmers Co-Op, Farm Bureau of Davidson County**, and **UT Extension**. Our exhibition sponsor is **All Seasons Gardening & Brewing Supply Co.** Our media sponsors are **Local Table Magazine** and **Team Green Adventures/Lightning 100**.

Volunteers are needed to help during setup on Friday, May 15th from 3:30pm-7pm and the day of the festival beginning at 6am until takedown at 4pm. Signup for as many hours as you'd like to volunteer — it's going to be a great day and the more merrier!

Signup at the May meeting or contact Nancy Wilcenski, at (615) 750-3947 or [nancy.wilcenski@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.wilcenski@gmail.com). 🐼

## Plant Sale

*by Judy Burger, Plant Sale Coordinator*

Our annual Master Gardeners of Davidson County Plant Sale is less than two weeks away when it's held during the Urban Gardening Festival.

Please consider donating: Perennials, annuals, vegetable plants, herbs, or anything garden-related. Please keep in mind:

- Plants should be potted in clean, nondescript containers.
- Plants should be labelled with: Name (common and/or scientific), location, and description.

All plants donated to our sale require inspection by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and **must be dropped off at the Demo Garden before 12pm Friday, May 15th.**

Alternatively, **plants donated to the sale will be accepted during the May monthly meeting (May 14th).**

We will also be in need of volunteers to assist with the plant sale during the festival. You may signup at the May meeting or by contacting me. I can be reached at (615) 244-4533 or [judyburger@rocketmail.com](mailto:judyburger@rocketmail.com). 🐼

## Sylvia Wahl to chair garden tours

*by Carroll Marrero, Membership Chairperson, Class of 2009*

Sylvia Wahl has always had that gung-ho attitude and, yes, she brings it with her on this new assignment.

With winter and some of spring behind us, it's time to share the beauty of our yards with fellow Master Gardeners. Yes—it's time to **host a garden tour!**

Show off all your hard work by hosting a tour of your garden by contact Sylvia at (615) 227-0633 or [wahlhs@bellsouth.net](mailto:wahlhs@bellsouth.net).

You may earn 5 teaching hours, the "T" of your ACT hours, for preparing and hosting a tour of your garden for other Master Gardeners.

You choose the date and time to highlight something of seasonal interest in your garden. Tour dates, times, and locations will be posted in our newsletter and all Master Gardeners and Interns are invited to visit.

Remember: Any Master Gardener, whether Certified or an Intern, attending a garden tour may report their time as continuing education hours (CEUs). 🐼

## A Note to Interns

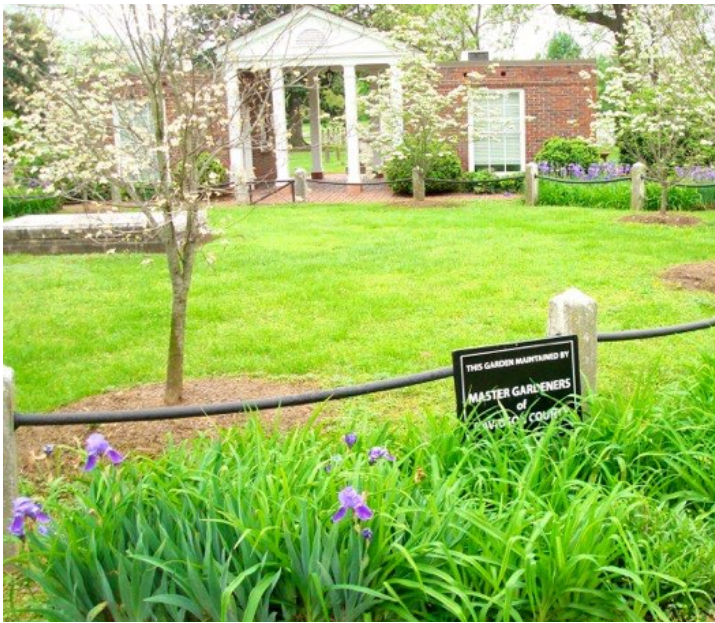
*by Bob Mather, President, Class of 2000*

As the Master Gardener course comes to a close this spring, we ask that you set aside a few moments to complete an electronic survey to tell us about your experience.

We need your input in order to make improvements to the program and ensure that it meets the needs of everyone who enrolls. The survey is anonymous and we invite you to give your honest opinions about what you enjoyed and what you didn't, what you want to see in the future, and how else we can make the course more worthwhile.

By now you've received a link to the survey and another will be sent to you shortly. Please take a few moment when not gardening to give us your valuable input. Thank you! 🐼





## Nashville City Cemetery

by Bob Mather, Co-Chairperson, Class of 2000

There is nothing like Historic Nashville City Cemetery in the spring. The many dogwoods are especially spectacular as they form a canopy over several of the roads that wander through the cemetery. The old-fashioned blue Iris is also in full bloom.



Canopy of dogwoods. Photo: Bob Mather/MGDC

The rains of April have prevented us from preparing the flowerbeds for planting, but we plan on several work sessions for May.

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 9th** as we return to present our annual "Master Gardeners Tour" of the cemetery, giving you a little history and a look at some of the plants in the flowerbeds and outlying graves where they are planted. The tour is from 10am-11:30am. 🌱

## Historic Grassmere Gardens

by Cathie Long, Chairperson, Class of 1999

It is our favorite time of the year. Spring has sprung and the early vegetables are looking great. We have radishes, Swiss chard, early peas, carrots, onions, beets, lettuce, and turnip greens. The kale is looking good from last fall but the collards bolted and have been pulled to give to the animals. New collard plants and seeds are taking their place.

The big push will be to finish getting the vegetable garden weeded, cultivated and planted with the summer vegetables. The poles are ready for the beans, five different kinds and three kinds of bush beans. Who can resist those interesting heirloom names: Lazy Wife, Dragon's Tongue, and Trail of Tears, to name a few.

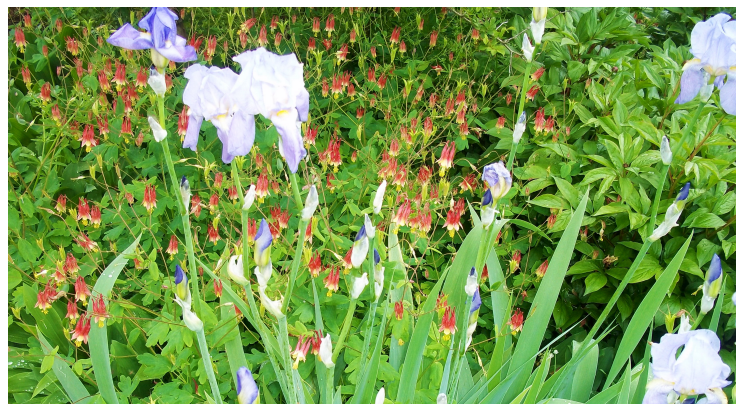


The pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*, host plant to the Zebra Swallowtail butterfly, in bloom at Grassmere. Photo: Cathie Long/MGDC

We will have eight varieties of heirloom tomatoes. The plants we started from seed are outstanding and we will probably have a few available for the Urban Gardening Festival. Also, the pepper plants and eggplants will be coming out to the garden. It is best to wait until the ground is warm, not just warm air temperatures.

Daffodils need to be thinned and the perennial bed needs to be weeded and pine straw added to showcase the beauties as they come forth. Spaces can be filled with the seeds for summer annuals.

With so many items on our "to do list", we need many gardeners to participate to get all this accomplished. An **Earn and Learn Workshop will take place on Saturday, May 9th**, and mentors and interns are invited to come out as a group for that Saturday morning. Please contact me by Wednesday, May 6th, to let me know you are coming. The group will meet at 8:30am at the Croft Center and walk to the gardens together. There will be a "Volunteer Group Agreement and Roster" to sign when you arrive. 🌱



Columbine and irises. Photo: Anne Bush/MGDC



# Demonstration Garden

by Mary Boyd, Co-Chairperson, Class of 2008

Since our Earn & Learn Workshop on February 28th, we've seen a lot of activity in the garden...plants and humans hard at work growing and taking care of nature. So many perennials are returning; and so many Master Gardeners and Interns from the Class of 2015 have been coming to help as well. From the freezing February temperatures to the pleasant spring idylls, we've seen many weeds pulled, perennials trimmed and transplanted, and vegetables and annual color planted.



**Vegetable garden renovation. Photo: Mary Boyd/MGDC**

Our Keyhole Garden was given some additional soil and planted with cool season veggies. The Herb Garden was really cleaned up and organized; we gained some elbow room! The compost bins were turned and are ready to be a demonstration station for the Urban Gardening Festival. Thanks Melanie Perry (2014)! The Butterfly Garden were cleaned, plants identified, and plantings added. Our fabulous finished compost was used on the herb, rain garden, shade beds, etc. The Shade Garden was given a spring cleanup. Tyann Chappell (2013) worked hard on beautifying the perennial flower border out in the acreage as well as remodeling the vegetable garden, while Barbara Allen (2000) and others worked prepped the Junior Master Gardener space.



**Katie and Barbara. Try keeping up with these gals!. Photo: Mary Boyd/MGDC**

Mary Dickerson (2000) has a propagation project making stem cuttings from *Fothergilla gardenia* ('Mt. Airy') and *Calli-carpa dichotama* ('Beauty Berry'). They were stuck in the ground in March near the beautiful bulbs and many are sprouting new buds.

The Rain Garden has been weeded, although there are still a few violets! And, of course, the weather has been doing its thing over the past two weeks with major rainfall. It's a great example of a rain garden! Come observe it sometime.

The Demonstration Garden has so many types of planting areas that there is really something for every interest, and the perfect green space to host the Urban Gardening Festival this month. Please join us in the gardens as we prepare for the event on Saturday mornings from 9am-12pm.

Thanks to all who have helped, including: Barbara, Catherine, Katie, Bob, Bill, Laura, Tom, Lisa, Jeannine, Cheryl, Tyann, Mary, and Shirley. 🌱

## Mentoring Program

by Carol Marrero, Membership Chairperson, Class of 2009

Congratulation to all of our Interns for completing the first step of their journey toward becoming a Master Gardener of Davidson County! Many of you have already begun earning your 8 continuing education hours and 40 volunteer hours while attending class. In fact, a few have now certified!!

Please remember that you count travel time for volunteer activities.

All projects will continue to offer Earn & Learn workshops throughout the year. Please refer periodically to our newsletters and website calendars for updated information on scheduled and new education and volunteer opportunities.

Garden tours will be scheduled for this summer, so keep a watchful eye out for these gems. NPT's "Volunteer Gardener" is a great resource AND you may earn ½ hour of continuing education for every segment you watch. (They are also available on [YouTube](#).)

Your Mentor continues to be a valuable resource for you so stay connected. Remember Saturday, May 16—it's our Urban Gardening Festival, a great opportunity to earn both education and volunteer hours.

Many of you have registered and are entering your hours. If you should need help—call your Mentor. If you are unable to reach your Mentor, please call Bob Mather at (615) 525-5293 or email him at [rmather321@aol.com](mailto:rmather321@aol.com).

Mentors, thank you for your dedication and caring. Thank you for the many hours you commit to this program. It is very visible and appreciated by everyone. 🌱



# April Meeting Minutes

by Laura Boatwright, Recording Secretary, Class of 2014

The April meeting was held on Thursday, April 9, 2015 at the Ed Jones Auditorium with 44 members in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Mather at 6:30pm. Following the potluck meal, Polly Rooker, a biologist with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, spoke about native bees.

Bob stated that the Class of 2015 would end in three weeks, with the last class being held on Thursday, April 30th where projects will be invited to display and discuss their work. Mentors are urged to encourage their interns to update their volunteer and continuing education hours.

Bob also reminded members to be thinking about making plants for the Jackson trip in July.

**Nashville City Cemetery** — General James Robertson's lot has been planted with 300 dwarf mongo grass plants to help prevent erosion.

**Historic Grassmere Gardens** — There are a lot of seeds to plant and flowers to transplant. Master Gardeners can come and help in three ways: 1) Call Cathie the day before you wish to work and sign a Nashville Zoo day waiver, 2) Attend an Earn and Learn Workshop as a group, or 3) Sign the Nashville Zoo volunteer form and go through orientation.

**Kitchen Gardens at The Hermitage** — No report.

**Harding Garden at Belle Meade** — The May monthly meeting will be held at Belle Meade at the Kitchen Gardens.

**Treasurer's Report** — Our account balance is \$9,848.93. Marilee has asked that if you need a receipt for your dues payment, please see her at the next meeting or email her at [mljacobs25@hotmail.com](mailto:mljacobs25@hotmail.com).

**Urban Gardening Festival** — A signup sheet was available at the back of the auditorium to for volunteer opportunities during setup on May 15th and the event on May 16th. If you would like to work in a specific area of the garden, or at specific times, members were urged to contact Nancy Wilcenski at [nancy.wilcenski@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.wilcenski@gmail.com).

Upcoming Deadlines for the Urban Gardening Festival:

- All crafts for the MGDC Craft Booth are due at the next monthly meeting, Thursday, May 14th. *Members are asked to save wine corks and bring them to this meeting.*
- All plants for the MGDC Plant Sale must be delivered to the Demo Garden by 12pm on Friday, May 15th. Plants this year must be inspected and certified by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

Bob would like 5 people to assist him with setup and signage. Please do not forget the Junior Master Gardener's White Elephant Sale—gardening items always sell well.

**Junior Master Gardener Camp** — Doris has many instructors for the different topics to be presented but is still in need of a few teachers. Please contact her if interested at [dorisgweakley@comcast.net](mailto:dorisgweakley@comcast.net). She also requests any large shoe boxes (boot size) be saved by members and brought to her for use at the camp. She needs both box bottoms and tops for the project.

There being no further business, Don Hover made a motion to adjourn. 🐼



## Moles Extraordinaire

by Marilee Jacobs, Treasurer, Class of 2013

Aww, spring is here and if you have walked in the grass you've probably stumbled over the hills—the Moles are out of dormancy.

Here's a little known fact about these critters: Moles rely on directional (or stereo) scent to determine an object's location, such as when locating the worms they enjoy eating.

Dr. Kenneth Catania, Stevenson Professor of Biological Sciences at Vanderbilt University, published "Stereo and serial sniffing guide to an odor source in a mammal" in the February 2013 issue of *Nature Communications*. ([Link to article](#))

As he discovered, even though the moles' nostrils are very close together they still effectively detect odor gradients. The common mole is virtually blind and doesn't have a very good sense of touch but surprisingly is very good at locating prey. Experimental evidence established that they can tell which direction a scent is coming from, the first evidence of a directional sense of smell in a wild mammal!

The fact that moles use stereo odor cues to locate food suggests that other mammals that rely heavily on their sense of smell, like dogs, might also have this ability.

This tells me, too, that if you plop one of those "wormy poison things" in a mole run, that they will find it and to not worry whether the tunnel is old or new, or at least that is what I tell myself as I buy box after box! 🐼



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# The Urban Gardening Festival

Saturday  
May 16<sup>th</sup>, 9am-4pm

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS AT  
ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER

A free event for the community

*hosted by*  
Master Gardeners of Davidson County  
[www.mgofdc.org](http://www.mgofdc.org)



- Explore over **8,800 square feet** of garden space
- Learn from area experts during **how-to** workshops
- Discover **neighborhood** gardens and markets
- Shop **local growers, suppliers,** & the Nashville Mobile Market
- Buy from **local artists** and **vendors**
- Find how to get involved and give back to **your community**
- Find flowers and vegetables at the **Master Gardener Plant Sale**



Bring the whole family (and your pets, too) and visit 60+ exhibitors & the Tennessee Agricultural Museum!