

Garden Talk

The Official Monthly Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Davidson County
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Mather's Musings

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

I recently spoke to the Agricultural Association of Middle Tennessee. Beforehand, I wondered what would I present that members of this group didn't already know...the Master Gardener program! I already had a PowerPoint presentation prepared and it worked perfectly. (I even think I recruited someone for the 2016 program!)

What a year 2015 has been for the Master Gardeners of Davidson County!

Despite cold weather during the **Nashville Lawn and Garden**, our organization came together and won an award. We fine-tuned our **Mentoring Program** during its second year for the 2015 class which had several interns earn their volunteer and continuing education hours to become certified Master Gardeners.

Several interns learned about Boxwood trimming at the **Nashville City Cemetery** and participated in Earn and Learn workshops at the **Demo Garden, Grassmere Historic Farm at the Nashville Zoo, Harding Garden at Belle Meade** and **Kitchen Gardens at Andrew Jackson's Hermitage**.

Despite the rain, we had over 1,000 attend this year's **Urban Gardening Festival**. Several of our members opened their gardens for tours this year. NewChannel 5's **Talk of the Town** program featured our "Butterfly/Pollinator Gardens". We once again held another fun and

educational **Junior Master Gardener Camp**. We educated another segment of our community with presentations on various gardening topics and answering questions at the monthly **Meet Me at Market** events hosted by the Nashville Farmers' Market.

A great job, as always, at the **Tennessee State Fair and Music and Molasses**. Our **Speakers Bureau** has already begun to prepare for 2016. I am very pleased with the programs we have presented to our members this year and hope you were as well.

2016 will include a celebration of 30 years and the honor of being the first Master Gardener program in Tennessee. I am proud of the fine job you have all done and continue doing as Master Gardeners. I am also very happy that we have gotten our **Memorial Board** at the Demo Garden restored and updated. If you have not visited the memorial, I encourage you to visit.

Looking over the past four years, it has been a busy, productive and satisfying time as your president. Now is the time for me to pass the gavel to someone else to guide you for the next year. I look forward to working on the plans for our 30th Anniversary Celebration and urge all of you to participate in any way you can so you can get the most out of being a Master Gardener of Davidson County! 🌱

Christmas Celebration

Thursday, December 10th

6:30pm

Ed Jones Auditorium

Ellington Agricultural Center

Featuring Randy Shaw and Don & Karen McNatt

Guests welcome. Please bring finger foods or desserts. Ham, turkey, rolls, and beverages provided.

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Cover:

The Class of 2015 during a presentation by Julie Berbiglia of Metro Water. Photo: Caroll Marrero/MGDC.

Editor's Note:

With this, my 25th and final monthly newsletter as editor, I want to thank everyone who has made contributions over the past two years. Your content, photos, and proofing have given us such a wonderful newsletter and, co-incidentally, made mine a much easier task. You've made our newsletter what it is and I thank you! —Jason

December Meeting: Christmas Celebration

by Karen Shaw, First Vice President, Class of 2014

Don't miss our monthly meeting held at 6:30pm on Thursday, December 10th in the Ed Jones Auditorium on the campus of Ellington Agricultural Center. Our last meeting of the year brings with it our annual Christmas Celebration.



We'll share delicious holiday ham, turkey, rolls, and beverages (provided), so please bring finger foods or desserts. While enjoying the food you'll be entertained by local singers and songwriters.

Randy Shaw, singer, songwriter and member of Southern Sound Quartet comes to us with fellow singers and songwriters, Don and Karen McNatt.

While Randy has taken his talent across America as well as to Kenya, Zambia,

Uganda, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Bolivia and Mexico, Don and Karen keep a full schedule of gigs including trips to Germany, Bermuda, England and Australia as well as across the United States.

All performers will share Christmas classics as well as some of their own holiday songs. 🎵



A Few Housekeeping Items

by Jason Goodrich, Corresponding Secretary, Class of 2013

2016 Master Gardener Course. Enrollment for the 2016 Master Gardener course has begun and UT Extension has begun accepting applications. Please tell your friends that may be interested and remember that space is limited. For more information, visit the [Enroll page at our website](#). (Also note, if you'd like a refresher, certified Master Gardeners are welcome to audit the course for free.)

MGDC Website. Our website, www.mgofdc.org, has recently been updated with some added content and resources, including a more complete newsletter archive of the past two years. If you haven't already done so, please login and use some of the helpful features in our "members-only" section. If you're having trouble, please email webmaster@mgofdc.org.

2016 Officers. Congratulations to our newly-elected officers for 2016! Your new officers are **Paul Martin** (1998), **first vice president**; **Virginia Casalone** (2011), **second vice president**; **Karen Shaw** (2014), **recording secretary**; and **Laura Cooper** (2014), **treasurer**.

The offices of president, corresponding secretary, membership chair, education chair, and events chair remain unfilled. Please let us know of your interest with an email to info@mgofdc.org if you would like to serve.

2016 Dues. Annual dues for 2016 calendar year are being collected through the end of February. Dues are \$20 for certified members; lifetime members and first-year interns are exempt. Questions? Email treasurer@mgofdc.org!

You may pay your dues at our upcoming December meeting or by mail to PO Box 41055, Nashville, TN 37204.

You can also now [pay securely online with a debit/credit card](#) using Square. 📱



My Master Gardening Experience

by Sonya Ewing, Class of 2015

Being an intern in the Master Gardener program has been a rewarding experience for me. I maintained a small home garden for the last three years, but I never imagined I would have been exposed to so much information and knowledge in a short period of time. Although going through the Master Gardener classes were very informative and helpful to building my gardening skills, I gained an equally or more valuable experience through volunteering for the community projects supported by the Master Gardeners of Davidson County.

Volunteering for the Hermitage Gardens has allowed me to build relationships with like-minded avid gardeners, obtain tips and ideas, utilize the information learned from the intern class, and improve my gardening skills through practice. For instance, the Hermitage Gardens hosted an Earn and Learn workshop on starting indoor seeds followed by hands-on training through potting seeds in their greenhouse. Additionally, they provided literature on how to build your own grow light. I have always purchased plants from local nurseries and major home improvement stores; however, being informed about GMO seeds from the Earn and Learn workshop inspired me to start my own plants indoors. Developing those skills at the Hermitage Garden's allowed me to have more control over the state and healthiness of the plants that I put in my own garden.

I used to believe that if you did not plant all your seeds by a certain time (March or April) that it was too late to plant anything. Working at the Hermitage Gardens showed me that one can continue to plant certain veggies throughout the summer. For example, I helped Mary Langford plant squash at the Hermitage Gardens and I was quite surprised that we were planting the squash well after April. She assured me that I could continue to start seeds in my garden during the summer months and gave me some pattipan squash seeds to plant. Within a few weeks I had a healthy squash plant in the middle of July and was later able to harvest quite a bit. These are just two examples of several additional things that I learned outside of my intern class through working at the Hermitage Garden.

Special projects like the Junior Master Gardener Camp was a great experience because it has allowed me to help with a pro-

gram that teaches children about gardening, which aids in better nutrition and useful skills that they can take home to teach their parents. It is believed that teaching nutrition early to young kids helps to get parents more involved in making healthier choices for family meals, and there have been schools that have tried a nutrition programs with success. We all know that growing your own food is a useful skill and will be an increasing need as people become more health conscious and the consumer demand and prices for organic foods continue to rise.

I love the Junior Gardener Program because I feel that it is helping the health crisis and obesity epidemic in America by teaching children garden skills that they can take home to teach their parents. Children who love to grow veggies, eat more veggies. Additionally, the excitement and smiles on the children faces as they planted veggies at the Demonstration Gardens along with the surprised looks on the parents' faces when they see the various daily crafts their child brought home from the gardening class was nice. I spoke to one mother who told me how amazed she was with Junior Master Gardener Camp and how much stuff her child was bringing home at very affordable and reasonable price.

Building relationships with other Master Gardeners is important and I soon realized after attending my first Thursday monthly membership meeting that it's almost like having a gardening family. I became acquainted with Master Gardener couple, Joan and Biars Davis (2014), and they spent a couple hours mentoring me in their community garden and giving me ideas on how to organize my seeds and tips on putting together a grow light. Also, Joan gave me the idea and inspired me to freeze and start canning my extra garden veggies instead of allowing them to go to waste when I could not give them away.

Being active in the various projects that the Master Gardeners of Davidson County supports is a rewarding experience and I encourage all interns to do the same. You will learn and grow more beyond the training you received in the intern class and besides, you get to share ideas and build relationships with other avid gardeners like yourself! 🌱

Children and their parents get garden tours from Weedin' Woman emeritus, Catherine Atwell. Photo: Mariwyn Evans/MGDC.



Harding Garden at Belle Meade

by Mariwyn Evans, Class of 2011

The Weedin' Women are done — at least til April. In early November, we put the scarecrows to bed, mulched walkways, and weeded one last time before frost sets in. Hopefully, we'll get enough rain to keep all the winter greens bright and the herbs fragrant. Now, we'll celebrate the season's end and the holidays with a lunch and tour at the Belle Meade Plantation.

Before we called it a day, we played host to more than 300 schoolchildren. Master Gardeners showed kids what some of the food they eat looks like in real life. We also gave them a taste of garden's bounty, including crispy carrots and warm sautéed apples and sweet potatoes. A great day in the garden for the kids — and for us.

We'll be back in April, so until then — Happy Holidays and enjoy the Season of Seed Catalogs. 🍷

Historic Grassmere Gardens

by Bill MacLennan, Class of 2003

Looks like our growing season was extended, at least as far as the weeds were concerned. Everything else has been put to bed. Our attention now turns to flower and seed catalogs to keep our interests focused until we are able to dig and plant. While we are preoccupied with our catalogs, we should not forget some interesting moments we have all experienced during the past growing season.

One stands out especially for me. Gazing out a window, I happened to see a raccoon climb an oak tree in the day's fading light. Then I remembered the oak tree held a bird feeder. As I watched the raccoon climb out a limb from the tree trunk, the limb bent closer and closer to the ground. I just had to continue watching to find out what would happen to the limb and raccoon. Shortly, the answer emerged as the raccoon jumped from the limb sending the limb streaking skyward. As the limb flew upward and reached its summit, the lid on the feeder left. Now all the seed had left its confines and spread itself on the ground beneath the tree. I watched for a couple of minutes to see what might happen. As expected, the raccoon feasted on the sunflower seed and seemed content to continue the pleasure until all the seed would be consumed.

Just as I was turning from the window, something else appeared near the newly fallen seed. Much to my surprise the new appearance was a possum. The house next door has an outside light that cast its glow into my backyard — enough light to illuminate the raccoon and possum. The next surprise was to watch the raccoon and possum begin to feast themselves on the fallen seed. Although these two critters are not to be considered friends, they continued their feast within a foot of each other. Maybe they are the odd couple. 🍷



Demonstration Gardens

by Tyann Chappell, Class of 2013

We are finding ourselves at the Demo Garden going in a slower and more "stop and smell the roses" pace. We are no longer driven to keep everything planted, watered, weeded, staked, picked, sprayed, dead-headed, or all the other typical gardening duties. Of course, there is still plenty to do but at this time of year there's more time to just meander through and enjoy the garden.

We want to thank everyone who added their special touch this year in the gardens and hope that we will see you and several new faces in 2016.

Each garden here is so individual and has its own personality and can change so much during the seasons that we are the fortunate ones to have the opportunity to experience it as the caretakers. Looking back, 2015 has been an exceptional year. Old things became new, new things came into being, and some things remained as stalwarts in the garden. Come with me and take a tour of our special places at the Demo Garden. 🍷



Mentoring Program

by Caroll Marrero, Membership Chairperson, Class of 2009

This year has simply “flown by at warp speed”! I believe the reason for feeling like this is because many certified Master Gardeners and Interns have been so busy tending to tasks involving our projects as well as working to make our special events such big successes! Many supporting hours have been spent being Mentors, many Interns have already achieved certification and many Interns continue earning hours to achieve their certification! A very big and heartfelt “thank you” to everyone involved — individually and collectively we do make a big difference in Davidson County and in each other's lives.

By now you must have noticed my frequent use of “many” — rightfully so. All of the above equates to hours — many hours. Reporting these hours is extremely important. PLEASE take the time to enter all or your Continuing Education and Volunteer hours. Each December, David Cook must submit an annual report to UT on total hours recorded for each category. If you would please enter your hours by December 15th, it would be very much appreciated. All hours count. Many, many thanks!

As we put our gardens to bed for the season there is still a long list of opportunities to earn hours. Here are a few exciting ones to choose from:

1. Metro Parks: Guest speakers. Check schedule on their website, <http://www.nashville.gov/Parks-and-Recreation.aspx>.
2. Meet Me at the Market: Nashville Farmers' Market
3. Tennessee Agricultural Museum at Ellington
4. Riverfront Park: 1 hour at the park = 1 hour CEU
5. Shelby Bottom Park: 1 hour at the park = 1 hour CEU
6. Warner Parks: 1 hour at the park = 1 hour CEU
7. Cheekwood: 1 hour = 1 hour CEU
8. Volunteer Gardener: Watch on Thursday evenings, repeating again on Sunday mornings – ½ hour credit for each episode.

My love and appreciation to each of you. 🌱

Memorial Dedication

by Bob Mather, President, Class of 2000

Saturday, November 14th could not have been a better autumn day for the dedication of the newly restored and updated Memorial at our Demonstration Gardens. The recently restored board looks wonderful. For several years this board honoring Master Gardeners of Davidson County who have passed was located at Grassmere but had been moved to the Demo Garden. It needed work and updating when I first took office as president in 2012, and I've wanted to make its restoration a priority ever since. Finally, with the help of many, we have a great memorial to our departed gardeners.

On this day we added name plaques for **Don Buchanan** (1999), **David Fleming** (1999), **Bob Goss** (1998), **Mary Ellen Knott** (2005), **Chrissie Smith** (1999), **Barbara Sullivan** (1993), and **Bessie Ward** (1997).

It was wonderful to see Master Gardeners Ruth Buchanan (1999) and Cecil Ward (1997) at the Ceremony as well as



Gerre White (2013), sister of Bob Goss and a Master Gardener, who believed she may have been unable to attend.

To help with the ceremony, Arden Schlesinger (2004) spoke a few words before Doris Weakly (1999) read a poem about trees and presented a plaque to Patti Waller (2004) in honor of her late husband Rob Waller. We then proceeded to an area of the Demo Garden where, with the help of our advisor and fellow Master Gardener David Cook, we planted our state tree, the Tulip Poplar, in Rob's honor.



I would like to thank the team at the Demo Garden, Tom Coulter (2015), Erica Shannon (2015), Katy Brantley (2015), Mike Humeny (2014), Arden Schlesinger, Doris Weakly, Muff Cline (2007), Shelia Whitlock, (2005), Catherine Atwell (2004), and especially Shirley Lee (2001) for their help in making this commemoration possible. When you're next in the Demo Gardens, please pay a visit to our MGDC Memorial. 🌱



MGDC Memorial. Photo: Shirley Lee/MGDC.



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Perfect Divinity Candy

from the kitchen of Bob Mather

Ingredients

- ✓ 2½ c sugar
- ✓ ½ c light corn syrup
- ✓ ½ c water
- ✓ ¼ tsp salt
- ✓ 2 egg whites
- ✓ 1 spoonful pure vanilla extract

Instructions

1. In a large, heavy saucepan combine sugar, corn syrup, water, and salt. Place over medium-high heat and attach a candy thermometer. Stir until sugar dissolves.
2. As the temperature approaches 240 degrees, place the egg whites in a bowl and beat at high speed until stiff peaks form.

3. When the temperature of the sugar mixture reaches 250 degrees, very gradually add it in a stream to the egg whites, beating at medium-high speed. Add extract and continue beating until the candy holds its shape (around 5 minutes).
4. Quickly drop onto waxed paper using greased spoons. Cool completely and store in an airtight container at room temperature.

Notes on Substitutions

- ▶ Substitute butter extract for vanilla and add ½ c chopped pecans.
- ▶ Substitute brandy extract for vanilla and add ½ c chopped walnuts.
- ▶ Decrease the vanilla extract to ½ tsp and add ½ tsp of peppermint extract and along with ⅓ c crushed peppermint candy.

