

THYMES

CUMBERLAND COUNTRY MASTER GARDENERS

APRIL, 2022



President: Jewell Wilhoite

Did someone accidentally flip the switch? What happened to those bright, sunny days of early spring? Let's make sure that *switch* moves back to perfection for this weekend.

The signs are out and the radios are playing our song. We are all tuned up for a big Flower Lawn and Garden Show. Mike Barron and his diligent core of leaders have been gearing up for more than a year and are poised to present a colorful, voluminous event. Many creative ideas and hand-crafted treasures will offer the community an opportunity to stock up on a variety of lawn and garden items. In addition, the theme *Tennessee Smart Yards* emphasizes the educational nature of our club. Master gardeners can

feel proud of our generous and well-represented volunteer network. We look forward to a celebration of everyone's involvement in a successful Show.

Thank you!

Vice President: Rhoda Hiller

At our May 3rd general meeting to be held at the **Plateau Discovery Gardens**, we will hear from Shalena Durkot. Shalena has been preparing for the Garden's annual plant sale and will share some insights about new plants offered this year. She will also talk about the newly planted area which includes conifers and some hard woods. We are fortunate to gain access to Shalena's knowledge and gardening experience.

Also, the hospitality theme for the evening is Mexican fare. Wear your sombrero.

Meet Our Members April 2022

By Rosie Drechnik

Sue Partch

Sue and her husband Peter moved to Crossville from Vermont in December of 2009. Sue also lived in New Jersey (where she was born), grew up in Vermont where she attended a one room schoolhouse and was taught by the same teacher through the 8th grade, and lived in Connecticut where she went to college and resided for a number of years. She worked as a computer programmer, taught programming, and taught high school and middle school math which is the position she retired from. She has a son and a daughter, and 2 granddaughters. She and Peter have a cat named Cody (named after a singer in a Bluegrass band).

Sue is a Certified Master Gardener having completed the program in 2018. Her favorite part of the program was learning about the unique challenges and differences involved in gardening on the Plateau. When asked about her favorite thing about CCMG she stated it is being able to work with all the beautiful plants at the Discovery Garden and also the contacts and friendships she has made since joining CCMG. Something she would like to see in the future for CCMG is an increase in the number of members who volunteer. (Amen to that!).

Sue has sort of adopted the daylily plot and you will often see her weeding diligently in the afternoon. She is involved in FLAG this year as the person in charge of demonstrations and has been helping with the craft table. She describes herself as a crafty person and enjoys working with fabric (she made the felt butterflies and birds for the CCMG Christmas tree entry).

As far as gardening preferences, she enjoys working with perennials and is challenged trying to keep family heirloom plants thriving in our unique environment. She loves wildflowers of any kind and many of you have read some of the wonderful pieces she has written for our newsletter about them. When asked if she would consider herself an expert in any area of gardening, she emphatically answered “no”. She describes herself as having a “pale green thumb”.

Lastly, when I asked Sue if there was anything else she wanted to share or something interesting about her, she stated she has had a number of great travel experiences. Here are just a few: she kissed the Blarney stone in Ireland; she toured the Sydney Opera House; observed people fishing with nets in Colombia; traveled through the Panama Canal, and attended a Shakespeare play in Germany (all in German) while visiting a former exchange student. Wow! The pictures and memories she must have.

Barbara Moore: For the Birds & Cats

Last fall I had the wonderful opportunity to work with several Master Gardeners making bird seed wreaths and bark butter and logs. Vickie gave me the recipe for the bark butter after making it one day at the gardens. I looked at her and told her I would have to alter the recipe as there was no way I would need that much bark butter. Well, it did not take long to go from using a small amount of ingredients to buying and making the same amount as we made to sell! The birds like it so much, some days I fill up the log twice.

One day, as I was filling up the log, the cat decided to help me. Molly is a rescue cat that is on the *hefty* side, about 14 pounds! She decided the bark butter is pretty yummy. One thing a 14 pound cat does not need is something made with lard! So every day when I fill the log, I have to fight with Molly to keep her away from the delicious bark butter. At my house, we have happy birds and a happy cat, when she gets a bite of bark butter.



Molly the happy cat.

Robin Piacine: Blooming imposters—not peonies



Murillo tulip



Schoonoord

Julia Wood

Tick Season is Here

Ticks in Tennessee are most active from April through September, but it is not uncommon in to have them in winter months. Folks heading outdoors and letting their pets out should still be checking for ticks. I have already removed two larvae this March from myself and know of at least 2 other Master Gardeners that picked them up at the garden. I wasn't thinking that we'd had enough warm weather!

To avoid ticks, the [CDC](#) says to use EPA registered repellents such as DEET, picardin, and oil of lemon eucalyptus. Some like to wrap ankles with lint roller tape (sticky side out) to trap them low. I have never tried this.

It's equally as important to know what to do if you're bitten.

The first step is removal:

1. The Center for Disease Control says to use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.

2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouthparts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
4. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

Tick bites are often harmless and don't cause any symptoms. However, ticks can cause [allergic reactions](#), and certain ticks can pass diseases onto humans and pets when they bite, such as Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Make sure to monitor for symptoms like flu or rashes for several days or weeks after a tick bite. These can be dangerous or even deadly.

Here are some of the most common tick-related symptoms to watch out for:

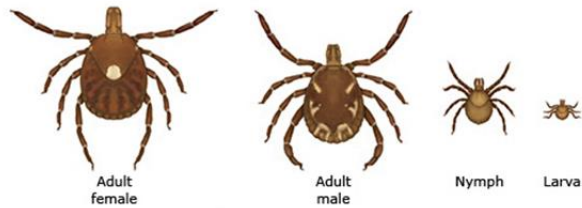
- Fever/Chills
- Aches/Pains
- Rash: A "target" rash, spotted rash, expanding rash and others.

As many as 15 tick species live in Tennessee, but the four most common are the **blacklegged tick, commonly called the "deer tick"; the Lone Star tick; the brown dog tick; and the American dog tick, sometimes called the "wood tick"**.

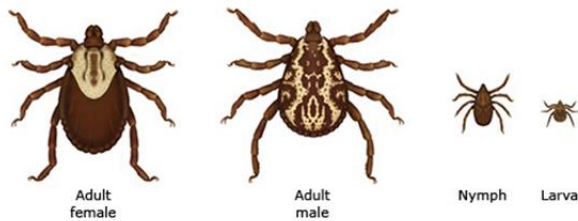
Blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)



Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)



NOTE: Relative sizes of several ticks at different life stages.

Engorged female
I. scapularis tick.
Color may vary.



They live outdoors in grass, trees, shrubs, and leaf piles.

Use of pesticides can reduce the number of ticks in treated areas of your yard. However, you should not rely on spraying to reduce your risk of infection. Here are some tips to reduce risk, but they aren't always practical in all gardens:

- Remove leaf litter.
- Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- Mow the lawn frequently.
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area (discourages rodents).
- Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees.
- Discourage unwelcome animals (such as deer, raccoons, and stray dogs) from entering your yard by constructing fences.
- Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.

Check yourself and good luck!

Sue Partch: Animal Encounters: Wood Duck



Near buildings on the Vermont hilltop which I described last month was a half-acre pond. Among other creatures, the pond attracted waterfowl, usually as just a rest stop but some years a wood duck pair would stay. The nest boxes installed by a previous owner were at the far end of the pond, so sometimes we didn't even know they were there.

The property owner used the large apartment over the garage only on occasional weekends. As caretakers, we had keys so we could check the apartment now and then to be sure there were no problems with heat, water lines, mice, etc. On one such random check, my husband called me into the apartment. The owner always left the place clean and neat, but that day some things were slightly disturbed. A bedspread was askew and magazines were on the floor in the living room. A closer look turned up some bird droppings, so a room-by-room search ensued until in a guest bedroom we heard some rustling. Under the bed was our culprit, a male wood duck.

Attempts to coax the duck out failed and neither of us really wanted to stick an arm in range of an upset duck beak. Finally I went and got a broom to poke at it. As it retreated to the other side of the bed, my husband grabbed it, pinning the wings to the body. After a couple squawks and wiggles, the duck gave up all struggle and let my husband take it out to release it by the pond. During the tidying up, we puzzled about how the duck got in. All windows were firmly closed and locked, as was the door. All we could come up with was that it somehow flew/fell down the fireplace chimney. The damper was open with no screen across the opening. Most importantly, though, my husband just happened to decide to check the apartment within a day or two of the duck's entry. Lucky duck.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS MONTH'S CCMG
NEWSLETTER