

THYMES MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

AUGUST, 2021



PRESIDENT: RON DRECHNIK

Hi Everyone,

This month the Drechniks have been busy trying to save and use up the produce from our garden. Tomato sauce is in the freezer along with peppers and beans. And, of course, there is the never ending job of weeding!

At this month's board meeting, we discussed closing our post office mailbox due to an increase in cost, as well as very little utilization. Gregg's office will now be used as our official mailing address. A mailbox will be placed in Gregg's office and Ellen will place any mail received in it. The new address is:

Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.
1398 Livingston Rd
Crossville TN 38571-5123

We also discussed the Homestead Apple Festival booth invitation for September 25th and 26th. Vicki May has graciously agreed to be the chairperson for this event. THANK YOU, Vicki! She has sent out some emails about it and hopefully we will get the volunteers needed before the August 31 deadline, so we can proceed with this event. Please contact Vicki to sign up or for more information.

Our next membership meeting is on Tuesday, September 7 at 5:30 at the outdoor classroom at PDG. This is our annual picnic. We will be serving ham sandwiches, chips, water, and pop. **Please bring salads or desserts.** The board and possibly a few others will be serving you as you proceed through the line. **Remember, both members and spouses/significant others are invited!**

There will be a short meeting to choose the nominating committee and a few announcements as well.

Our next board meeting is on Thursday, September 23 at 2:00 in the Country Store. You are welcome to attend.

Thank you to ALL of you who have spent many hours planning and preparing for the Fall Festival!

Keep getting those hands dirty in the garden.

Sue Partch: Ragweed

Uses for, yes, RAGWEED



Maybe, because it isn't pretty, with no flower to speak of, has nasty pollen and grows almost anywhere, ragweed is considered a most noxious weed. Still, that fall nemesis of allergy sufferers has some good points.

Because it does grow most anywhere and not only tolerates, but seems to love, poor soil, it is a great plant for erosion control and ground cover in disturbed or barren areas. It even removes lead from soil. Since leaf miners prefer it to peppers, ragweed can also be used as a companion plant.

Ragweed leaves are a food for many moth and butterfly caterpillars. Rabbits and deer eat the whole plant, insects eat the leaves, and many small mammals and birds eat the oil-rich seeds. There is evidence that Native Americans cultivated giant ragweed for its seeds as a winter food source high in crude protein and fat. Anecdotal comments indicate some natural foods advocates eat young leaves raw or cooked like spinach. Some dog owners claim their dogs love the stuff.

Medicinal uses of the leaves include: an astringent, antiseptic, emetic, emollient, fever reducer, relief of itches due to insect bites or plant rashes, and for relief of menstrual discomfort. Native Americans made a tea of the root as a laxative. Additional possible Native American uses for ragweed note the stems could be used to make rope, plus the sap and seeds made a red dye.

And, like fighting fire with fire, ragweed pollen tinctures might be effective in reducing allergy symptoms for some people.

Speaking to the allergy sufferers - the very small and light pollen that irritates you is wind dispersed. It can travel up to 40 miles, is most prevalent in the morning and not only flies up your nose and in your mouth but sticks to your clothes and your pets. It is heaviest August through November and accounts for 90% of the allergy pollen in the USA. If you have ragweed allergy, you may also get symptoms from eating these food relatives: chamomile tea, banana, cantaloupe, cucumber, honeydew, watermelon, white potato, zucchini and sunflower seeds.

Information for this article was taken from the following on-line sources: *Common Sense Home*, *Lewisginter, Patch*, *Eat the Weeds* and *Song of the Woods studio*

Jewell Wilhoite: Garden Tips

Now that summer is quickly bidding adieu, I wanted to remind future thinkers that those brown seed pods and capsules could be next year's bounty. Pick out seeds from what has been your best performers. On a dry day, get your gear together (clean gloves, handi-wipes, snippers, paper bags or containers, and eyeglasses—for me) and swoop in on those plants. Always plan to let the seeds dry for some time in an open container after gathering. Then, arrange storage someplace cool, dark, and dry. Okay, keep track of your successes for next year at this time. I'll be waiting to hear.

Alan Baker: Landscaping Screen

We have a new house going up behind our lot, so my wife and I wanted to put up a screen of plants. After seeing other planting screens of Leyland Cypress go bad, I was encouraged to do a mixed variety screen and turned to, of all places, UT Extension publication *Screen Plants for Tennessee Landscapes* by Carol Reece and others. I decided on a mix of all evergreens that includes Leyland Cypress, Canadian hemlock, Nellie R. Stevens holly, Oakland holly, green giant arborvitae and, for a little color, a fernspray, gold hinoki cypress. They are paired with our 3-year-old forest pansy redbud. All are over 6' now, except the hinoki. I know they have a long way to grow, but it is good to have them in the ground.

I'm sure that we will add some deciduous plants for color along the way. I highly recommend that publication...it is full of detailed information on lots of plants to choose from.



Thank you to all who contributed to and enjoyed this month's newsletter.