

THYMES

CUMBERLAND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

2023



President: Mike Barron

Experiment 2023

Changing from 2022 to 2023 is inevitable, whether we like it or not. Changes for the Master Gardeners of Cumberland County will also occur in 2023, but we have more to say about them. Many things, like our mission of education, will not change; but the ways in which we educate Regularly may change. We will work to highlight the educational aspect of all of our activities.

Meetings may be one of the things that changes. Some feedback from members concerning business meetings is that they are too long. Is there a way to shorten the meetings so they don't end late? Many MGs, me included, do not like driving at night, so we may try having a few meetings during the day. Our Christmas luncheon at noon was well attended. So, maybe we need to vary our usual times to meet.

Fundraising without a FLAG Show will change, with many ideas for new fundraisers. For 2023, we will be experimenting with new ideas, like *Teas in the Garden*; and others, like raising and selling tomatoes and peppers, will be continued. Please get involved and consider leading one of the fundraising proposals.

Tennessee Smart Yards (TNSY) will continue to be a focus for our organization and as an outreach for the community. I hope that all MGs are looking in their own backyards. Volunteerism in activities will remain a focus for MGs and we will find new ways to make the work enjoyable.

BOOM! Did the Bomb Cyclone hit your home? I have Hollies and Boxwoods dropping all their leaves, resembling a Charlie Brown Christmas tree. I have Laurels that look shell shocked; and my three varieties of Nandina have uniformly brown leaves, but at least they still have leaves. I have read several articles and seen a couple of videos that all tell me to be patient. I am pretty good at not doing anything, but I am worried that my landscaping plans for this year may turn into rescue and/or replace missions. I am sure this will be a topic for MGs this spring.

I am looking forward to a great 2023, where we all get to know each other even better and at the end of the year are proud of our accomplishments.

Vice President: Rhoda Hiller

Hello Master Gardeners. Spring is just around the corner and I am seeing signs of spring all over my yard. I have some grape hyacinths blooming, my neighbor has a daffodil blooming, and I saw a dandelion in my yard.

I am excited to announce that John Conrad will be our speaker for Feb. He will be speaking about the trails in Cumberland County and talking about a couple of new trails. I am sure we can see some early signs of spring if we get out and walk the trails.

I am including a couple pictures of some daffodils, a dandelion and the Hellebore blooming in my yard.



I know we are all thinking about planting and designs for our yards. Just take it a little slow when you go out to rake or to fertilize. It is so easy to slip and fall or turn an ankle.

Hope to see you all at the Feb. meeting.

FEATURE STORIES

Sue Partch: Winter Memories

It's snowing, a dusting-of-powdered-sugar kind of snow, a reminder that it's still winter. The birds are busy at the feeders. The cat doesn't want to go out. The trees are lovely with their white frosting. It reminds me of *home*.

Where I grew up, at this time of year the fields would be covered in white. Roadsides would have lumpy snowbanks. Snowstorms could be anything from a dusting like today's or a blizzard dumping up to 3 feet. With freezing temperatures, like we had a couple of weeks ago, the pipes could freeze solid. Or, maybe we would see a more benevolent January thaw with its promise of spring to help get us through the next few months of more snow and cold.

But here, winter is mostly brown and a dull green with temperatures wandering between bundle-up 20s and shirtsleeve 60s. Fields and lawns are sweeps of flattened, brownish grass; and roadsides are full of dead weed stalks and exposed rocks and trash. Autumn's downed leaves make dark carpets and heaps in ditches, in yards, in woodlands, in gardens. But also here, by the end of the month, fresh green sprouts will appear, the grass will perk up and the promise of spring will be within weeks, not months.

White or brown, North or South, I can find color in January. There's the winter green of evergreens, a glimpse of red berries on a bush here and there. Cardinals and bluebirds are bright spots. Mostly though, I make sure to appreciate the clear days when blue paints the sky. It always looks bigger in winter without the leafed-out trees to block it; and, somehow, the stark tree skeletons enhance its size and color.

Not today, though. Overcast, with snow. It's a *curl up by the fire with a book and cup of tea* day.

Keeping Up!

Connie Taylor

My brother gave me a few ginseng seeds which someone had gifted him. He had frozen them and they are now almost ready to plant. Does anyone have any suggestions about starting ginseng seeds?

Erin Fletcher Conley

In the interest of continuing to identify our master gardener group as one of committed volunteers, Erin has offered to host a *Lunch and Learn* session in February. She will remind us of all the ways we can accumulate volunteer hours. More importantly, Erin will coach us through the process of entering hours via phone or computer. If you see that method as an impossibility, Erin will actually enter your hours for you. Just write them down—approximate date, activity, place—and bring them to the session. No problem. PS: Erin will provide pizza. Just bring a drink for yourself.

We will have a sign-up sheet with specific date and time for *Lunch and Learn* at the February meeting. Think ahead and bring your calendar.

Your involvement matters to all of us, and we want to see it recognized among all master gardeners.

Thinkers Anonymous

Bet you've been thumbing through several plant catalogs recently, picking out everything you'd like to have. What if we include in the newsletter a new section called: *Plant Wish List*

Members could send their names, along with plants they would like to have this spring to be placed on the list. However, for each *wish*, an exchange must also be offered. Plants should be healthy, no bugs, and must have been successfully growing for a few years. Also, a brief description tag should be attached.

We could devote a meeting to the exchange or just set aside an area (outside?) with a predetermined date. (Rhoda could weigh in on this decision.) We might limit this to a spring and/or fall occasion or a periodical event.

So, what do you think? The newsletter editor stands ready: wilhoitejewell283@gmail.com

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this month's news!