

The Thymes ❄️

The Cumberland County Master Gardener's Monthly Newsletter

January 2026

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy. ~ William Blake



Photo credit/Creative Commons

Happy New Year!

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, Margo Carroll

Happy New Year!

As we begin a new year, I am excited to share the renewed energy and recommitment surrounding our beloved Plateau Discovery Garden. In 2026, we are returning with purpose to the original master plan that inspired this garden from the very beginning—one rooted in education, sustainability, beauty, and community engagement. This recommitment gives us a clear path forward and a shared vision as we continue to grow the garden as a place for learning, inspiration, and connection for both our members and the broader community.

The year ahead brings a wonderful lineup of opportunities to learn and grow together. Our popular *Classes in the Garden* series will return with a strong schedule of hands-on education led by knowledgeable and passionate presenters. We are also delighted to continue our *Teas in the Garden* events—a favorite tradition that blends learning, fellowship, and the simple joy of gathering in a beautiful setting. These programs reflect the heart of what it means to be a Master Gardener: sharing knowledge, encouraging curiosity, and nurturing a love of gardening in others.

Perhaps most exciting of all is the season ahead—one filled with fresh beginnings, new friendships, and the promise that every gardening year brings. As we step into 2026, I am grateful for the dedication, generosity, and camaraderie of our members. Together, we are cultivating more than plants; we are building a community grounded in learning, friendship, and a shared passion for gardening. I look forward to another rewarding year growing alongside each of you.



IMPORTANT DATES:

**January 6- gather 12:30 bring cookies 1:00
Membership meeting, 2026 Budget Review and
Approval Vote. Plateau Discovery Garden Committee
presentation & Report, other committee reports.
Location The Country Store**

**January 20- 1:00 CCMG Board Meeting, all welcome.
Location The Country Store**

Warmly, *Margo*

President of the Cumberland County Master Gardeners

Thank you to the 2025 CCMG Board members for the time, leadership, and dedication you gave throughout the year—your work made a real difference and set a strong foundation for what’s ahead. Welcome to our newly elected 2026 Board members; we’re glad to have you and look forward to working together in the year ahead.

2026 CCMG Board

President: Margo Carroll (Class of 2022)

President Elect: Kristi DuBois (Class of 2023)

Vice President: Carla Lund (Class of 2024)

Secretary: Sharon McKinney (Class of 2025)

Treasurer: Lisa Lee Briggs (Class of 2024)

Director: Tracy Scrimsher (Class of 2024*)

Director: Vicki May (Class of 2018)

2026 Class Rep: TBD



SAVE THE DATE(S)!

- **Jan. 17: GROWING NATIVE WILDFLOWERS FROM SEED** at Warrior's Path State Park, Kingsport, TN. Rosanna Ohlsson, a naturalist and expert on TN native plants, will teach about starting native wildflowers from seed. The session will also explore overlooked/underutilized plant species, what and what not to collect and easy seed-starting methods. More info: 423-239-6786
- **Jan. 17-18: THE SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL**, Birchwood, Tennessee. With up to 20,000 sandhill cranes returning to the area each year, you're bound to be caught up in the spectacular display of the sandhill cranes, eagles, waterfowl, and more on the refuge. More info: www.tn.gov/twra
- **Jan. 30-Feb.1: REELFOOT LAKE EAGLE FESTIVAL** in Obion County. Discover the lake's unique biodiversity with wildlife tours, birds of prey demonstrations and more. More info: 731-253-9652, reelfoottourism.com



Plan on Coming to Knoxville for the 2026 Extension Master Gardener State Conference!

We are coming back to campus in Knoxville in the new Ag and Natural Resources Building on **May 27th through 29th, 2026!!**

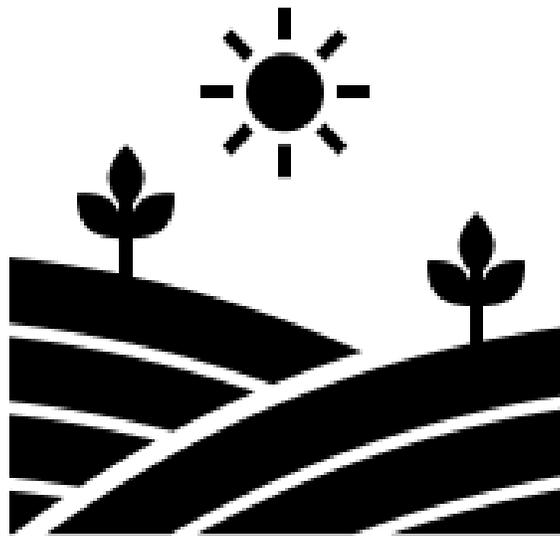
The EMG Workgroup and Hort Team have begun planning and will share more details early next year!



You can plan on:

- Events and tours at the UT Gardens Knoxville to dive into the research being done
- Tours at UT research farms where you'll get the inside scoop on vegetable, hops, groundcover, turf research to meet your needs
- Tours of campus including stewardship efforts, green roofs, athletics fields and all the fun of the TN flagship university
- Hands on workshops to teach new plant skills and just have fun
- Opportunities to meet EMGs from around the state and share knowledge and ideas about local outreach and projects!





12 New Year's Resolutions for Gardeners

From www.GardenDesign.com (Edited)

1. Learn, Grow, Share

Make this your year to both grow *and* share your garden knowledge. Explore webinars, online courses, and in-person events that spark your interest. Then, put that knowledge to work in your community—open your garden for tours, mentor new gardeners, or share your seasonal successes on social media. Your Master Gardener certification formalized your learning and created new opportunities to teach others. Learning and teaching go hand in hand in creating a more vibrant gardening community.

2. Master the Art of Pruning

Commit to learning proper pruning techniques for different ornamental plants. Understanding when and how to properly prune plants will result in healthier plants and more abundant blooms.

3. Improve Your Soil's Health

Focus on building healthy soil by adding organic matter, rotating crops, or planting cover crops in vegetable beds. Healthy soil means thriving plants.

4. Design with Four-Season Interest

Plan your garden to shine year-round Include winter-blooming flowers, spring bulbs, summer perennials, and autumn-interest plants like ornamental grasses and trees with spectacular fall color. Create striking combinations that ensure your garden never sleeps. Visit your favorite local garden center often and plant something that stands out each month.

5. Create Stunning Container Displays

Develop your container design skills! Plan seasonal rotations of containers to maintain visual interest throughout the year. Try new color combinations and unusual plant varieties in your pot arrangements.

6. Grow a Themed Garden

Focus on a single theme, like a moonlight garden with white flowers and silver foliage or a kitchen garden with all your favorite culinary herbs. Themes add a cohesive, creative flair.

7. Support Local Wildlife

Transform your garden into a haven for wildlife by including native flowering plants creating water features and providing shelter through thoughtful landscaping. Design butterfly gardens, install, bird-friendly features, and embrace the natural ecosystem.

8. Develop or Refine Your Garden's Color Palette

Plan and implement a cohesive color scheme in your garden. Whether you prefer a monochromatic white garden, a hot border of reds and oranges or a cooling palette of blues and purples, commit to refining your garden's visual impact through careful color selection

9. Create Garden Rooms

Define distinct spaces within your garden through thoughtful design. Establish outdoor rooms with different themes or purposes—perhaps a secret garden, a meditation space, or a cutting garden for fresh bouquets. Use hedges, structures, or changes in elevation to create and define these spaces.

10. Experiment with Vertical Gardening

Maximize small spaces with vertical gardens. Try trellises, hanging baskets, or living walls to add a lush, layered look to patios or balconies.

11. Add Artistic Touches to Your Garden

Unleash your creativity by incorporating art and handmade elements into your garden design. Start with simple projects like painting terracotta pots in bold patterns, crafting mosaic stepping stones, or repurposing old items as unique garden décor. An antique bicycle, an upcycled window frame, or even colorful glass bottles can add personality and charm to your space.

For larger projects, consider installing a sculpture, wind chimes, or a decorative arbor as focal points. You can also highlight your artistic flair with whimsical touches like fairy gardens, painted rocks, or DIY birdhouses. By blending art with nature, your garden becomes not just a growing space but a personal expression of your style.

12. Start a Garden Journal

Document your garden's progress throughout the seasons. Record maintenance tasks, bloom times, successful plant combinations, color schemes, and observations about weather patterns. This valuable resource will help you become a more knowledgeable gardener and create a lasting record of your garden's evolution.

Take regular photos of your garden's progress throughout the year and include those in your journal. Capture morning and evening light, seasonal color changes, and perfect bloom moments. Create a digital archive that helps you track plant performance and garden development over time.



Editor's Note

Your items of interest for *The Thymes* are important. Content regarding the Plateau Garden is especially appreciated by the membership. Please send your submittals for publication prior to the month's end to: jprp1990@gmail.com

Every effort will be made to include your content in a timely manner. This publication is not responsible for errors and omissions.



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