

2010 Madison County
Master Gardener

madisoncountymg.org



The Bridge to Knowledge

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New Year--Old & New Board

MCMG elected some new board members to take the place of those rotating off the board. The wonderful thing about our gardening group is that everyone is used to hard work, because every garden requires it; and, as we are a volunteer group, we are use to saying yes when made aware of need.

Leaving the board are Kayo Mullins, Marge Stumpenhorst, and Shirley Wallis. We thank them for their dedicated service and their inspired leadership.

New members on the board are Doris Holder, Nancy Murray, and Carol Sams. We thank them for their willingness to serve.

Boards are like compost you need a bit of new green stuff to liven up the rich old brown stuff, and you need to use it to keep things growing.

Old or New, your boardmembers will do their best for MCMG.

Respectfully, Linda Laney

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant."

-Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)

submitted by Liz Whitsitt

Notes from Bill...

As I write this on December 16 many of you have entered all of your volunteer and CEU hours online or Marge has done it for you. I appreciate your getting that done and informing me that yours is ready for review. The remainder of you should get this task completed right away so that I can complete the review process and we can put 2009 into the archives and begin a great MG year in 2010. Hope to see all of you at the first MG meeting of the New Year on January 7.

William B. Wyatt
Extension Agent Madison County
(731) 668-8543.

Winter Garden Dreams

Here are some gardening ideas that may occupy you if you've been feeling withdrawal pains from winter not being generally regarded as a gardening season:

1. There are bound to be a couple of weedy areas that have never been planted. After a heavy rainfall the remaining weeds pull loose with great ease & the soil is easily turned over with some compost to get a head start on spring.
2. Visit nurseries with lots of shrubs & trees to assess winter appearance of sundry plants. If you've been the sort who buys only in spring or on the basis of fully leafed & flowering items, you may end up with gardens not so interesting in winter with too many annuals that vanished entirely, perennials that died to the ground, & brittle twiggy shrubs that look puny & dull without their leaves. Assessing for shape of limbs when leafless, for aesthetic quality of the barks, limb & twig coloration, and finding out more about plants that look deciduous but are actually semi-evergreen or evergreen help to make selections easier when spring finally arrives.
3. Dig a compost trench.
4. Repair arbors & trellises while growth is minimal & plants won't be upset.
5. Look at the sky through naked limbs, and appreciate mosses and lichens on branches that are not visible when trees & large bushes are fully leafed.
6. Gaze longingly at the spot that is perfect for a greenhouse & whimper that you don't have one.
7. Keep feeding the birds.
8. If you use salt for ice or snow removal remember salt will harm or kill your plants.
9. Use branches from cut Christmas trees to shelter garden plants.
10. Read those seed catalogs and dream.

Submitted by Liz Whitsitt

How Black Walnut Trees Can Affect Your Plants

If you have one or more black walnut trees in your yard, you may have noticed that some plants have difficulty surviving near the trees.

The roots of black walnut trees produce a toxic substance called juglone that adversely affects plants that are sensitive to it. Many plants are highly sensitive to juglone, but there are some that will tolerate it.

Plants that cannot tolerate juglone will show symptoms such as yellowing, wilting foliage. Juglone acts as a respiration inhibitor, sapping a plant's energy and leaving it unable to breathe. Plants that cannot tolerate juglone will eventually give up and die.

Although juglone is produced in the trees' roots, all parts of a black walnut tree contain the toxin, with the strongest concentration in the buds and nut hulls. Black walnut trees have a habit of dropping leaves, nuts and twigs from late summer through autumn and this debris adds to the juglone levels in the soil beneath the trees. Rain dripping from the leaves also adds juglone to the soil, making the entire drip zone beneath the tree a hazardous environment for juglone-sensitive plants.

Cutting down the offending tree won't solve the problem, as the roots will continue to release juglone into the soil, making the area toxic for several years after the tree is gone. Debris from black walnut trees should not be added to compost, nor should the wood or bark be used for mulch.

Referenced for Mike McGroarty newsletter

Submitted by Jan Priddy

Master Gardener News from Around the State and Across the Country

Knoxville:

The TMG Advocacy Board is Excited to Announce the 2010 TMG Winter School! Sustainable Solutions Murfreesboro, TN February 17*, 18-20, 2010 Pre-registration Deadline: February 9. Pre-registration is required for each track to ensure enough supplies and refreshments for all participants. MGs have the option register using a credit card with the link below.
http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/tmg_resources/advocate/advocates.asp

This year's Winter School has been kicked up a few notches. It promises excellent national speakers, targeted presentations, a pre-conference workshop, and networking opportunities to enhance your MG experience. The Rutherford County Master Gardeners are graciously assisting the TMGAB host this event by adding their personal touch of hospitality... This is really going to be a great opportunity that you won't want to miss. Winter School is open to all Master Gardeners and Extension personnel--and yes, eager interns too! Tracks are separate rather than concurrent to allow leaders to participate in education and educators to participate in leadership activities.

MG and agents have a choice to participate in only one track if desired.
*Optional Pre-Winter School TYN Workshop February 17. FREE DINNER
The Tennessee Yards and Neighborhoods Program is a full delivery program for Extension offices and local water resources folks to partner on educating the public on better landscape management practices. Master Gardeners have the opportunity to provide input on the program to advise coordinators on how to best utilize MG volunteers. You may attend this workshop without attending the full Winter School, but you must register for the opportunity. This workshop is sponsored by the

Tennessee Water Resources Research Center. See the 2010 WS Registration Form for details.

Educator Track: \$45 Open to Extension agents and MG educators. This training will provide educators with teaching methods, skills and resources about best gardening practices.

Leadership Track: \$45 Open to Extension agents, all current MG leadership and those considering leadership positions in the county groups. This track will provide guidance and demonstration in best practices for leading, communicating and managing volunteers in county leadership.

Entire Winter School Registration \$75 (both tracks). Hope to see you all in Murfreesboro!

Beth Babbit
Horticulture Specialist/Master Gardener
Coordinator UT Extension

Seed Packets by Sue Ann Barnes

Recently Mike Millsom sent me a template for a seed packet, which had been sent to him by another intern. Since I like to give credit to the artist/creator, I thought I'd look it up on line.

What a treasure trove I found, when I typed in seed packet. There are lovely sites with many different designs for free. Take a gander at some of the sites listed below, or if you are not into "googling", use the template that Mike sent top of next page or below it the one that I chose from an image search on google.

GardensAblaze.com /SeedsPacket.htm
gardensandcrafts.com/seedpackets.html

Garden Seeds



* _____ *

Plant Name

* _____ *

Date

* _____ *

Origin





From the Garden of:

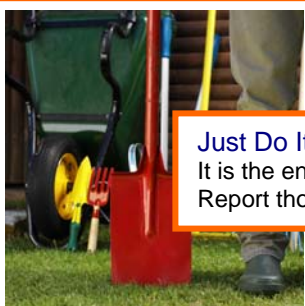
www.GardenHere.com



Exchanging
is the
Neighborly
thing to do...

20 ____

*MCMG Members' Corner
Information
Project Workdays
Questions & Answers*



Just Do It!
It is the end of the year!
Report those hours!

Contribute to the "Bridge"

Recently Cindy Kryscio requested the participation of MCMG by asking members to contribute the names of their favorite plants. She wants to write a series of small pieces on the plants submitted of our members. In these articles she would research the plant and share information and tips about it with everyone.

Cindy's e-mail is ckryscio@charter.net if you have a plant to suggest.

Poinsettias

Submitted by Liz Whitsitt

Many of us probably enjoyed the beauty of poinsettias during the Holidays. If properly cared for Poinsettias may last a month or more after Christmas.



Care of the new plant

Poinsettias use a lot of water. Check daily. After the holidays, I take the wrapping off the plant and place a saucer under it.

Keep the plant out of drafts. Excessively hot, dry air from heating ducts will reduce the life of the plant. Also avoid cold drafts. Poinsettias are semi-tropical and cannot tolerate cold temperatures or rapid temperature changes.

Place the plant in good light but not direct sun. Do not allow the plant to wilt. Poinsettias are closely related to many desert plants. Their first response to dry conditions is to drop their leaves in order to cut down water loss.

Reblooming -*poinsettias* are perhaps the most difficult flowering potted plants to rebloom in the home. So if you are tired of not being able to get out in the dirt, try using your time and effort on this project. It's not complicated, but it's not easy either. In spring move the plant outdoors and keep in semi shade. Beginning in late September, you must provide your poinsettia with 12 hours of complete darkness each night and 12 hours of good light during the day. For about eight weeks, you will have to move your poinsettia to a dark closet every night and back to the windowsill each day. Even a small amount of light from a light bulb for a short time can disrupt the formation of the new flowers. This is a lot of work. Most people prefer to purchase a new poinsettia each holiday season.

Planning

"Plan your work, then work your plan" is a bit of advice we have heard over and over. But reminders about the importance of planing are always work repeating, especially to gardeners.

Alexander Pope wrote, "All gardening is landscape painting." Before you begin your masterpiece reduce it to paper. Consider such matters as design, climate, sunlight, and, above all, your own tastes. Thoughtful preparation will pay more dividends than a wheelbarrow full of fertilizer, so remember: Plan your work then work you plants.

From *The Gardener's Guide to Life*
By Criswell Freeman



In Cindy's Garden

Cindy Kryscio

This Holiday has brought my thoughts to a tradition plant always seen at Christmas. After remembering all the years I have seen it at family festivities and in our homes, I began to be curious about the origins of this unique plant. After searching the web, I wanted to share some of the information I located. It seems to be a weed rather than a tradition flower and yet it is so wonderfully beautiful and brightens our days so much. Have a wonderful holiday filled with family and friends. . . and poinsettias.

Cindy Kryscio

The history of the poinsettia

The plant we know today as the poinsettia has a long and interesting history. The fact is, that lovely plant you place in your home during the holidays was once used as a fever medicine!

Native to Central America, the plant flourished in an area of Southern Mexico known as Taxco del Alarcon. The ancient Aztecs had a name for this plant found blooming in the tropical highlands during the short days of winter: **cuetlaxochitl**. Not merely decorative, the Aztecs put the plant to practical use. From its bracts they extracted a purplish dye for use in textiles and cosmetics. The milky white sap, today called latex, was made into a preparation to treat fevers.



Joel Roberts Poinsett

The poinsettia may have remained a regional plant for many years to come had it not been for the efforts of Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779 - 1851). The son of a French physician, Poinsett was appointed as the first United States Ambassador to Mexico (1825 - 1829) by President Madison. Poinsett had attended medical school himself, but his real love in the scientific field was botany. (Mr. Poinsett later founded the institution which we know today as the Smithsonian Institution).

Poinsett maintained his own hothouses on his Greenville, South Carolina plantations, and while visiting the Taxco area in 1828, he became enchanted by the brilliant red blooms he saw there. He immediately sent some of the plants back to South Carolina, where he began propagating the plants and sending them to friends and botanical gardens.

Among the recipients of Poinsett's work was John Bartram of Philadelphia, who in turn gave the plant over to another friend, Robert Buist, a Pennsylvania nurseryman. Mr. Buist is thought to be the first person to have sold the plant under its botanical name, *Euphorbia pulcherrima* (literally, "the most beautiful Euphorbia"). Though it is thought to have become known by its more popular name of poinsettia around 1836, the *origin* of the name is certainly clear!

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The following legend came from the “just for kids library”.



The Legend of the Poinsettia

The legend of the poinsettia comes from Mexico. It tells of a girl named Maria and her little brother Pablo. They were very poor but always looked forward to the Christmas festival. Each year a large manger scene was set up in the village church, and the days before Christmas were filled with parades and parties. The two children loved Christmas, but were always saddened because they had no money to buy presents. They especially wished that they could give something to the church for the Baby Jesus. But they had nothing.

One Christmas Eve, Maria and Pablo set out for church to attend the service. On their way they picked some weeds growing along the roadside and decided to take them as their gift to the Baby Jesus in the manger scene. Of course they were teased by other children when they arrived with their gift, but they said nothing for they knew they had given what they could.

Maria and Pablo began placing the green plants around the manger and miraculously, the green top leaves turned into bright red petals, and soon the manger was surrounded by beautiful star-like flowers and so we see them today.

Here is another version of the legend of the Poinsettia:

A charming story is told of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to present the Christ Child at Christmas Eve Services. As Pepita walked slowly to the chapel with her cousin Pedro, her heart was filled with sadness rather than joy.

"I am sure, Pepita, that even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes," said Pedro consolingly.

Not knowing what else to do, Pepita knelt by the roadside and gathered a handful of common weeds, fashioning them into a small bouquet. Looking at the scraggly bunch of weeds, she felt more saddened and embarrassed than ever by the humbleness of her offering. She fought back a tear as she entered the small village chapel.

As she approached the altar, she remembered Pedro's kind words: "Even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes." She felt her spirit lift as she knelt to lay the bouquet at the foot of the nativity scene.

Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into blooms of brilliant red, and all who saw them were certain that they had witnessed a Christmas miracle right before their eyes.

From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night, for they bloomed each year during the Christmas season.

Today, the common name for this plant is the poinsettia!

Their address is as follows: <http://www.just4kidsmagazine.com>

Tips from Jan

Growing Roses from Seed

Fall is a good time to start this project, and it's especially good to wait until after a hard freeze to collect the rose hips from your rose plants. If the hips are clipped off the plant before it is dormant, it may encourage the plant to put on tender new growth that could be damaged over winter.

The first step in growing roses from seed is to gather the rose hips. Rose hips are the seedpods that form when roses are allowed to mature on the plant. Depending on the type of rose plant; rose hips will generally turn orange, yellow, red or brown when they are mature. Gather rose hips that remain on the plant and do not collect those that have fallen to the ground.

Next, cut each rose hip in half and remove the seeds. Rose hips may contain anywhere from one to forty seeds per hip. Once the seeds are removed from the hips, rinse off as much of the pulp as you can by gathering a handful of the seeds in your hands and rubbing them together under running water.

Once the pulp has been removed, place the seeds in a plastic bag along with some damp peat moss and keep them in a warm room for about four weeks. If some mold appears within the bag, that's fine. It will help break down the hard seed shell.

After four weeks, move the bag of seeds into the refrigerator for another six weeks of cold stratification. This six-week cold stratification is an imitation winter for the seeds.

The next step is to plant all of the seeds in a flat. Plant each seed about a half-inch deep and an inch apart. Keep the planting medium moist but not soggy while the seeds germinate. You may need to spray the seedlings with a fungicide if any mold develops. Roses are fungus magnets, and lack of disease resistance can be an issue with seed-grown roses.

When the seedlings develop their first true leaves, they can be potted up. Once potted, give them a weak dose of fertilizer with every other watering.

Do not expect that seed-grown rose plants will be identical to the parent plant. Seeds from any one plant will produce a wide range of bush shapes, from climbers to shrubs or ramblers. Flower color will also vary, with pink being the most common. To duplicate a rose plant exactly, it can be propagated with cuttings, but growing them from seed is a fun gardening experiment.

Referenced from Mike McGroarty newsletter
Submitted by Jan Priddy

Vermicomposting - You Can Be a Worm Farmer

What is a worm farmer, and why on earth would you want to be one? Because worms can eat your garbage and produce natural fertilizer for your garden!

Redworms can be used as little composters, and the process is referred to as vermicomposting. Those who practice vermicomposting are referred to as worm farmers, and the worms are referred to as their herd, just as if they were little cows.

Instead of discarding food scraps in the trash or adding them to an outdoor compost pile, scraps can be recycled and turned into nutritious soil for plants with the help of worms.

Redworms are the worm species most suitable for vermicomposting. Ordinary nightcrawlers that you may find in your garden are beneficial for the garden, but they are not suitable for a vermicompost herd. Redworms can be purchased online from commercial growers, and they can also be found at the local bait shop.

Vermicomposting is done within a bin, either indoors or outdoors. When the worms are kept in a bin, they can't crawl away to join their friends in the wild. You can construct your own worm bin or purchase one that is ready-made.

If you make your own bin, drill several half-inch holes in the bottom and sides of the bin to provide aeration and drainage and keep a tray below the bin to catch any moisture that may drip out. Then add shredded paper to the bin for the worm bedding and moisten it. Keep a lid on the bin so the worms can't crawl out the top.

Next, add the worms and give them some food. Add any food scraps you have available, but do not add any meat or fish scraps. Your worms are vegetarians. They won't like greasy or oily food either. One pound of worms will eat about four pounds of food scraps per week and turn those scraps into soil.

In 3-4 months it will be time to harvest the vermicompost. Simply push all of the material to one side of the box and add new bedding to the other side, along with some food scraps. The worms will migrate into the new bedding to get their food, and you can scoop out the finished vermicompost and mix it into your garden soil.

Referenced from Mike McGroarty newsletter
Submitted by Jan Priddy

Tennessee Urban Forestry Council Our Common Legacy



Holding court in the middle of town, the magnificent Commons Elm of Norris, *Ulmus americana*, was planted in the mid-1930s by the newly-formed Tennessee Valley Authority. Thanks to careful maintenance and pruning by groups like the Norris Tree Commission, the tree has survived decades of severe weather and the ravages of Dutch Elm disease. Today its stately crown soars some 83 feet over the Commons, standing testament to the importance of long-term care for our community trees.

The first Tree City USA in Tennessee, the City of Norris was built by TVA to house workers constructing nearby Norris Dam. As a model planned community, its design was loosely based on concepts established by the English Garden city movement, an approach to urban planning founded in the late 1890s. These so-called Garden cities offered their citizens communities that struck a balance between residence and commerce, industry and environment. Today we find elements of Garden city concepts, like greenbelts and commons areas, informing the design principles of new urbanism, downtown revitalization projects, and our work at the TN Urban Forestry Council.

The Norris Elm entered The Council's Landmark & Historic Tree Register in 2007 as a **Landmark Tree**. In addition to the Register, TUFC offers a wealth of programs to assist communities of every size across the state. The Council provides support for and complements the State of Tennessee Urban Forestry Program as well as Tree Boards and ReLeaf Programs throughout Tennessee. Urban Forestry Tool Boxes provide a host of helpful information, equipment, and software and are available for checkout to communities, urban foresters, tree boards, and utilities.



Be part of TUFC's efforts as we help communities plan for and achieve smarter growth. Sign up now for the [TN Tree Tag](#), and show your support for building a better tomorrow with trees!

In the short term, your order will help us reach our target of 1,000 tags and make the Tree Tag an option for all Tennesseans renewing their license plates - generating funding for TUFC's programs. In the months and years to come, your Tree Tag will spread the message of Urban Forestry and enable the Council to continue providing quality education, training, and advocacy on behalf of Tennessee's trees and the communities they've helped build.

Trees make a difference, so can you! Visit www.TennesseeTrees.org or www.TUFC.com to learn more about the Tree Tag as well as TUFC's diverse programming.

P.S. - You can now find the Council on both [MySpace](#) and [Facebook](#)!

Wanted: Garden Ideas! Great! or Small.

Contributors to this month's newsletter include: Cindy Kryscio, Liz Whitsitt, Mike Millsom, Jan Priddy, Manuel McKnight, Linda Laney, Bill Wyatt, and Beth Babbit. Thanks also to Doris Holder and Jeannie Kaess.

With the start of a New Year let us keep the best of the past and start constructing an even better future. If you have ideas for the newsletter, content or structure, please share them. This will be a transition year in which your editor hopes to put this line of communication into fresh and capable hands.

Sue Ann Barnes, Editor
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Keep contributing.
Keep reading.
Keep sharing.

photo of English Robin by
Eleri Wynne Jones



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Regular Meeting of the Madison County Master Gardeners January 7, 6:30 PM

Program:
"Greenhouse 101"

Presenter:
Rita Randolph

Location:
West Tennessee Research and
Education Center

Please Bring Finger Foods.
Drinks are provided.

Greenhouse 101 –

How plants are produced...
Whether it's from seed or
vegetatively produced from
cuttings, Rita will show the
methods to the madness of
producing plants in the
greenhouse.

Lighting,
capillary mats,
heating systems,
specialty soil mixes
and anything you ever
wanted to know about
greenhouse growing.

She will finish with a
sampling of new plants and
ideas for spring.