

Sevier County Area Master Gardeners Association

Master Gardeners Meeting
July 16th, 6:30pm
Sevier Co. Courthouse



Events & CEU's

Growing Degree Days

By Leo Lubke

Volunteers In The Garden – Sevierville Senior Center... 1st Saturday of the month and 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10:00am. Come spend some time helping and earn volunteer hours!

Friends of the UT Gardens 525-4555

July 5th – Books & Blooms 10:30am

July 7th – Design Concepts for Home Landscaping UT PPD Course #264618

July 12th – Books & Blooms 10:30am

July 17th – Lunchtime Walk 12 noon
Twilight Walk 6pm

July 19th – Books & Blooms 10:30am

July 26th – Books & Blooms 10:30am

IJAMS 577-4717

Know More: Creating a Zero Energy Home
Part 1 – **July 12th** 5pm, Part 2 – **July 14th** 1pm
\$10 per person, \$15 per Couple,
preregistration 577-4717 x 10

July 14th – 1 pm - Living Clean & Green –
Butterflies are Free! Learn what attracts
butterflies, how to improve your habitat, and
which ones you might expect to see.

July 21st – 1pm - Living Clean & Green – The
Air We Breathe. How pollution affects young &
old alike – see alternative energy sources at
work.

July 27th – 8pm – Wildlife Symphony –
Naturalists will conduct an evening trail hike.
Members free, non-members \$5



- The Growing Degree Day is 1,842.5 as of July 4, 2007.
- Japanese beetles continue to be a major pest interest in our yards and gardens. Their “exit date” is on the horizon (GDD=about 2,154). Keep treating or “handpicking” until then. Check your “Using Growing Degree-days for Insect Pest Management” leaflet to see other pests about to arrive, or that have left for the season. Remember some of the prolific pests have a second life cycle and will be returning for a “repeat performance.”
- It's not too late! If you would like to assist with the calendar project, or the East Tennessee Master Gardener Conference in October, please contact Leo at LHLubke@aol.com. You will earn volunteer hours.
- The end of September (and this federal year) is quickly approaching. Earn your volunteer hours and complete your CEU's so that you will be reported as an “active” TNMG. Report your activity to either Alan or Leo.

Editors note: If you need the Hours Reporting form to either email or print to report your hours, Jan Sutton has it available in Excel format that can be emailed to you. Email jssutton@mindspring.com

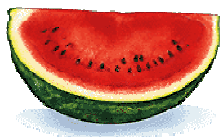
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Attention Weather Watchers!

I joined COCORAHS, "a grassroots volunteer network of backyard weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow) in their local communities." Look at the site and map. I am the station in Blount County near the river. Everyday, when I report the precipitation at my station, I notice that there are no reporters for Sevier County and thought maybe a couple gardeners in your group would be interested. The precipitation gage that is used is not expensive (about \$20) and arrives quickly with good instructions.

<http://www.cocorahs.org/>

*Bonnie Holmes
Blount Co. Master Gardener*



Nine Ways to Tell If Your Watermelon Is Ripe

North, South, East, or West, wherever you grow your watermelon, this summer you'll face the daunting task of determining its ripeness. We've heard all sorts of advice, including the fact that a ripe melon, when thumped, will feel more like a human head than a human chest. Dr. Bill Rhodes, professor of horticulture at Clemson University, offers the following but warns that for the past 20 years, he's been hoping for better insight.

1. Thump it. If the watermelon sounds hollow, it's ripe. This is difficult for less-gifted ears.

2. Look at the color on the top. The watermelon is ripe when there is little contrast between the stripes.

3. Look at the color on the bottom. A green watermelon will have a white bottom; a ripe melon will have a cream- or yellow-colored bottom.

4. Press on it. If the watermelon sounds like it gives a little, it's ripe. (Rhodes doesn't like this method because it can ruin the quality of the fruit.)

5. Check the tendril. If it's half-dead, it could mean that the watermelon is nearly ripe or ripe. If the tendril is fully dead, it could mean that anthracnose or some other fungus killed the melon, or that it's ripe or overripe. If the tendril is green, you should wait to pick the melon.

6. Count the number of days from anthesis (flowering) or the number of days from planting. This works pretty well if you know the variety of watermelon and how many days it's supposed to take for that variety to ripen under normal temperature and fertilizer regimes.

7. Check the size. It's not necessarily true that when a watermelon is big enough, it's ready; but under good conditions, it should be normal size. If it's not, you're probably too anxious.

8. Crack a few. You've got a whole field of watermelons, and you can practice a little, right?

9. Is the vine dead or dying? Well, the watermelon is not going to get any riper, so you might as well pick it.

Submitted By Rich Wasman

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Member Annual Dues

The following Members have paid their \$15 Annual Dues... Have you?

Jack Bailey ... Sandi Bailey... Selena Ball
Liz Ballard...Casey Berg...Gayle Crowe
George Denton...Judy Denton...
Jerry Gilpin...Robert Glenn ...Jo Golden
Dalene Griffith...Jim Grubb...Tommi Jo Harrell
Gayle Holt...Dottie Johnson...Mike Jones
Glenna Julian...W.C. (Dub) Julian...
Barbara King...Donna Little...Leo Lubke
Carol MacKenzie...Colette Mancke
Juneil Mathis...Ruth Miller
Sheila Pennycuff ...Pat Powell...Reatha Reil
Jerry Shonk...Nellie Smith...Jan Sutton
Randell Tate...John Thomas...
Margaret Thompson...Richard Wasman
Les Williams

Please write your check to Sevier Co.
Extension, and give or mail to:
Margaret Thompson, Treasurer
3014 Sugarwood Drive
Kodak TN 37764

REPORT YOUR HOURS!

Sevier Co. Certification Officer Leo Lubke needs your hours...by telephone, fax, Email or paper ... email: lhlubke@aol.com, or phone the Extension office at 453-3695



Even in the heart of the drought, zinnias provide their cheerful color....

Master Gardeners A. K. A. Agritourists!

Several years ago, Les and I found ourselves on a beautiful sunny June day visiting an herb farm near Asheville (the third for that day), and were approached by an aggressive young newspaper reporter asking to interview us on the subject of agritourism. We sort of said "Well, sure, but what exactly are you talking about?" He proceeded to tell us that the herb farmer had pointed us out and told him that we had been visiting area farms and that we were actually from Tennessee. We were happy to share with this fellow that we had an obsession with plants and that we enjoyed visiting farms, gardens, and plant vendors in other places, looking for unusual specimens and taking note of how they were grown and displayed. It was a learning experience and also a fun way for us to spend vacation time away from home. We didn't also tell him that we antiqued along the way as well. He took our picture and thanked us and we forgot about it until a good friend from Asheville sent us the clipping a few weeks later. We were surprised to have been a part of a huge feature on the newly popular pastime known as agritourism. We have continued our quest for plants and plant information ever since, and this is one of the many reasons that we were led to become Master Gardeners. We were getting CEU's before we could count them for any other reason. Consequently, we continue to be a part of the agritourism industry each year, enjoying finding new places to go and of course, new plants to purchase or to just learn about.

Continued....

This year we began with our usual visit to the Nashville Lawn and Garden Show in early

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March. This particular show is a real delight to all of the senses. There are an amazing number of installed gardens as a centerpiece for the entrance to the show done by area

nurseries. Classes are given all day by well known experts and fabulous vendors display their wares. This year we heard Don Shadow and Rita Randolph speak on their particular businesses and their plant favorites. Area florists display massive and gorgeous floral arrangements in a darkened room illuminated by spotlights on each arrangement. Non-profits are set up in one area and there are many, giving out information on every kind of plant life imaginable. It is a good show, well worth a visit, and held at the Nashville Fairgrounds. There are many area retailers to get to know and it is nice to make a few side trips on the way home.

In April, we gave our own garden show and missed our usual destination "Bloom'n Weekend" in Franklin on the same date as our show. This is an event given by the Williamson County Master Gardeners annually. The show is huge, presented at the Williamson County Agricultural Exposition Center in Franklin, TN. Classes are offered by experts, vendors, and has displays of complete gardens.

In May we took two weekends to get to garden shows in North Carolina. First was the herb fair at the Western North Carolina Farmers Market, always held the first weekend in May. There you will find every possible herb for culinary, medicinal, crafting and aromatherapy in existence. There are also more than herbs among the plants exhibited. You will also find unusual perennials and annuals, herbal products and even prepared foods. They have discontinued their classes there, but it is an education to just be there and see what is available. Talking with these vendors is an informative and entertaining experience as well. We always find time to get to this one

and spend the night at our favorite bed and breakfast, "The Red Rocker". We also make

time to tour the gardens at the Biltmore. It was unfortunate but a little comforting to see that they were dealing with the same problems we had encountered in dealing with the late freeze.

This year we made it to the Passholder's Only Sale at the Biltmore, located on the property, but in an obscure area not marked by any signage. The plant variety there was tremendous, and we loaded the car with some unusual rhododendron, a new variety of baptisia, "Screaming Yellow," and primula.

On the Memorial Day weekend is a fabulous garden show in Hendersonville, North Carolina. The town closes its main street downtown and lines it with vendors from the area who present plants and garden products, art, and equipment. Lowe's sponsors a huge tent where Bill Slack-Southern Living's landscape and garden specialist presented programs both days. There are also representatives from companies such as Miracle Grow, Spectracide, Bayer and others who talk with you about your problems and needs in your own garden. There is quite a festive atmosphere and is very much worth the effort to get there. Hendersonville is just a few miles down I-26 from Asheville.

We have just returned from the Master Gardeners State Convention in Kingsport, held June 8-10. This was an exceptional event, so well planned and executed by these Master Gardeners. Featured speakers were Roger Swain and Erica Glasener from HGTV. They not only spoke to us, but hung out with the gardeners talking with us and having meals and even attending classes. The classes were well presented and covered a variety of garden subjects.

Continued....

On Saturday there were garden tours to area attractions as well as classes and the vendor

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area was always available. Of course, there were always drawings for door prizes and opportunities for making new

garden friends. We didn't make any stops of note on the way home, because it was Sunday, even though we passed some inviting greenhouses on the way home down 321. They were all closed on Sunday.

We are always on the lookout for new learning experiences. The North Carolina Arboretum is a wonderful place to visit. They house a massive bonsai collection and have beautiful gardens to see. Programs there are ongoing and varied.

Other upcoming events of note: Happy Gardening and traveling!
Oaks Daylily Festival
Sunshine Hollow Daylily Festival (with a major pit stop at Mouse Creek Nursery) McMinn County
Blooms Days at the UT Gardens (June 23-24)
Classes available from the UT Personal Development Catalog (sponsored by the Friends of the Garden)
July 7 Landscape Design by Ben Blackwood from Pope's and others
Area County Fairs (try going to other county's fairs)
Events at Ritter Farms (Grainger County) who are vegetable growers at 2999 Hwy. 11-W Rutledge.

Cindy and Les Williams

<http://www.treehelp.com/>
<http://plantsciences.utk.edu/>
www.arborday.org
www.pestfacts.org
<http://www.gardensalive.com>
[Starting Plants from Seeds](http://www.startingplantsfromseeds.com)
[friendsoftheutgardens.org](http://www.friendsoftheutgardens.org)
[Mulch Calculator](http://www.mulchcalculator.com)

The Newsletter needs your contribution! Events, pictures and articles are welcome!
Email to jssutton@mindspring.com

Greetings from the Weather Rock

The Weather Rock is on "sabbatical" this month, but will return for our August Newsletter!

Maybe he will bring us some.....



Links and Sites



Sevier County Area Master Gardeners Association

Japanese Beetles

Back to
Insects

If we knew what it was we were doing,
it would not be called research, would it? -Albert
Einstein



Japanese beetle: Larvae is a grayish-white, 1 inch long, has a dark brown head and has two rows of spines. They lie curled up in the soil and burrow into deep soil to overwinter, pushing upward as the weather warms up in the spring. The adult is 1/2 inch in length, very fine hairs all over the body which is shiny bluish-green. The wing covers are a metallic copper, which shines various colors in the light and the head is bluish-green (they are hard to miss!) One generation every 1-2 years is produced. They eat and fly only during the day. They can cover an area up to 5 miles! The damage is seen as the familiar lacy looking skeletonized leaves on everything they attack. Several years of this destruction can seriously compromise a plants chances for survival.

The adults will eat most anything however their food of choice includes: flowers, fruit trees, roses and raspberries. They skeletonize foliage giving it the characteristic lacy look. The grubs chew on the roots of plants which is often seen in turf area damage. If you encounter a dead area of grass and can lift it right up you will probably find the Japanese beetle grubs to be the culprit.

Predators: Starlings...yes, those pesky starlings love to dine on Japanese beetles! Tachnid flies and tiphia wasps kill them. Native birds and chickens will feed on the larvae. You can help the birds along by turning the soil in autumn to expose the larva.

Repellent plants: Catnip, chives, garlic, tansy and rue.

Resistant plants: Box elder, Common lilac, Firs, Hemlocks, Hollies, Pines, Rhododendrons, Spruces, Scarlet oak, Tulip tree, White ash, White poplar and Yews.

Control Methods:

- Good plants for trap crops include: evening primrose, soybeans, wild grapes, African marigolds, borage and knotweed!
- Make bait traps of water, mashed fruit, sugar and yeast. Place on the perimeter of the garden at least 1 inch off the ground in plastic jugs with an entrance hole cut at the top. Choose sunny spots and strain the bodies out of traps every evening.
- For easier handpicking : In the morning spread out a sheet under infested plants. Shake the plants and the beetles will fall onto the sheet. Dump them into a bucket of soapy water. Dew on their wings in the morning keeps them from flying away. The cooler air also makes them more lethargic.
- Use pheromone traps keeping them at a distance from victim plants so you won't attract new beetles.
- Use interplantings of four o'clocks (Mirabilis), larkspur, white geraniums, red (and dwarf) buckeyes whose flowers attract and poison the beetles. The leaves of the castor bean plant also poison them. These plants are poisonous to people to so be careful using them around children or pets!
- Milky spore disease known as Bacillus

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popilliae can be used against the grub stage as a most effective long term control. This is best done on a wide scale treating entire infested areas in neighborhoods or grasslands. Complete control may take a few years. Once it does take effect the control can last up to 15 years!

- **Japanese Beetle Trap and Bait**

The following bait and trap method is to be used during the height of the Japanese Beetle season.

Ingredients:

1 cup water
1/4 cup sugar
1 mashed banana
1 pkg yeast

Dissolve sugar and yeast in the water. Mix the well maxhed banana into the sugar water. Put all ingredients in a gallon milk jug. Place the jug (with the top off) in an area where Japanese Beetles gather. The fermentation and odor of the bait attracts the beetles which get in but not out.

- Trap crops for the beetles are African marigold, borage, evening primrose (oonthera), four o'clocks, knotweed, soybeans, white roses, white and pastel zinnias, wild grapes and blackberries.
- Nematodes: Another control for the grub stage is to apply beneficial nematodes to the infested area. These are applied at a ratio of 50,000 per square foot of targeted area.
- Botanical Control: Pyrethrin, ryania or rotenone.

Bug Juice spray: If you can handle it this is supposed to work. Harvest about 1 cup of beetles, put them in an old blender and liquefy them. Thin this with enough water to make it pass through a sprayer. Spray it on any plants they victimize. NOTE: If you make this out of beetles infected with the milky spore disease you will actually infect more grubs with the

disease. So...if you can handle it give it a try!

Submitted By Pat Powell