

# THE SEVIER COUNTY AREA



## MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER

www.SCAMGA.org

February 2010

**SCAMGA Meeting February 15th @ 6:30 pm**

**Guest Speaker: Noah Wilson, Master Rosarian, (Morristown)**

**Eastern Regional Conference Committee Meeting February 15th @ 5:30 pm**

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*Submissions: If you have information, articles, CEU or volunteer opportunities you would like published in the SCAMGA newsletter, please send to Alison Stokes at P.O.Box 5767, Sevierville, 37864 or [lysnwolf@yahoo.com](mailto:lysnwolf@yahoo.com). Deadline is the 26th.*

## UNINVITED GUESTS

by Roger Simpson

Almost every gardener, sooner or latter, will have uninvited dinner guests show up in their gardens. These guests, in form of the local wildlife, appear to be eating machines ready to wipe out their hard work. How to deal with this danger depends on the animal, where you live, and your attitude toward wildlife. I called the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency to see what they expect of a citizen. The

*cont'd on page 3*



*"Is that corn I smell?" Squirrels and Groundhogs are only two of the many kinds of wildlife attracted to gardens.*

## TEACHING WITH TREES: INTERVIEW WITH CASEY BERG

Author: Lisa Duchene

"I'm really trying to encourage my students to think about their place in the world and how they can [either] make it a better place or be users and just use up what we have," says Wearwood Elementary School science teacher Casey Berg. Casey turns to trees to help relay this message to her students.

Located in Sevierville, Tennessee, the school's property includes a quarter-mile-long, wooded nature trail with 20–30 tree species, providing a perfect space for hands-on learning

opportunities. Casey always begins her tree unit with a thorough explanation of how essential trees are to humans, believing that students need to personally connect with the subject matter before diving into the details. Students learn how trees absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen, providing air for us to breathe, as well as how tree trunks provide wood for the houses we live in and paper we use to take notes, read books, and do our work. She also ties in local history by talking about the logging industry and how in the past, loggers cut down too many trees, devastating the land that is now the Great

Smoky Mountains National Park, less than 20 miles away.

Through the years, Casey has developed a rich collection of successful lessons plans and activities. Some examples:

—To bring tree botany to life, students first learn about the parts of the tree (crown, trunk, roots, bark [inner and outer], leaves, cambium, sapwood, heartwood, surface roots, and taproots) and then make a human sculpture as a model. Casey assigns a tree part to each student, and they act out their role in tree growth. Engaging their creativity, students often add sound effects; for instance, those representing

the heartwood of the tree may make a sound like a beating heart.

—As an introductory activity in the outdoor classroom, students pair off for a sensory-based tree hunt. One partner is blindfolded and led by the other partner to a tree they feel and describe. They then switch places and repeat the activity. When the blindfold is removed, students try to find "their" tree.

—Casey creates a visual aid from construction paper to help first graders and second graders connect green leaves to summer's long days of sunshine and red and orange

*cont'd on page 4*

## MAKE NOTE OF IT

by Donna Little

Any time of year is a good time to assess the success and failure of your gardening efforts.

While you are thumbing through seed catalogs and dreaming of warmer months to come, you might be turning the page corners down to mark some of the items you want to try, but it can be hard to keep up with which catalog had that new perennial or heirloom vegetable you want to try.

The best way of keeping track of this information is with a garden journal. Please don't throw this column down and run away screaming, "I'm not going to do write everything down in a journal." Today's updated gardening journal can be done in many ways. I keep mine on the computer. I simply add a few notes when I think of it. I use a calendar format and just add notes, wrapping the text by the week. I don't worry about the year; I just keep adding info by the month.

That way I have several years' information on each month, with just 12 months to check and all the information in one place. If you don't want to use your computer, you could just write on a big desk calendar. Another way is to use a 3-ring notebook, using pocket pages to slip in notes, seed packets, or clipping from newspaper, magazines, or nursery catalogs. If something did not do well, toss the packet or clipping; keep what worked or slip in a note about what didn't work. You could make a note on anything at anytime and slip it in the pocket. You could use file folders on a computer or with paper. You could always use the old time honored tradition of actually hand writing daily or weekly comments about your garden in a paper journal. The point is, it does not matter how you keep a garden journal, but keeping one will improve your results in the garden.

Everyone thinks they will remember what grew well and when it bloomed, or

when the aphids and black spot started, or where they want to move a plant; but by the time you finish you gardening for the year and are sitting in your comfy chair looking at your dormant garden during the winter months, you will have a hard time remembering.

A garden journal is an important tool in pest management. Looking back you can remember when you had a problem and head it off before it gets started next year. A journal will remind you if you had more than one outbreak a pest or disease during the growing season. A big part of organic pest control is prevention or at least taking care of it before it gets out of hand. My journal reminds me when to start looking for aphids so I can spray with milk to control them before they multiply into a formidable garden foe. It reminds me what plants to thin out to prevent mildew problems. Thinning improves air circulation, which reduces mildew

problems. Seeing when black spot and other fungal problems started reminds me to start spraying susceptible plants with a baking soda mixture before it starts. A journal will help jog your memory about where you planted what vegetable so you can rotate your crops to prevent pests and disease.

A journal will help jog your memory about what areas of the garden you wanted to improve the soil or where you wanted some color on a gray winter day. My journal reminded me about an area that looks fine in the summer, but it looks dull and empty in January. I had a note to plant a witch hazel or Japanese apricot for color during the late winter months.

While keeping a journal may seem boring or a dreaded task; it is helpful. Start simple and give it a try. As you find your journal useful, you will add to it and see the results in a better garden.

## CEU CALENDAR

MGs are required to complete a min. of 8 CEUs (Continuing Education Units). Before completing any CEU Courses, be sure that you get approval from Alan Bruhin.

**February 19th-20th:**  
**Georgia Organics Reclaiming Agriculture Conference** Athens, GA. 10+ farm tours, 70+ presenters, 70 exhibitors and Expo open to public for the first time. Non-member registration fee \$50-\$250 by Feb 5th. Visit [www.georgiaorganics.org/conference](http://www.georgiaorganics.org/conference) for more information and to register.

**February 27, 8:30am-5pm:**  
**Conifers for Gardeners**

UT Visitor Center & Gardens, 2712 Neyland Drive, Knoxville 37996. Educational seminars teaching you how to grow and design your garden with conifers combined with a guided walk through the UT Gardens conifer collection. Concludes with an exclusive conifer plant sale of some of the most beautiful and choice selections for the mid-South. UT Gardens Members \$40; Non-members \$45. Register

online <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu> or call 865-974-8265.

**March 13th 8am Rose Seminar** (see page 4 for details)

**March 18th-20th:**  
**Alabama Master Gardeners Conference** Montgomery, AL Workshops include "Changing Problem Areas into Natural Beauties," "The Latest and Greatest Gardening Trends,"

"Gardening for the Birds, Creating a Wildlife Habitat," "Landscaping with Herbs, Putting Spice in Your Life," and many more. Featured speakers: Dr. Doug Phillips and Mr. Steve Bender. For more information or to register visit [www.alabamamg.org/state\\_conference.asp](http://www.alabamamg.org/state_conference.asp)

**March 20th at 1pm: Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop at Jack & Sandi Bailey's Orchard.**

*cont'd from page 1*

TWRA agent said people should understand what true depredation is. If an animal is causing damage to a crop or property, the owner of that crop or property has the right to eliminate that animal. This is whether the animal is protected small game such as raccoons, rabbits, or squirrels; or if it is legally termed a pest, such as the ground hog or the coyote. Pests or non-game animals have no legal protection, open season is year around, and there are no bag limits. Deer are big game and in order to kill or trap a deer, permission from the TWRA is required. However, it can be done.

On the other hand, if you feed wildlife such as at a bird feeder, then squirrels and other wildlife that are attracted to it can not be killed or trapped. This is not depredation. Are raccoons getting into your garbage can? Not depredation, the homeowner is expected to keep a tight fitting lid on their garbage cans. Is something catching your prize game roosters out of their roost tree at night? Not depredation, you are required to keep small animals up.

One way to deal with a problem animal is to trap it. The traditional steel, leg hold trap is no longer legal for setting in the open. It is still legal for sets in water or

below ground. This means you can place a steel trap at least 12 inches deep in a groundhog hole and it is a legal set. If you are more humane, you might consider a soft-catch trap. These traps look like the old steel traps, but are a response to animal rights. These traps can be adjusted to the point that they will hold an animal, but not injury them. I spoke to a professional trapper who he said he could spring one of these traps with his finger and his skin would not get broken. However, he did mention catching pets in these traps from time to time. Cats were harder to get out than dogs. This is something to consider when using any leg hold trap. You can also set snares and instant kill traps in some instances, but you had better check the TWRA regulations beforehand.

There is always a live trap. If set correctly, it will allow you to catch animals alive. If you have an animal or two that you would like to catch, then this is a good bet. The question after capture is what to do with the animal? Because of disease, the only small animal that you are not allowed to relocate is the raccoon. However, where do you take everything else? It is against the law to release animals on other people's property without their permission. So if you plan to relocate animals on someone

else's land, talk to them ahead of time.

I asked the agent what he felt was the best way to keep animals out of a garden? He said an electric fence. This is every walking animal from rabbits to deer. It seemed that for most animals, only two strands of wire are needed. One is a low wire to keep the animal from crawling under and a higher wire for the animal to walk into. For rabbits only, he said an 18-inch high fence of plain rabbit wire would work.

Other controls give varying results. Nevertheless, try some of the following:

- Repellents either commercial or homemade may be used. (For a recipe see the June 2009 SMGA Newsletter: Gourds, Part I). In a study, done to see which repellent worked best to protect small trees from deer damage, the winner was Dial soap. But even it was not 100 percent effective. If you use soap, just drill a hole through it, wrapper and all, and make soap on a rope for your tree. Place the soap on the ground to protect against rabbits. If you notice the bambi's and bunnies ignoring your soap, it is time to change the fragrance. Other things to try are bags of human hair. Another recommendation is to sprinkle a mix of half bone meal and half blood meal around plants. (comment: my dog loves bone meal and

he will dig to get it).

- Put up lights or sprinklers that are activated by motion detectors.
- Cage individual plants or sections of your garden. Use lightweight wood frames covered with chicken wire. Protect the bark of individual young trees with trunk guards.
- Get a guard dog or hunting dog. This is not a bad idea. Just remember, the dog has to stay on your property. Also, if there are coyotes or raccoons in the area you might not want to leave a single dog outside after dark. Coyotes eat small pets, and raccoons become very nasy when threatened.
- Remove hiding cover and brush, if any, from around your garden.

Gardeners have several options for dealing with wildlife in their gardens. None of these solutions are 100 percent. TWRA would like to remind you that every animal in your yard is not a problem. Make sure to do away with as many outside sources of food as possible. If you feed your pets outside, TWRA recommends that you do it in the morning. Be careful with pet doors. If you feed them they will come. Anyone considering shooting or trapping animals should visit the TWRA website at <http://www.state.tn.us/twra/>.

## SCAMGA Flower and Garden Show Update

We had a productive meeting February 8th. Muriel Higgins is heading up seeking auction donations and Les Williams is heading up sponsorship donors. Many signed up for specific areas and times they want to work. I am preparing a mailout of reminder cards to the vendors to let them know the Early Bird Fee is not in effect after March 1st. Also, the counter cards will be printed today for distribution to area retailers.

We have a great lineup of speakers:

10:00 A.M.: Avi Askey, Overhill Farms *Landscaping with Native Plants in East Tennessee*

11:00 A.M.: John Coykendall, Blackberry Farm *Value of Heirloom Vegetable Seeds*

1:00 P.M.: Neal Denton, Knox County Ext. Agent & County Director *Raised Bed and Container Gardening*

The group at the meeting was energetic and ready to roll! I fully believe we will have a really good show!

Janet Banks

## SCAMGA EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Feb 19th-20th: Bazillion Blooms Volunteers Needed

Volunteers needed to staff our booth at the upcoming Dogwood Arts Festival's House & Garden Show. You are welcome to ask a spouse/friend to work with you. Our duties will include: Talking about the importance of planting dogwood trees, promoting dogwood tree sales and orders, distributing information about how to plant and care for dogwood trees. We are also trying to have a dogwood tree planting demonstration at the booth. Let me know if you can help! Amy Styles, Corporate Marketing Director, (865)374-0425 or 437-6599.

**March 15th-24th: Tomato Seed Project** Every year Meg Curtis conducts an educational program with Sevier County kindergarden classes. Have great fun working with children and earn volunteer hours, too! Following is a list of available times/locations. Contact Meg Curtis, TNCEP Program Director at 865-453-3695 or mcurtis1@utk.edu

- March 15th (Mon) 1 pm, *Trula Lawson Center*

- March 17th (Wed) 8:30am, 9am & 9:30 am, *Sevierville Primary*

- March 18th (Thur) 9am & 9:30 am, *Pigeon Forge Primary*

March 22nd (Mon) 9:15 am, *Northview Elementary*

March 24th (Wed) 8:45 am & 9:45 am, *Northview Elementary*

### April 17th: SCAMGA Flower & Garden Show

The Flower and Garden Show and Sale is our annual "come-together and get-it-done" day. This Show not only benefits us, but our entire community, by offering a one-day venue for local vendors, as well as, just regular folks, to sell their wares in a friendly, local setting. As a special bonus, Master Gardeners who work the Show, will **earn Community hours!** Contact Janet Banks for more information [jbanks98@bellsouth.net](mailto:jbanks98@bellsouth.net)

**Senior Center Garden & Greenhouse 1st Saturday & 3rd Wed of each month from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

*Trees, cont'd from page 1*

leaves to the shorter days of fall. She cuts out the parts of a tree, a small sun, a big sun, and shapes that symbolize water and carbon dioxide. As they talk about concepts, the students assemble the paper parts into side-by-side pictures on another piece of construction paper. One side of the paper has a big sun with green leaves; the other side has a small sun with red and yellow leaves. Casey also uses this activity to introduce plant cells, chlorophyll, and chloroplasts.

—Students in sixth through



eighth grade focus on the ecosystem. Students discuss species composition of forests and the importance of biodiversity in maintaining

balance. They learn about native trees like Tennessee's state tree, the tulip poplar, and about such invasive pest species as the balsam woolly adelgid, the hemlock woolly adelgid, and the Southern pine beetle. They talk about the role of living trees and also dead trees, which provide habitats for many animals. They debate whether people help or hinder nature, and how human actions affect the delicate web of the ecosystem. —Older students practice identifying trees on the trail and in their own backyard using a dichotomous key. During winter months when deciduous trees are without their leaves, Casey challenges students to identify trees using bark rubbings.

For more information about trees, check out *How Trees Work*.

Lisa Duchene is an environmental writer and volunteer coordinator of the Bellefonte Community Children's Garden in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

### 17 Garden Lovers Found! Only 6 Spots Left! South African Garden Adventure - October 13-24, 2010

You are invited to tour South Africa, explore the lush gardens of Johannesburg, stunning national parks and the gardens of Cape Town. Also, discover Cape of Good Hope, visit South Africa's premier wine region and stay in the Dutch colonial town of Stellenbosch. From the Bakubung Bush Lodge in the Pilanesberg National Park, you'll venture into the bush with African rangers to view South Africa's wildlife. Post-tour adventures to Botswana and Victoria Falls are also available. This 12-day, 11-night adventure is limited to 24 garden lovers. UT Gardens members can receive up to \$250 off. For trip details and costs, contact Andy Pulte at [pulte@utk.edu](mailto:pulte@utk.edu) or 865-974-8820.

Rose Seminar Sponsored by:

Holston Rose Society & Tennessee Rose Society

**GROWING BEAUTIFUL ROSES MADE EASY**

(Information for both novice and experienced growers)



**Saturday, March 13, 2010**

University of Tennessee Knoxville

Ag Campus Plant Biotech Building, Rooms 156 & 157

Fee: Pre-registration \$10 Day-of-Seminar \$15

8:30 Registration & Refreshments

Each presentation is 40 minutes:

"Selecting Roses for the Home Garden" \* "Building Rose Beds & Creating Fertile Soil" \* "Planting, Fertilizing & Watering Roses"

"Coping with Insects & Diseases" \* "Pruning (with demonstration)"

1:00 Summary -- George Poe, Certified ARS Judge

1:15 Door Prize Drawings

Plants, garden-related items, and baked goods available for purchase throughout the seminar

**For directions, map, and registration form:**

Go to [www.tennesseerosesociety.org](http://www.tennesseerosesociety.org) Click on "Events"

*“Gardening – a Capital Idea!”*  
**20th Annual Alabama Master Gardeners Association Conference**  
*Montgomery Renaissance Hotel and Spa at the Convention Center*  
**March 18-20, 2010**

The official conference hotel for the 20th annual AMGA conference is the magnificent Montgomery Renaissance Hotel and Spa at the Convention Center in the heart of the downtown historic Riverfront Development area.

The conference program includes roundtable discussions, hands-on workshops, outstanding educational and entertaining presentations and interesting tours. The hotel has offered us an excellent rate. Since the conference is open to the general public, make your reservations early.

The theme of the conference, Gardening... A capital Idea!, illustrates the importance that public gardens and public open spaces make to the quality of life in our communities and the valuable contribution made by volunteers. Speakers will inspire Master Gardener volunteers to renew their commitment to becoming integral players in their communities, contributing to the very existence of beautiful public spaces. The sessions will apply to home gardens and landscapes as well as public spaces. There will be opportunities to shop with the vendors, view chapter exhibits, and bid on Silent Auction items.

**REGISTRATION:** *Anyone attending the sessions pays full registration.*

\* *Regular registration is \$80. Deadline: March 1, 2010 (postmark date).* This includes entrance to all sessions on Friday and Saturday, continental breakfast on Friday and Saturday mornings, and lunch on Friday. The Thursday night dinner and the Friday banquet require a ticket and registration by March 1, 2010.

\* *Late registration (after March 1, 2010) is \$125.* No breakfast or lunch will be available with late registration, nor the Thursday night dinner or the Friday banquet.

**For more information or to register online visit [www.alabamamg.org/state\\_conference.asp](http://www.alabamamg.org/state_conference.asp)**

### Conifers

#### Symposium...Calling all gardeners!

When: Sat, February 27th  
8:30am to 5pm

Where: UT Visitors Center

The UT Gardens will host a one-day symposium that will teach gardeners of all skill levels how to grow and use conifers in the Midsouth.

The day will include educational seminars by horticulture experts Jason Reeves, Andy Pulte, Flo Chaffin and Hugh Colon. Attendees will be treated to a guided walk through the UT Gardens conifer collection and an exclusive conifer plant sale.

The cost is only \$40 for UT Gardens and American Conifer Society Members and \$45 for non-members and includes lunch.

*To register for the event online:* visit <https://web.dii.utk.edu/ag-Store/pc-2709-2412-conifers-for-gardeners-symposium>

*For more information:* call 865-974-7972, e-mail [sueham@utk.edu](mailto:sueham@utk.edu) or visit <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/>

### The Weather Rock

Greetings from the “it’s been snowing all day”...Weather Rock’,

I guess I need to get right to business with where this freight train of cold and snowy Winter weather is going...and that is...going and going and going...and Not...gone! Thought the shots of energy from the Gulf of Mexico will turn off after the coming weekend storm (which may hit south of I-40), storms will continue to run cross country from the energy of the ‘trying to die’ el Niño. There will be no break from the cold either. Average high temps for our area is around fifty (50) degrees in February. Except for the warm-up, mid January, we have seen few temps that were average, or above...in fact, remember that flash of cold air around Christmas? Well in fifteen (15) to twenty (20) days a large area of Siberian cold

will invade the U.S. and may bring us our coldest temps yet...so the February forecast is for more moisture, rain or snow, and more below average cold...low highs and low lows...did you get that? The Groundhog got it right...but he may have been a bit...OPTIMISTIC!

I have had numerous questions about all the rain... Would it continue into the Spring? If we could get the El Niño to finally disappear I might be able to say yes, it will be drier...but...I think the El Niño will hang around a while longer, unfortunately. An El Niño is an area of warmer than normal water along the Equator. As time has passed, it has struggled to retain its ‘warmness’...but...the surrounding water has cooled also!...and El Niño’s ability to evaporate water and create low pressure storms, continues...and I believe the Spring will be wetter than normal...SORRY...that’s probably bad news if you like to grow things...but...there is some good news...

There has been an up-tic in sunspots. Instead of three (3) to five (5) as we averaged per month, last year, we have had ten (10), each of the last two months. We will see if the trend continues...I hope so. Still, NASA classifies the suns general energy output as ‘low.’

Next month we will have details of all these amazing snowfalls. Many, many, many records set in the late 1890’s have been broken...and I will outline the sunspot record and look at the possible consequences of this low solar constant (seen as the longest sunspot minimum in a century)...we are seeing consequences of that event now...and...we are seeing that, as weather, we have seen...in years past! And PLEASE...manmade global warming is NOT causing the cold!

From the rock where snow is ‘laying’ nicely...stay warm!!

‘the Weather Rock’  
Jack Bailey