



NEWSLETTER - April 2020

Where to From Here?



Today is a new day! We choose to focus on the present and future while looking for the positive opportunities we would not have experienced or appreciated under the past normal. We pray for those experiencing the many negative effects of this disease and for a quick recovery to a new and better time.

In the next few weeks through e-mail or group software, your leaders will be developing some plans for the future including what to do in place of the May Plant Sale.

One of my questions for the moment is what to do with the plants that we planned to put in the May Plant Sale that need to be planted this spring? Here are some possibilities:

As individuals

- 🌿 Give plants to family or neighbors
- 🌿 Reach out to friends who live near by and provide them with a list of what you have available
- 🌿 Place plants at the end of your driveway with a 'Plants for Sale' sign and donation box.

To share plants with MCMG club members:

- 🌿 Create a list of plants you have available and send the list to a MCMG coordinator (to be determined) along with your preferred contact information. The coordinator would assemble a

master list of plants available and send an e-mail to the group asking if anyone would like any of the plants on the list to contact you. If you get any responses you can work out the details on how to pick up the plants or a porch drop off could be arranged.

- 🌿 We could possibly arrange to have a parking lot swap the first week that becomes an option.

Stay tuned but be open to different ways to bless others with your plants.

In addition we have an opportunity to have a different Plant Sale in the fall. There are lots of possibilities.

- 🏠 Indoor plants
- 🏠 Starter trees
- 🏠 Fall Flowers: Asters, Chrysanthemum, Pansy...
- 🏠 Small shrubs: Azaleas, Camellia, Hydrangea, Forsythia, Lenten rose...
- 🏠 Bulbs: Daffodils, Hyacinth, Grape hyacinth...
- 🏠 Cold weather vegetables for transplanting: Kale, Spinach, Cauliflower...(Start veggies like these in late summer.)
- 🏠 Transplant lots of perennials, flowers & herbs up until it gets cold...
- 🏠 Assemble "Complete Ready for Spring Seed Packages". arranging bunches of summer seeds packages in groups along with instructions to sell as a unit. Ex. "All you need for a fabulous early vegetable garden," "All you need for great annual garden," "All you need for your summer perennial garden..."
- 🏠 Handmade items
- 🏠 Workshops, Vendors, Activities, Local Band
- 🏠 Dunk the Extension Agent

OK maybe not that one-different things and activities that will bring JOY to our members and the community. It would be our fund raiser for the year.

Always feel free to send in your ideas. Have fun reading and keeping updated by reading your newsletter.

George ...Thanks to Cynthia for sharing some Fall Plant Sale ideas



A LITTLE SUNSHINE

As I read the newsletter e-mail request from Gail, I thought, how can I share something uplifting in the Sunshine corner. I decided to go outside and work on a little triangle of yard where we have difficulties getting things to grow. Last year I planted balloon flowers. I was looking forward to seeing them again. To my dismay the only thing I saw growing were weeds. I started getting the weeds out, knowing that I wanted to prepare to plant something else. I got down on my knees and there under the muck were Balloon Flowers! There was the answer to my article.

I don't know about you but some days I get discouraged with this new norm. The news is dire at its best. I sometimes feel helpless and hopeless. I am reminded by the Balloon lower sprouts, we are not helpless or hopeless. Things will get better. Until then, here are some things we can do.

- ☀ Go outside!
- ☀ Take a walk!
- ☀ Follow the rules the Governor has put in place. We all want this to be behind us.
- ☀ Check on a neighbor.
- ☀ Offer to get groceries for someone that's compromised.
- ☀ Call, write or text someone that you haven't heard from in awhile.
- ☀ Write a note of thanks to your mail carrier.
- ☀ Journal to remind yourself how things were.
- ☀ Read a book.
- ☀ Try a new recipe.
- ☀ Post an online gardening tutorial to help others.
- ☀ Count your blessings.
- ☀ Pray and give thanks.

There are so many things we can do. The list is endless.

I can't wait until we can be together again to share our pandemic stories.

Until then, be the sunshine to someone!

Cay

Please contact the Sunshine Chairperson, Cay McShurley at bcmcsburley@yahoo.com or call or text 931-446-1027, to inform her when you or another club member could use a ray of sunshine.



SERVICE PROJECT CORNER

Maury County Fair – 2-5 September
(Roger, point of contact rogvclar@utk.edu)

Senior Center: Clean-up – 13 October – 4 to 6 pm
(Judi, point of contact jbeyning@aol.com)

Seed Packaging – 13 October – 4 to 6 pm
(Gail, point of contact fgapaton@gmail.com)

Rippavilla Workforce Gardening, Dates TBD
(Sue, point of contact susan.nagel2@va.gov)

Other ideas and nominations:

UT Extension – Blueberry Bush Trials more details TBD

If you have nominations for service projects please contact:

Judi Heyning, jbeyning@aol.com, 931-489-6029
Susan Nagel, susan.nagel2@va.gov, 307-640-0004



Register for the 2020 TEMG State Conference

June 11,12, and 13

From herbs to ginseng to fishing and from heirloom fruit and vegetables to farm to table dinners, our MGs hosts from Northeast TN are making sure there will absolutely be something for everyone!!

Schedule details [HERE!](#)

Paper Registration Form [Link](#)

Online Registration [Link](#)

Thanks to Cindy Shapton for a wonderful evening learning about "Companion Planting in the Kitchen Garden"



#thecrackedpotgardener at
#fernvaleherbandflowerfarm

If you missed it you can glean some of Cindy's wisdom from her book... "The Cracked Pot Herb Book" is filled with useful information to help you grow and incorporate basic herbs into everyday life. Cindy shares timely ideas and advice on gardening along with simple ways to use herbs in the kitchen, garden or as an easy remedy to soothe the tummy or ease a headache.

<https://cindyshapton.com/index.php/shop/product/34-the-cracked-pot-herb-book>



The Old Farmer Says...

In April...

- Complete any pruning not finished for March
- Prune spring flowering shrubs soon after they finish flowering if they need it. Selectively cut old or unruly branches by reaching deeply into the shrub leaving no visible stub. Make the cut just above a joint.
- Treat crape myrtles for crape myrtle bark scale.
- For azaleas use systemic insecticide imidacloprid NOW to prevent damage from lace bug and spider mite infestations. In summer Pour this insecticide in liquid form around the root system as the flowers fade. Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control is a common, safe, effective insecticide to use.
- Direct seed flowering annuals and vegetables.
- Be on the lookout for rose rosette in roses. Symptoms are witch's broom effect, where the stems branch many times and the foliage and flowers look congested. It is important to remove any infected plant and place in the trash not compost. Sterilize tools with bleach water.
- Freshen up mulch.

- Fertilize well established trees or shrubs.
- After the danger of frost has passed cut back woody perennials.
- Pull or carefully spot spray winter weeds.
- Water only 2 or 3 times per week for better blooms.

A weed is a plant that is not only in the wrong place but intends to stay.

~Sara Stein~



Meeting CEU's for March

- Attending "Companion Planting in the Kitchen Garden" with Cindy Shapton at MCMG March Meeting earned 1.25 CEU hours.

Why gardening should be your go-to quarantine activity

Taken from Euronews with John Stirland

Fed-up with being on lock down and anxious about the corona virus pandemic? One expert says the answer is getting your fingers green.

Gardening expert John Stirland told Euronews people looking to relax should "Just get in there! If you've got a garden, just get out there and enjoy it because it's therapeutic, and you're out there with nature, and at this time of year as well, the birds are singing, they're mating and everything like that, so it's a fabulous time."

Gardening has been found to provide therapeutic benefits, including reductions in both anxiety and depression. Studies also show that spending time in nature has huge mental health benefits. With an uptick in mental health complaints in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, now might be the perfect time to grab a spade. The best approach is one of discovery, said Stirland.

"Unfortunately, some people have not a lot of room, and that can cause problems. But you can grow some wonderful plants actually in the house. "If you're limited in your space, I would go for the herbs," said Stirland. "They're easy to grow, don't require a lot of space. Not only are herbs aromatic and wonderful to touch but they can transform a simple meal into a gourmet dish. For example, chives, beautiful chives, transforms an omelette, and you need hardly any room to actually grow it."

My top five herbs:

- 🌿 Chives – so useful and lovely blue flowers.
- 🌿 Rosemary – great with lamb and for flavouring roast potatoes.
- 🌿 Mint – all-time favourite for mint sauce and mint tea.
- 🌿 Sage – for partnering onion in stuffing.
- 🌿 Parsley – for white sauce with fish or gammon.

Top Tips for Growing

- 🌿 Get the basic information. There's a little bit of chemistry.
- 🌿 Don't try and grow too early.
- 🌿 There are two main requirement for success: well-drained soil or compost and lots of sunshine (it help bring out the aromatic qualities in the leaves in herbs.)
- 🌿 The base of a south facing wall is an ideal place, as it is usually dry and hot. Plants can be purchased in small pots from garden centres and

simply planted out or potted up for you to grow on and enjoy.

- 🌿 Once plants are growing, water regularly and with containers use a liquid feed.

"Being cooped up in a house all day is no ones 'cup of tea' and no matter how pleasant the furnishings may be this type of environment can bring on tiredness and lethargy," says Stirland.

"Houseplants can transform your surroundings and help bring a little of the garden into a home while also improving the air quality. If the air in your home is a bit dry, consider misting your plants. The conditions within a room can vary greatly and light will be much brighter as you get nearer the windows. This again allows you to grow a wider range of plants with the main rule being 'the darker green the leaf the greater the shade tolerance'. This means plants with variegated leaves can be placed in stronger light and flowering plants in the window itself. All house plants will require a regular liquid feed.

My top five house plants:

- 🌿 Phalaenopsis - 'moth orchid' – ideal for totally shaded window sill, flowers last for months.
- 🌿 Sansevieria – 'mother-in-law's-tongue,' indestructible and stately.
- 🌿 Streptocarpus – 'cape primrose' flower for months.
- 🌿 Chlorophytum - 'spider plant' variegated leaves, favourite with the kids.
- 🌿 Amaryllis – stunning bulb with giant flowers.

"Just take it steady. The best part is the payoff — less stress. It really is beautiful, just to be able to touch plants, hold them, feel the leaves, etcetera. It's just fantastic."

"I find it reassuring to see my plants growing and budding just like they do every year, even with all the craziness and uncertainty all around us."

...Cheryl



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