

Spring 2025

NEWSLETTER

FAYETTE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER'S ASSOCIATION



Kentucky Extension
Master Gardener
Fayette County



The Prez Sez...

Spring 2025

The evenings are lengthening, daffodils are blooming, and we are beginning to see glimmers of green in perennial shrubs. Time to get away from the catalogs and cleaning our tools and into the garden again! With each spring comes the renewal of hope that a treasured cultivar will finally bloom or that experimenting with a new vegetable will produce a bountiful crop.

And so it is with the Fayette County Extension Master Gardener Association. After winter challenges, we are awakening to a new spring. Thank you, Susan McDaniel (Immediate Past President), for all your efforts in helping us emerge from a season of uncertainty and ambiguity. Thank you also Jamie Dockery and Reena Martin for successfully negotiating administrative changes and realignments stemming from higher up the food chain.

We are poised to move our Association in exciting new directions. The volunteer program has taken a quantum leap in developing a new structure and plethora of opportunities (see elsewhere in this Newsletter). We welcome an influx of talent, enthusiasm, and creativity from a newly minted class of Master Gardeners described by its mentors as "outstanding."

As incoming president, you can be assured that I will be doing all I can to sustain our momentum. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time [growl2@uky.edu] or members of the board with suggestions for improving our Association and enhancing the communities we serve.

Most important, this year, let us each, individually, commit to using our expertise as an Extension Master Gardener to enrich someone else's life whether it be by sharing garden produce with someone in need or gifting a posy of flowers to an elderly shut-in neighbor.

May your garden thrive!

Graham Rowles



Newsletter Committee:

MARY MILLER, CO-CHAIR
SUSAN MILLER, CO-CHAIR
PAMELA DORREL
SUSAN MCDANIEL

In This Issue:

Board Update p. 2
Potluck and Garden Tour p. 3
Guidelines for MG Hours p. 4
Emeritus Status p. 4
Volunteer Teams p. 4-5
Battling Invasives p. 6-7
Continuing Education Opportunities p. 7-8

*"We might think we are
nurturing our garden, but of
course it's our garden that is
really nurturing us."*

Jenny Uglow

Board Update from Graham Rowles

Our new Executive Committee, committee chairs and other officers were affirmed at a well-attended Annual Meeting. At this meeting, it was announced that, as we are currently in a sound financial position, dues will no longer be required for FCMGA membership. Of course, gifts and voluntary contributions are always welcome to support our mission and activities. The Board, comprising Graham Rowles (President), Pam Dorrel (Treasurer), Fran O'Connor (Secretary), Susan McDaniel (Immediate Past President), as well as Susan and Mary Miller (Newsletter Editors), (the Nominations Committee chair position is currently vacant) met on April 1. Fran O'Connor, reluctantly, needed to withdraw from the board for personal reasons and so we are seeking a new secretary. Board members expressed excitement about the multiple new volunteer opportunities and programs, including health and wellness initiatives and a speaker's bureau, coordinated by Reena Martin. Work continues completing a Directory of Members that we hope will be available soon. In his role as president, Graham Rowles now meets monthly with Reena to share information and ensure optimal communication between Extension Master Gardener programs and the FCMGA. In addition to our annual meeting and fall picnic, several team-building events are under development. Plans are being finalized for an initial gathering in May at a local site that is nurturing native plants. This event will provide the first of what we hope will be regular get-togethers at which Master Gardeners will be able to enjoy food and beverages as they get to know fellow Extension Master Gardeners and share experiences. Focus will be on facilitating stronger relationships among different master gardener classes and fostering an integrated rather than class-siloed sense of community. We are hoping for a large attendance. Keep an eye out for details!! The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for May 7. If you have any ideas/issues you would like us to consider, please contact me or any member of the Board. Remember, your contributions are important in building a vibrant and useful Association.

Graham Rowles



VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

Congratulations to Jeanna Jordan for going above and beyond volunteer requirements and winning the 2024 Master Gardener Volunteer Service Award. Jeanna acquired 93 hours assisting Jamie in Toolbox classes and recording attendance and grading assignments for the Master Gardener training classes. Thank you Jeanna for your dedication.

Master Gardeners have been busy this month!



**Working with children at the
Insect Zoo programs**

On April 10, the Youth Education Team had a program on insects at Marksbury Library. The insect zoo was divided into four centers that the children moved freely through. The children observed live and pinned insects, learned about the parts of an insect to create insects using natural materials, learned about a stag beetle and put the parts of it together, and placed insects into categories based on their roles. Master Gardeners helped children engage with insects and the parts of an insect at each center. Total attendance was about 70 people, at least 55 of them being children. A successful class on bulbs was held earlier in the month.

The Adult Education Group led Gardening 101 at Northside Library for an audience of 14 people in April. MG volunteers have been busy volunteering with Seedleaf and getting started on the Extension Gardens for the season. Please send info on your activities and photos to Reena and she will share with the Newsletter volunteers!



Master Gardener Potluck and Garden Tour

Saturday, May 31 from 11-2

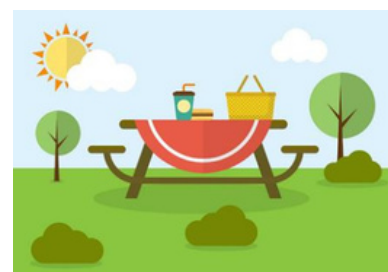
Unitarian Universalist Church,
3564 Clays Mill

Lunch will start at noon, with tours covering different topics at 11 and at 1. Please bring a dish to share, based on your last name.

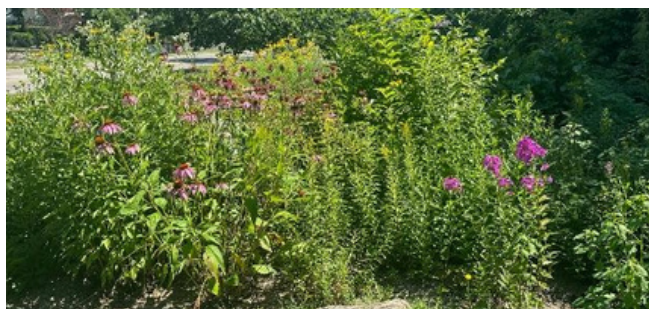
A - G Salad or Veggie

H - N Bread or Dessert

O - Z Main Dish (Pasta, Casserole, etc.)



Learn about the UU Church's seven-acre grounds and devotion to growing native plants and removing invasives. We'll also hear about a city funded stormwater quality project and a self-guided tree walk. Tours will count toward continuing education hours. Attend to learn and to build community with fellow Master Gardeners. We have access to the building so will hold this event, rain or shine.





Kentucky Extension
Master Gardener
Fayette County

Master Gardener Service Guidelines

If you don't complete and submit the required number of hours in a year, the EMG Program will give you until December 31 of the following year to make up the missed hours, in addition to completing the current year's hours.

For example, in 2024 you submitted 5 continuing education hours and 15 volunteer service hours by December 31. In 2025, you must complete and submit 15 continuing education hours (5+10) and 25 volunteer service hours (5+20) by December 31, 2025 to maintain your certification.

If you still don't complete and submit the required number of hours by December 31, 2025, then in 2026 you will no longer be a Certified Master Gardener. You can choose to become an Emeritus Master Gardener or leave the program.

If you have a question about your hours contact Reena Martin, Extension Assistant at Reena.Martin@uky.edu or 859-257-5582.

What if I didn't meet my hours?

Fayette County Extension Master Gardeners are required to complete 10 continuing education hours and 20 volunteer service hours each year to maintain their certification. To be counted, all hours must be submitted by December 31 of the current year. Hours submitted after December 31 will not be counted.

What is Emeritus status?

A Certified Fayette County Extension Master Gardener who chooses to retire from volunteering can decide to become an Emeritus Master Gardener at any time. An Emeritus Master Gardener:

- Is no longer an active volunteer
- Is not required to submit volunteer hours or continuing education hours
- Can still participate in Master Gardener Association activities such as the annual picnic, annual meeting and various tours
- Will continue to receive newsletters and other notifications from the Extension Office, if desired
- Cannot be an active volunteer again until completion of the EMG training program and recertification

If you have a question about your status contact Reena Martin, Extension Assistant at Reena.Martin@uky.edu or 859-257-5582.

VOLUNTEER TEAMS ARE OFF TO A GREAT START!

BY PAM DORREL

In case you missed it, Master Gardener volunteering has changed in 2025. Some of the same volunteer activities still exist, like Growing Community and the Demo Garden, but several new opportunities have been added this year.

Last year Jamie Dockery (County Extension Agent for Horticulture) and Reena Martin (Horticulture Assistant) worked hard to put together projects based on the UK Extension Program's Plan of Work. They came up with several volunteer activities that focus on this year's interest areas, which are Horticultural Demonstration, Local Food Access, Conservation & Natural Systems and Mental Health.

Here are brief descriptions of this year's volunteer teams:

The **Youth Education Team** will facilitate classes for youth at the Marksbury Branch library. This will be a 2-hour class once a month from March through June about topics like forcing bulbs, an insect zoo, succulents, and butterflies and their host plants

(continued on next page)



VOLUNTEER TEAMS ARE OFF TO A GREAT START, CONTINUED

Volunteering with the **Seedleaf Team** this year is reserved for the new apprentice Master Gardeners, since they'll need the additional hours to meet their certification requirements.

The **Eco-Team** will be partnering with other organizations to work on conservation initiatives such as removing invasives and building pollinator gardens. Potential partner organizations include Wild Ones and Trees Lexington. This team is open to ideas.

The **Health Benefits Team** will focus on the mental, physical and nutritional health benefits to the community provided by horticultural activities. Their first volunteer project will be focused on growing houseplants to provide mental health benefits.

The **Adult Education Team** will facilitate classes at the Northside and Marksbury Branch libraries. These will be 2-hour classes for groups of 20-25 for adults once a month from August through November about topics like Herbs for Iced Tea, Using Harvests (including a possible cooking demo), Growing Garlic, and Herbs & the Holidays.

The **Food Access Team** will distribute seeds or plants along with growing information and answer questions for an hour or so once a week from April through July at the Marksbury and Northside Branch libraries. Hopefully, this team will evolve to include lots of tactics to improve local food access in Lexington!

The **Growing Community Team** supports the Growing Community event on Saturday, May 3rd from 10am to 1pm at the Marksbury Branch library. Master Gardeners will partner together to create 10–15 minute lessons on gardening basics.

The **Flower Show Team** supports the Bluegrass Fair Flower Show which takes place June 7th-8th at Masterson Station Park by assisting contestants with entry drop off and pickup, assisting during the flower show, working information tables and volunteering in other ways.

The **Speaker's Bureau Team** will create three 30-minute Power Point presentations. The topics for 2025 are Native & Non-Native Plants, Gardening for Mental Health, and Climate Resiliency. When local organizations and groups request, this team can present one of these presentations and also answer questions.



Growing Community 2024

The **Outreach Team** will maintain the Master Gardener photos and social media, and publish the EMG newsletter. They'll also plan continuing education tours and work information tables at events as needed.

The **Arboretum Team** works individually with the Arboretum to do various gardening tasks as assigned. This requires a separate background check and training each year by the Arboretum and also double reporting of volunteer hours to both the Arboretum and the Extension Office.

Last but certainly not least, the **Demonstration (Demo) Garden Team** plans, plants and maintains the vegetable, herb and perennial garden located behind the Extension Office. This year Jamie Dockery will be much more hands on with the garden!

The new volunteering program is overseen by Reena Martin. She began with meetings in February for Master Gardeners to form groups to help plan and lead various parts of projects. If you attended a meeting, you earned volunteer hours for your attendance. If you missed them, no worries. All teams still need volunteers to successfully complete their projects, so there are plenty of opportunities for the rest of the year!

You can get more details about schedules and opportunities for each volunteer team by getting on Reena's email list for the team you're interested in. To get on or off a team email list, contact Reena at Reena.Martin@uky.edu or 859-257-5582. The growing season is just starting, so the work is only beginning!

BATTLING INVASIVES - A SEVEN ACRES APPROACH

BY MARY MILLER

I have worked for many years on the volunteer grounds crew at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Our seven acre property was a cattle field when originally purchased by the church in the 1950s. Dr. Tim Taylor, a UK forestry professor, along with other members, created wooded areas by planting at least one of every native KY tree, and many of these survive today. Our current Seven Acre Group is following his tradition by planting new native trees, flowers, and shrubs. But much of our focus now is on battling invasive non-native plant species, which threaten our native Kentucky species. Of course, most non-native plants are not invasive and many of us have those species in our gardens. The National Invasive Species Information Center of the US Department of Agriculture defines invasive species as non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Dozens of non-native plants are considered invasive, but I'm going to focus on my experiences on three invasives which we battle most often on our church property. The species that occupy most of our time are bush honeysuckle, winter creeper and garlic mustard.



For many years, our primary foe was bush honeysuckle otherwise known as *Lonicera maackii* which was imported as an ornamental in 1898 by the New York Botanical Society. It's a very different plant from the native honeysuckle vine (*Lonicera sempervirens*). It's easy to understand why it was introduced – it's hardy and disease resistant, grows very quickly, and has lovely red berries in the fall. But unintended consequences often accompany plants imported from other climates. Kudzu is one of the very well-known invasives that was meant to be an effective ground cover.

Bush honeysuckle leaves emerge early in the spring and native plants won't grow under the thick foliage. In the fall, the lovely red berries are eaten by birds and pooped out everywhere, which leads to unwanted plants on our church property and all over the county, invading natural areas such as Raven Run and public parks, as well as yards and fields. When I was working on the grounds in the 1990s, these bushes covered the property, many over 10 feet tall with thick trunks. Our approach was chopping plants with chain saws and chipping the remains –but the honeysuckle just kept coming back, new shoots emerging from the stumps left behind and new plants growing from berries. In 2025, we still chop down the bushes, but we also immediately treat the trunks by direct application with a powerful herbicide and only rarely do shoots emerge. Our philosophy is to avoid herbicides if possible, particularly important because a creek runs through the property and we want to avoid contamination, but some cases, limited use has helped with invasive control and the method of trunk application avoids contaminating the soil.

I would estimate that we've managed to eradicate around 80 percent of the bush honeysuckle on our property but I am now cursed with identifying it all over Lexington, and seeing those lovely red berries in the fall, knowing that birds will gobble them up and deposit generously, thus spreading the plant very effectively. The University of Illinois Extension Service has excellent information in their publication *Identify and Manage Invasive Bush Honeysuckle* at <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/good-growing/2024-11-29-identify-and-manage-invasive-bush-honeysuckle>



Photo from the Nature Conservancy website

Garlic mustard or *Alliaria petiolate* is another nemesis, and it is a super-spreader. It's a fairly compact plant, and a biennial which in the first year is a small rosette remaining green in the winter, and in the second year, can grow as tall as 3 feet after flowering in the late spring and early summer. The white flowers have four petals forming a cross, and when crushed the leaves have a distinct smell of garlic or onion. Each plant potentially produces hundreds or even thousands of seeds which can remain viable for years. Like many other invasives, garlic mustard has the potential to choke out other plants. Several compounds isolated from garlic mustard have been shown to depress growth of both grasses and herbs in laboratory experiments. Researchers concluded that release of these compounds from garlic mustard root systems might account for its dominance in forest ecosystems. (Michigan State University Extension Service, *About Garlic Mustard* at https://www.canr.msu.edu/ipm/invasive_species/garlic_mustard/about_garlic_mustard) Our crew has hand pulled thousands of these plants in the last few years, trying to get them in the early spring before they flower and seed and spread further. Several years of diligent attention have resulted in a substantial reduction. but this springtime will result in another concentrated battle.

BATTLING INVASIVES, CONTINUED

Having made inroads with bush honeysuckle and garlic mustard, our biggest problem now is winter creeper, or *Euonymus fortunei*, a dense vine that covers around 2 -3 of our 7 acres. We're not sure how it originally came to the property – perhaps as a ground cover or perhaps busy birds pooping out its berries, but however it was introduced, it has unfortunately flourished. Winter creeper spreads in thick mats with deep roots, and very few native plants can survive in these mats because it covers the ground so completely. Winter creeper spreads vegetatively along vines in contact with the ground by producing small roots called rootlets, which develop into new plants. Winter creeper will cover rocks and climb up trees, potentially reaching heights of 40 to 70 feet. When vines thicken and spread, they can suffocate the tree. When climbing a tree, winter creeper leaves block air and light from tree bark, and the vine's roots compete with the tree for nutrients in the soil below it. The vines have hairs that clasp onto and attach themselves to the bark, which puts more stress on the tree. These hairs also make it hard to remove the vines, and sometimes it is best to cut the vine at the base of the tree and dig up the roots



PHOTO: CHRIS EVANS, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, BUGWOOD.ORG

Currently, we're trying to clear small areas by digging up as many of the roots as possible. We're also experimenting with herbicides on a limited basis. The University of Illinois website entitled "invasive Wintercreeper" is an excellent resource and includes specific information on herbicide use with winter creeper (at <https://extension.illinois.edu/invasives/invasive-wintercreeper>) Winter creeper is another plant that has spread throughout Fayette County – in rural areas, it's a rare roadside tree that isn't covered with vines.

As a gardener, I struggle with getting rid of healthy plants. Gardening is always a balance, and gardeners choose the environment they want to create. Removing invasives from our church property allows us to plant and nourish native plants which feed the birds and bees of the Bluegrass.

Want to know more about invasive plants, many of which are still for sale in local nurseries? Many Extension websites have extensive researched based information, and particularly useful is UK Extension's *Field Guide Kentucky's Invasive Plants* at <https://publications.ca.uky.edu/177>

Other useful sources specific to Kentucky include:

Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council has an extensive list of invasives plant species at <https://www.se-eppc.org/ky/list.htm>

Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, "Invasive Plant Threats" at <https://eec.ky.gov/Natural-Resources/Forestry/forest-health/Pages/Invasive-Plant-Threats.aspx>

NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

BY PAM DORREL

Beginning this year, Master Gardeners have a completely new and easier way to earn the required continuing education hours. We've gone online! You can get 100% of your hours by watching or listening to any of the following approved programs:

Horticulture Webinar Wednesdays

Horticulture Webinar Wednesdays is a broadcast from UK Cooperative Extension Specialists in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Extension Agents from across Kentucky present topics that are of interest to home landscapers including lawns, trees and shrubs, flowers, vegetables, fruit and pests.



The series runs from March through October each year. You can register at <https://kentuckyhortnews.com/> to attend the live Zoom meetings on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. or view the recordings at any time on the website at <https://kentuckyhortnews.com/horticulture-webinar-wednesdays/> via a link that includes the notes so you can follow along. Each recording is about 30 minutes long and can also be viewed on the Horticulture Webinar Wednesday YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/HorticultureWebinarWednesday>.

So far, there have been five seasons for a total of 165 videos. Season six starts soon and you can subscribe to Kentucky Hort News at <https://kentuckyhortnews.com/subscribe/> to be notified when registration opens for the next presentation, or when recorded episodes are available. Follow them on FaceBook for more information at <https://www.facebook.com/UKYHortWebWed>.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, CONTINUED

Hort Culture

The Hort Culture Podcast is an audio only presentation about “the production, marketing, and joy of planting seeds and helping them grow”. It’s co-produced by the UK CCD (Center for Crop Diversification) and the Bourbon and Mercer County Extension Offices. The weekly episodes are 45 minutes to an hour long and are posted every Sunday on your favorite podcast sites like [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Zencast](#), [Podtail](#) and [Podcast Addict](#). The home page for the Hort Culture Podcast is <https://ccd.uky.edu/hort-culture-podcast>. There are over 104 episodes so far and more are being added every week.



The Arthro-Pod Podcast is an audio only podcast that teaches listeners about the weird and wonderful world of insects! The podcast was started by Jonathan Larson, an entomologist with the Fayette County Extension. The podcast was started in 2014, and there are one or two, or sometimes three episodes per month. There are 174 episodes so far and most of them are 45 minutes to an hour. You can listen on the website at <https://arthropod.blogspot.com/> where you’ll also find helpful resources like web links and photos for each episode.

For example in episode 130 from January 2023 entitled “Eat, digest, poop- how insects eat”, only a group of hardcore entomologists like the Arthro-Pod gang would spend an hour discussing insect digestion: the different types of mouths, the three guts of insects and the other side of the anus with insect frass. It’s an episode with lots of colorful descriptions and turns of phrase. The resource page includes the show notes as well as a chart of the types of insect mouths, several photos of insects and this photo entitled “Some of Jody’s favorite bug poo.” The caption reads, “Drywood termite frass is quite distinct.”



From the Woods Today

From the Woods Today is a program from the UK Department of Forestry & Natural Resources. The one hour weekly episodes are broadcast live on the website at <https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/woods-today> on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.

Topics include upcoming events and programs, animals, plants, pests, care, identification, and best practices for small forest owners. Some episodes include recurring segments like Tree of the Week, Snake ID, What's Bugging My Tree, and Pesky Plant of the Month. Recorded episodes, 236 so far, can be watched on the website and each episode includes a list of resources and web links. The recordings can also be watched on the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@UKForestryExtension>.

In-Person Opportunities

If you still want to learn in person, the Arboretum’s Naturalist and Perennial Gardening Series classes still qualify for continuing education hours. The schedule and registration details are on the website at <https://arboretum.ca.uky.edu/events-programs>. The classes haven’t been posted yet but you can check back periodically or call the Arboretum at (859) 257-6955 for this year’s schedule.

Each Gardener’s Toolbox class still qualifies for an hour of continuing education credit. You can see the list of all classes for 2025 at https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/sites/fayette.ca.uky.edu/files/Gardener%27s%20Toolbox%202025_final.pdf.

Go to <https://uky.fayette.pacecommunity.net> to register.

The new Outreach Team may be planning one or two additional in-person trips or tours this year which will count towards earning continuing education hours. (see page 3 for an upcoming garden tour). The Extension Office will email everyone as opportunities become available. If you have an idea for a trip or a tour, contact Pam Dorrel on the Outreach Team at plbdorrel@gmail.com or (317) 490-9134.



***SPRING HAS
SPRUNG!***