

Towns Union Master Gardener Association

NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly

Spring 2023

Volume 10, Issue 1

President

Nancy Peters-Benjamin

Vice-President

Recording Secretary

Our Officers

Janice King

Corresponding Secretary

Tommy Westbrook

Treasurer

Toni Smith

Meetings: Unless announced otherwise, Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties meet on the second Thursday of every month in the Fellowship Hall at Sharp Memorial Methodist Church in Young Harris, 4:00 p.m. socializing, 4:30 p.m. meeting. We do not meet if inclement weather closes Union County or Towns County schools.

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Edgeworthia chrysantha blooming in Henry and Tommy Westbrook's garden

SPRING. My second favorite season of the year (autumn is my favorite). The weather, very fickle, can be springlike at times or very stubborn, holding onto the winter cold. Forsythia, daffodils, Lenten roses, Iris reticulata, the red maples and more are all in bloom!

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers have been busy getting gardens, like the Gold Medal Garden, cleaned up and ready for spring and helping with the new Master Gardener Training Class. I had a chance to meet several of the trainees and they are a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable group.

Our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter is Kim Duval, please see pages 3– 6 and be sure to check out the article that Gayle Kusak shared about herbs, pages 19-20. And a must see, the two daffodil gardens that are Master Gardener Extension Volunteer projects are blooming and photographs submitted by Janice King and Grace Howard are found on page 16. Photographs of “What is Blooming Now” are found on pages 17 -18.

Happy gardening,

Jo Anne

***** Spring arrives on March 20, 2023 at 5:24 p.m..*****



Crocus, from the garden of
Tom and Jo Anne Allen

Meet Kim Duval

Not only is Kim our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter, she is also Chairperson for our 2023 Plant Sale. Kim and her husband Mike have resided in Union County since 2001, part-time from 2001 to 2015 and full time since 2016. They have one daughter and twin 11-year-old grandchildren, a boy and a girl. She completed her Master Gardener Extension Volunteer training in 2019 and was certified in 2020.

Kim grew up in St. Petersburg, Florida and she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. Now retired, Kim worked in corporate finance for 40 years, in several states; Florida, Denver, Colorado and Marietta, Georgia.

Recently, they completed a remodel of their home, expanding the footprint from a small cabin to one level living. They are also working to expand and improve the plantings in their woodland garden around their house.

Past community work consisted of volunteering as the U.S. Tennis Association Local League Coordinator for the Mountain Tennis Association, passing the baton after five years. Currently, in addition to being the Chairperson for the Master Gardener's 2023 Plant Sale, she is also in charge of the Container Gardens at Meeks Park. The theme for the Container Gardens last year was a Pollinator Theme. This project was initiated by Christine Issa and Kim took over as Chairperson when Christine moved in the latter part of 2019.

Her hobbies and passions include tennis and gardening and she plays pickleball for fun. She and Mike enjoy traveling anytime they have the opportunity. The Tuscany region of Italy remains her favorite place where they have traveled and to quote Kim, the Tuscany region is "A feast for the eyes, delightful people, fabulous food and wine."

Kim's favorite plants to grow are just about any plants that are deer resistant. She uses boxwood to provide evergreen structure to her garden and her favorite gardening activity is design.

Favorite foods include fresh vegetables in the summer and comfort foods in the winter like soups and stews. Something that many of her friends do not know about her is that she supports the Young Harris College tennis program and their players to strengthen the relationship between the community and the college. The tennis coach, Andrew Cobb, promotes community involvement and the spirit of giving and many of the adult players, in turn, support these young athletes at their matches and events.

I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Kim better and hope you will too.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



Symphotrichum georgianum—Georgia Aster



Cypripedium acaule—Pink Lady Slipper

Kim's Garden Continued



Muhlenbergia capillaris—Pink Muhly Grass



Echinacea purpurea—Purple Coneflower

Kim's Garden Continued



Kalmia latifolia—Mountain Laurel

March Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Complete all major pruning by mid-March. Maple trees bleed sap when pruned now, it's better to wait until late April.

Do not prune spring flowering shrubs like forsythia and quince until after they have bloomed or you will not get any blooms this year.

Only prune crape myrtles if needed, removing any suckers, cross branches and dead branches.

Prune roses back to about half their present size before buds break and began fertilizing as buds break.

Fertilize trees and shrubs following label instructions in March and follow with an application in early May and early June.

Cut back your butterfly bush to half the size you want it to become this summer.

Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains organic matter that has been thoroughly tilled.

Pull mulch at least six inches away from tree trunks to prevent soggy conditions and possible disease or insect damage.

Plant broadleaf evergreens and prune evergreen shrubs back to a manageable size before new growth starts.

Purchase azaleas when they are in bloom so you will be sure of the color you are buying.

Vegetables - Start planting cool season vegetables in late March – carrots, radishes, lettuce, collards, English peas, spinach, and beets. Warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, corn and okra should be planted after the soil temperature warms up and the danger of frost has passed.

Start vegetable and summer annual seeds indoors. Your seedlings will be ready to transplant into your garden after the soil temperature warms up in six to eight weeks.

Planting the same vegetables in the same spot in your garden year after year can lead to an accumulation of insects and or diseases in your soil. To avoid this problem, rotate your crops.

Flowerbeds - Divide overgrown hostas, daylilies and other perennials and ground covers as needed when you see the leaves unfurling above ground.

Dig up the new flowerbeds you plan to plant this spring when the soil is not soggy and

mix in plenty of organic matter.

Rejuvenate the pansies you planted last fall by fertilizing them with a water- soluble fertilizer as the temperature warms up.

English ivy can be very invasive. Good ground-cover substitutes include ajuga, mondo grass and creeping raspberry.

Avoid mixing freshly cut daffodils with other flowers in arrangements because they produce a chemical that injures blooms. Place daffodils in another container for a day after cutting, then rinse the stems before arranging.

Spring bulbs should be fertilized as flowers fade. Remove foliage only after it begins to fade.

Fertilize spring bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer (one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of flowerbed).

To help control weeds in your garden, apply a two to three-inch layer of mulch.

Sprinkle crushed eggshells around plants susceptible to slugs and snails, especially hostas.

Be on the lookout for summer bulbs at your favorite garden center. For better selection, buy them when they become available but do not plant them until late April or early May.

Plant clematis and other vines and put out hummingbird feeders.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested. Your County Extension Agent has soil test bags and instructions.

If your soil test indicates that you need to add lime, it needs to be added two to three months prior to planting your garden.

Houseplants - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength.

If you want flowers on your cactus, plant it in a small pot. Most cactuses bloom sooner if rootbound.

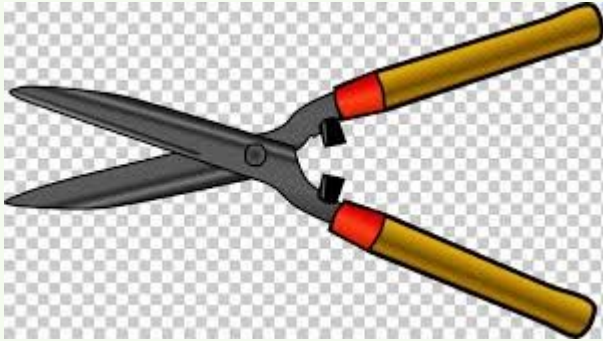
Miscellaneous - Set your lawnmower blade on its highest setting and cut back liriope before new growth begins, being careful not to damage the crown of the plant.

Sharpen or replace lawn mower blades if you have not already done so.

Lift stepping stones that have sunk below grass level, spread sand in the low area and

replace the stepping stone.

Clean leaves and other debris from ponds and water features.



Complete all major pruning by mid-March.



Start vegetable and summer annual seeds indoors.

April Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs – You may kill pollinating bees if you spray your fruit trees with pesticides while they are blooming. Wait until most of the blooms have dropped before spraying.

When planting a new tree, keep weeds and grasses out of a 3 foot by 3-foot area around the tree to reduce competition for nutrients and moisture. Cover the ground around the tree with mulch.

Don't be too quick to remove perennials and shrubs that have been damaged by cold. Cut back the dead branches above ground but leave the roots in place until June to see if new shoots appear.

Fertilize fruit trees just before or during bloom period, always following label directions.

Fertilize azaleas after blooming is complete.

Prune spring-flowering trees and shrubs AFTER they bloom.

Protect hydrangeas and roses if a late frost threatens.

Twist off faded flowers of rhododendron after they bloom to double the number of flowers next year.

Buy azaleas when in bloom so you can select colors compatible with your existing landscape.

As you see new growth on your roses, begin fertilizing (following label directions) every four to six weeks.

Container grown trees can be planted now.

Remove the thin sprouts (suckers) that grow from the base of Dogwood, Cherry and Crabapple trees and Crape Myrtles.

Regularly water bare-root roses and trees planted this spring.

Vegetables - Plant tomato seedlings in your garden as the weather warms up, after the danger of frost has passed. To reduce the likelihood of blossom end rot on your tomatoes, work one-half handful of dolomitic lime into the soil around each plant, mulch and provide a uniform amount of moisture during the growing season.

Leaf lettuce can be grown in containers or in your vegetable garden from spring until summer. Choose a site with four to six hours of direct sunlight and expect to harvest in about 45 days.

Do not work in your garden when the foliage is wet to avoid spreading diseases from one plant to another.

Don't rush to plant corn. Wait until the soil has warmed up, or the seeds may rot.

Set out herb transplants after the danger of frost has passed.

Flowerbeds - Eliminate weeds before they set seed and you will also be reducing future weed problems.

Fertilize emerging perennials with bone meal, following label directions.

Fertilize daylilies in April, June and September.

Fertilize summer bulbs now. Always follow label directions.

After spring-flowering bulbs are finished blooming, feed them a 5-10-15 or similar ratio fertilizer following label directions.

Remove faded flowers from daffodils and hyacinths but let the foliage remain and die back naturally.

Divide and transplant perennials and ground covers this month. Water them well until they are established if rain is sparse.

As the soil temperature warms up, begin planting summer flowering bulbs – dahlias, gladiolus, caladiums, cannas.

Mid to late April is a good time to plant annuals and perennials. Fertilize with a starter fertilizer that contains lots of phosphorus (the middle fertilizer number).

Dig in 2 cubic feet of soil conditioner for every 10 square feet of bed area when preparing new flower beds.

Replace the pansies in container planters with summer annuals.

For a different look on a sunny fence, trellis or mailbox, plant hyacinth bean – a fast growing ornamental bean (annual). Pink flowers give way to shiny, purple pods that are as attractive as the flowers. Wait until after the danger of frost to plant.

Pull up invasive plants such as Chinese privet, honeysuckle and English ivy.

Houseplants - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength. Protect them from direct sun.

Compost - If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Miscellaneous - Fertilize cool and warm season grasses.

Sod or sprig new lawn areas to fill in bare spots in existing lawns.



Plant tomato plants in your garden.



Fertilize emerging perennials.

May Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Do not pile mulch against the trunks of trees. This can encourage possible insect and water problems. Mulch should be approximately 6 to 8 inches away on all sides.

Lichens growing on your tree trunk may be an indication that your tree is stressed from soil compaction, poor drainage or insufficient fertilizer.

Water roses with a soaker hose to keep water off the foliage and possibly prevent black-spot.

Fertilize azaleas, rhododendrons, and roses now, following label directions.

Mulch newly planted blueberry plants to insulate shallow roots from heat and drought.

Prune climbing roses after they finish flowering.

Prune off sprouts from the base of crape myrtles that are being trained to an upright tree form.

Wait until after your azaleas have bloomed to prune them (if pruning is needed). This is also an ideal time to fertilize them.

Remove faded blooms from rhododendrons to increase the buds that make the blooms for next year.

Remove low-hanging and dead limbs from shade trees.

It is still not too late to set out roses.

Vegetables - Plant rosemary, basil, thyme and other herbs to enhance summer meals. Herbs are a good choice for a flower-box for your patio. Most herbs grow best in full sun, but mint, cilantro, parsley and thyme tolerate moderate shade.

Tomatoes can be grown in containers on a sunny deck or patio. Bush-type tomatoes do better in containers; plant in a large pot at least 24 inches across filled with a good quality planting soil. Fertilize and water tomatoes regularly.

Plant peppers by the first part of June for summer harvest.

Strong sun and wind are hard on new transplants. Set them out in the late afternoon so the plants have overnight to acclimate.

Fertilize your vegetable garden every four to six weeks during the summer, always following label directions.

Flowerbeds - Seeds of annual flowers like zinnias, cosmos, salvia, marigolds, and nasturtiums can be seeded directly into prepared flowerbeds.

Replace pansies with summer annuals and plant ornamental grasses now.

As your spring flowering bulbs die back, plant bulb beds with annuals for summer color, being careful not to disturb your bulbs.

Remove invasive plants like Chinese privet, poison ivy and English ivy from your landscape.

Do not remove daffodil foliage after they have bloomed until it turns yellow. The leaves absorb sunshine for energy and nutrition for the bulbs so they can bloom again next year.

Look for Lenten rose seedlings underneath your mature plants and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden.

Pinch out terminal growth (the tip) of annuals to make bushy plants and encourage growth.

Use rubber soaker hoses among shrubs and flowers in beds and mulch with pine straw to put the water where the plants need it and to conserve water this summer.

Fertilize flowerbeds with a slow-release fertilizer.

Move or replant irises if they did not bloom very well last season.

Variegated hosta may turn green when grown in lots of sun. It's best to grow hosta where it does not get hot afternoon sun.

Plant annual vines like moon flower vine and purple hyacinth bean to disguise ugly walls and enliven fences.

Plant sunflowers for a sunny summer flower arrangement.

Weed flowerbeds and borders regularly.

Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to continually produce new leaves during the summer.

Houseplants - Rejuvenate houseplants by lightly pruning them and moving them outdoors to a partly sunny/partly shady area for the summer. Start fertilizing at half the recommended strength.

Miscellaneous - Look for fire ant mounds and treat with appropriate insecticides, always following label directions.



Remove invasive plants from your landscape.



Use rubber soaker hoses in your garden to conserve water.

The Children's Daffodil Garden at Lloyd's Landing
gearing up for a beautiful show
Photograph by Grace Howard



The Children's Daffodil Garden at Meeks Park in full bloom
Photograph by Janice King



What's Blooming Now
From the Garden of Tom and Jo Anne Allen



Left: *Helleborus orientalis*, Lenten Rose

Right: Daffodil

Below: *Iris reticulata*



What's Blooming Now , Continued
From the Garden of Tom and Jo Anne Allen



Veronica peduncularis,
Speedwell 'Georgia Blue'



Magnolia soulangiana, Saucer Magnolia



Arum italicum

GROWING HERBS

Companion planting

Many herbs are extremely beneficial to the garden itself, improving the soil and environment, as well as attracting the beneficial insects to preserve your precious plants. Over thousands of years of trial and observation, gardeners all over the world noticed improvements in size, health, and yields when certain plants were cultivated close together. By observing nature, seeing what worked, and copying what they saw, they found that these effects could be reproduced.

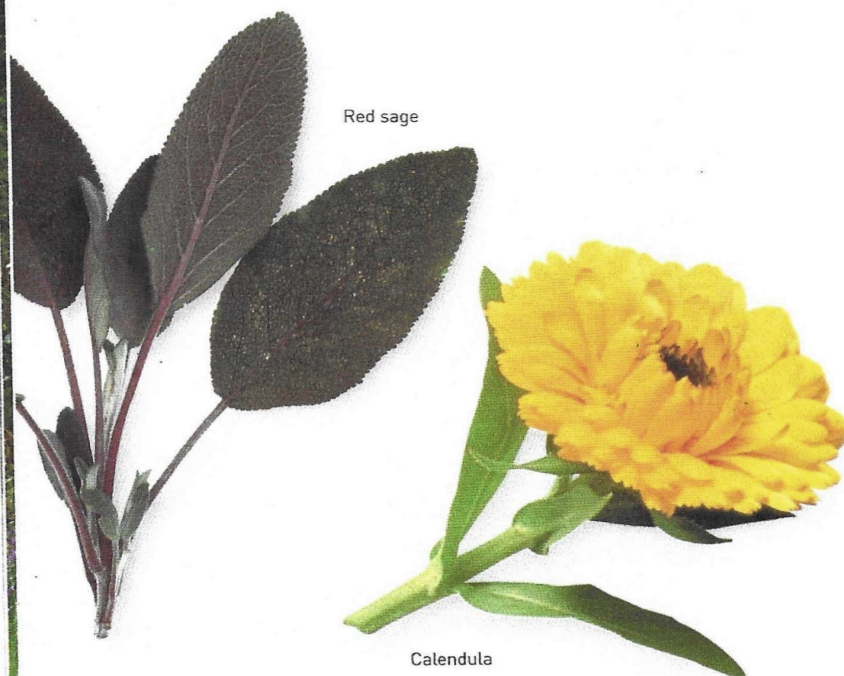
right The wild herb borage is usually found in woods or on waste ground.

One famous example is the fact that garlic plants under rose bushes really do deter aphids and other predatory insects. Certain types of calendula (marigold), called tagetes, actually give out secretions from their roots, which help keep weeds at bay—which is particularly good near vegetables. Farmers in past times would plant nasturtiums under their apple trees; not only would these keep away aphids, but they would then be plowed back into the soil as a “green manure” to enrich the earth with nutrients and feed the growing tree. Aromatic herbs give out such strong aromas they attract bees, so growing them near your orchard would improve the pollination of your fruit trees.

Good companion plants

This chart shows how common herbs can help other plants to grow when they are planted nearby.

Basil	Helps apples, asparagus, grapevines, and tomatoes and works well planted close to parsley and summer savory.
Borage	Helps fava beans, cucumbers, grapevines, large zucchini/squash, tomatoes, and strawberries.
Calendula	Helps artichokes, all beans, peas, and potatoes.
Camomile	(Roman or German) Helps broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kohlrabi, peas, and tomatoes.
Chives	Help apples, cabbage, carrots, grapevines, leeks, roses, and tomatoes.
Clover	Helps apples, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and pears.
Coriander	Helps radishes and spinach.
Dill	Helps Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, kohlrabi, and leeks.
Fennel	Helps cabbage, squash, leeks, and large zucchini.
Garlic	Helps apples, string beans, lettuce, peaches, pears, plums, and roses.



Special companion herbs

Borage, with its lovely blue flowers, encourages the growth of strawberries so the fruit is healthy and tasty, and the leaves resist fungi and other diseases.

The **camomiles** are such all-rounders that they are considered to be the "plant physicians" and can be planted anywhere to encourage healthy growth.

Hyssop	Helps broccoli, cabbage, grapevines, and kohlrabi.
Lavender	Helps cabbage, citrus fruit, and tomatoes.
Lemon balm	Helps potatoes and tomatoes.
Sweet marjoram	Helps beans, broccoli, cabbage, and potatoes.
Mint	Helps broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, peas, and tomatoes.
Nasturtium	Helps apples, apricots, cucumbers, and zucchini.
Parsley	Helps artichokes, asparagus, lettuce, and potatoes.
Rosemary	Helps beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, and tomatoes.
Sage	Helps carrots, cauliflower, grapevines, kohlrabi, and tomatoes.
Summer savory	Helps all beans, onions and potatoes.
Thyme	Helps beans, cauliflower, eggplants, and lettuce.
Yarrow	Helps corn and raspberries.

Using herbs like this is a totally organic way to enhance your whole garden, as well as providing you with herbs for cooking and medicine. The more you work with plants, the more you may discover relationships between them that are unique to your particular garden and climate.



Weeds I Love To Hate

Ligustrum sinense

Chinese Privet

Chinese privet is an evergreen ornamental shrub in the Oleaceae (Olive) family that grows 6 to 13 feet tall. They are fast growers, are hardy and have a long-life span (20-40 years). Chinese privet is native to Europe, Asia, Australia and the Mediterranean region. Leaves are opposite, usually oval, with a smooth margin. Flowers are terminal clusters of creamy-white, often odorous, with black berries following the blooming period.

Chinese privet spreads through sexual reproduction. It produces berries/seeds that are easily dispersed by wind, birds and other animals. These seeds can rapidly germinate and grow in disturbed soil such as abandoned agricultural land, cleared forests or erosion.

Chinese privet has become an invasive weed in the southeastern United States. It can quickly form an impenetrable thicket, crowds out native species, produces toxic berries and can change the ecology of an area.

Small Chinese privet plants (up to 10 to 12 inches) can be hand-pulled and discarded if the ground is not too dry. It can also be effectively controlled with herbicide treatments. Always follow the herbicide label.



Ligustrum sinense—Chinese Privet

Asparagus Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette



1 bunch asparagus, washed and cut into thirds
1 10-ounce container mixed salad greens (wash and spin dry)
1 handful of radishes sliced into thin slices
1 handful of cherry tomatoes sliced in half
1 small container of peas, thawed peas or fresh
1 red onion, thinly sliced
feta cheese for garnish, sprinkle and crumble at the same time into the salad

Lemon Vinaigrette

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil
1 lemon, juiced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple cider vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot boil the asparagus for 3-5 minutes. Rinse in cold water.

In a large bowl combine salad greens, radishes, cherry tomatoes, peas, and onion. Add and mix in asparagus. Garnish salad mixture with feta cheese

Make the dressing: In a small bowl whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, salt and pepper. Pour the desired amount of dressing over the salad and mix together. Enjoy!

Book Corner

Title: The Language of Butterflies How Thieves, Hoarders, Scientists and Other Obsessives Unlocked the Secrets of the World's Favorite Insect

Author: Wendy Williams

Not from the library of Jo Anne Allen yet, she has this book on order

A look at one of the world's most beautiful and resilient insects and the role they play in our ecosystem. Scientist journalist Wendy Williams explores butterflies across the globe, their habitats and those dedicated to studying them. This book is a love letter to these vanishing species and a celebration of the beauty and joy they bring to our world.