



# TUMGA NEWSLETTER

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## Our Officers

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TUMGA Membership Meetings: Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties meet on the second Thursday of every month at St. Clare's Episcopal Church in Blairsville at 4:00. We do not meet if inclement weather closes Union County or Towns County schools.

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## Reminders/Upcoming Events

March 8, 2024 - Daffodil Garden Events at both locations

March 14, 2024 - Gayle Kusak, Birds

April 11, 2024 - (Possible) New Educational Emphasis Discussion

May 9, 2024 - TBA



## Editor's Words

Spring is the season that many gardeners enjoy the most. The weather is not too hot or too cold and the promise of a fresh gardening season is upon us. Magic seems to happen in our gardens this time of year as bulbs send up shoots and flowers and seeds germinate and trees leaf out and everything comes to life. The same kind of magic happens as Master Gardener Extension Volunteers, all coming from different careers and backgrounds, come together with different strengths and passions and expertise to accomplish many wonderful things in our communities.

In this first issue of the eleventh year of our newsletter with an updated front page, Harriet Hoke is our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter (pp 3 - 5). Leslie Wade and Clare Johnston recently graduated from UGA's Certificate in Native Plants program (p 16). Pat Smith submitted an article on the 2023 accomplishments of the Vogel State Park Project (pp17– 20) and Jared Ogden shared an article about the Ethnobotanic Gardens at GMREC, When Serenity and Serendipity Combine (pp 21 - 22).

My hope is for a happy and warm spring for all.

Happy gardening,

Jo Anne

\*\*\*\*\* Spring arrives on March 19, 2024 at 11:06 PM\*\*\*\*\*



Crocus - In Tom and Jo Anne Allen's front entrance garden

## Meet Harriet Hoke

Not only is Harriet our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter, she also Chairs the Gold Medal Garden Project. The Gold Medal Garden always looks beautiful and well-tended and it is very visible, being located at the entrance to the Union County Farmers Market. Harriet moved to Union County in October of 2018. She has one daughter who lives in Indiana and two grandsons, one a freshman at Florida State University. She completed her Master Gardener Extension Volunteer training in May of 2021 and was certified in 2022.

Harriet grew up in Tampa, Florida and earned a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of South Florida.

Now retired, Harriet worked as a Mental Health Counselor at Suncoast Hospice in Pinellas County, Florida.

Her hobbies and passions include hiking, volunteering and visiting wineries.

Currently in her own gardens, Harriet is trying to decide how to garden without deer eating everything. She especially enjoys flowering trees, herbs and the beautiful fall color in the north Georgia mountains. Her favorite gardening activity is weeding, it is actually therapeutic for her.

Besides being a very active volunteer in the Towns Union Master Gardener Association, Harriet is currently working on forming an Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group.

Favorite foods include pretty much anything, as long as it is good. One exception: no Bambi! And a destination she would like to visit: she would like to do a walking tour of Ireland.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

Harriet's dog,  
Maggie





## Pictures of Harriet's Gardens



Dogwood



Day Lily



## Pictures of Harriet's Gardens



Rose



A bouquet of flowers from Harriet's garden

## **March Garden Activities**

**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 root-bound.

**Miscellaneous** - Set your lawnmower blade on its highest setting and cut back liriopse 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 major pruning by mid-March.



Divide overgrown hosta.

## **April Garden Activities**

**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.



Fertilize emerging perennials in spring.

Leaf lettuce can be grown in containers.





## **May Garden Activities**

**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 blackspot.

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.



Prune climbing roses after they finish blooming.



Plant rosemary, basil, thyme and other herbs to enhance summer meals.

Chuckles

Submitted by Roy Benjamin

What do you call a happy mycologist? A fun guy (fungi)

What do you call hostas that are being kept against their will? Hostages



## What's Blooming

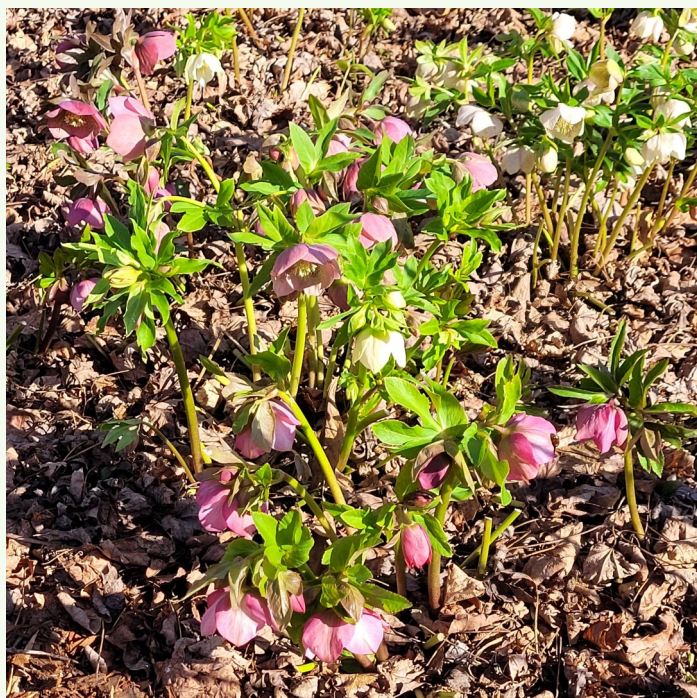
From the Gardens of Tom and Jo Anne Allen



*Iris reticulata* 'Harmony' - first bloom of the season - photo taken February 13th.



Moss



*Helleborus orientalis* - Lenten Rose



## What's Blooming, continued



White, nodding, bell-shaped blossoms of *Galanthus*, Snowdrops



Blooms on *Acer rubrum*



## Leslie Wade and Clare Johnston Earn Certificates in Native Plants

TUMGA Master Gardener Leslie Wade and GMREC's Clare Johnston recently graduated from UGA's Certificate in Native Plants program. The two were honored with others at the State Botanical Garden's annual Native Plant Symposium, February 15. Leslie also earned a Certificate in Plants and Pollinators.

UGA's Certificate in Native Plants program is part of a conservation and education initiative launched in 2007. The Certificate in Native Plants requires 80 hours: 56 hours of classroom study, 8 hours of field trips, and 16 hours of volunteer service. The Plants and Pollinators certificate requires an additional 20 hours of coursework, 8 hours of field trips, and 30 hours of volunteer service.

Leslie says she appreciated the self-paced nature of the program and the balance of in-person and online classes. She added that she looks forward to applying what she learned in her habitat restoration project at home and in her volunteer work for TUMGA, GMREC and the Georgia Native Plant Society.

Find more information about UGA's certificate programs and upcoming classes here:

<https://botgarden.uga.edu/education/adult-programs/>

Leslie Wade

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



Leslie Wade and Clare Johnston

## Vogel State Park Project

The Vogel State Park Memory Walkway, once a gem of the park, had fallen in disrepair for lack of maintenance. The groups involved in maintaining the walkway were no longer able to do the work. Stephanie Gray, President of the Vogel Volunteers, reached out to TUMGA for help. It took three years but the TUMGA members that volunteered met the challenge.

In the year 2023, this is what they did, project chaired by Pat Smith:

1. removed invasive plants such as poison ivy and black locusts
2. replanted using only native Georgia plants and shrubs
3. installed a new pollinator garden in June of 2023 to attract insects, birds, bees and butterflies of dwindling populations
4. had dangerous, dying tree limbs that overhung the walkway correctly removed by the maintenance crew
5. planted a new fern garden in a very dry, un-watered area
6. had a fence constructed to help prevent personal injuries as well as protect plants and shrubs
7. had a water supply installed for plant irrigation during dry spells and drought
8. shared plant costs with Vogel Volunteers when it was necessary to replace plants and shrubs
9. provided leaf and debris removal, pruning and deadheading of plants and shrubs, fertilizing and mulch installation for Earth Day celebration
10. beautified area to the north, south and front of CCC Museum
11. installed TUMGA sign in recognition of the group's hard work.

New plant additions to the area west of the new fence planted in the fall of 2023 are spicebush, St. John's wort, hickory alder, unscented mock orange, sedges and other grasses.

Thank you all TUMGA volunteers! It is BEAUTIFUL and you have every reason to be proud of your accomplishment! Pictures of the project supplied by Marcia Little follow on pages 18 - 20.

Pat Smith

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



## Vogel State Park Project



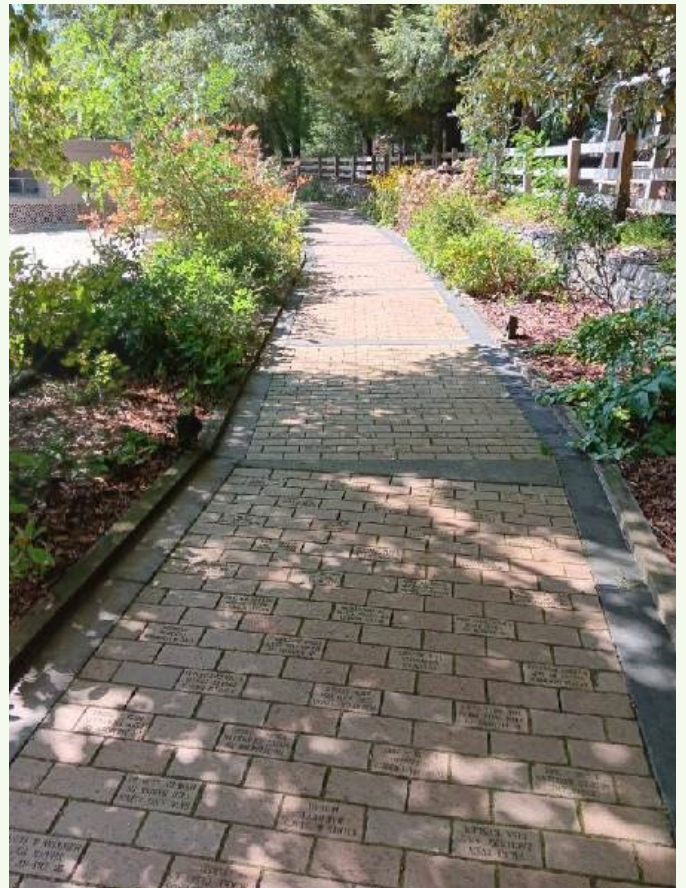


## Vogel State Park Project





## Vogel State Park Project



The Ethnobotanic Gardens at GMREC  
Where Serenity and Serendipity Combine

By Jared Ogden, MGEV

The gardens were developed to teach and illustrate how native and naturalized plants thrive in seven microclimates. Volunteers craft the gardens two Mondays each month, from April until October, and enjoy the peace and serenity of working with fellow gardeners in the “hidden jewel of the north Georgia mountains” by performing the quotidian task necessary for all gardens. Other gardeners find pleasure as tour guides, yet the aspiration of developing expertise in one of the microclimate gardens serves as a beckoning call for others.

The growth habits of native annuals serve as almost perfect examples of serendipity. Regardless of where they were last summer, natives find a spot more to their liking the following summer, and volunteers work with each other to best design around the new locations.

The combination of serenity and serendipity provides for a fun and enlightened experience. Last summer, for example, sciatic pain hindered my physical capacity. MGEV, Roy Benjamin paused, left the Sunny Hillside Garden to the asphalt road, and, for our benefit, illustrated how he uses yoga to prevent back problems.

The GREMC Gardens, where volunteers gain serenity and experience serendipity every other Monday!

***Serenity doo da and serendipity A***

***My oh my, what a wonderful day!***

***Figurative bluebirds sitting on our shoulders!***

***Each year it's new, it's actual, everything is satisfactual! \****

Come join us.

\*My apologies to Walt

*Please see the next page where MGEV Roy Benjamin illustrates how he uses yoga to prevent back problems.*



MGEV Roy Benjamin illustrating how he uses yoga to prevent back problems.



# Weeds

*Gnaphalium pensylvanicum*

Wandering Cudweed

In researching this weed, I found in my Weeds of Southern Turfgrasses book four different cudweeds; narrowleaf cudweed, wandering cudweed, purple cudweed and shiny cudweed. I identified my cudweed as wandering cudweed.

Wandering cudweed is a winter into spring annual or biennial that grows from a basal rosette of leaves. Both stem and leaves are covered by soft hairs. The underside of the leaves are covered with dense white hairs. The upper-side of the leaves are a dull green. The flowers are purple to pink and it reproduces from seed.

Wandering cudweed is found from Pennsylvania, south into Florida, west to Texas and in southern California. It is also found in Central and South America.

It does not appear on the invasive species list but reproduces only by seed which are easily dispersed by the wind into new, unwanted locations.

To get rid of wandering cudweed, pull or dig out the weed, being sure to pick up and discard the weed roots. Herbicides can be effectively used to eliminate it also. Always be sure to follow label directions.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



Wandering Cudweed



## Beet Salad with Goat Cheese and Balsamic Vinaigrette (Assemble the salad just before serving)

4 to 5 medium beets  
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling  
2 C salad greens, arugula or spring mix  
½ shallot, thinly sliced  
½ green apple, thinly sliced  
¼ C toasted walnuts  
2 ounces goat cheese, torn into pieces  
Balsamic Vinaigrette  
Flaky sea salt  
Freshly ground black pepper



For this recipe, I use beets that I grew and canned from last season. If you do not have canned beets, you can roast the beets, peel and then chill in the refrigerator until you are ready to use them. Slice the beets and assemble them with the salad greens and the next four ingredients. Drizzle with Balsamic Vinaigrette and season with flaky sea salt and pepper. Drizzle with a touch of extra-virgin olive oil and serve immediately. Enjoy!

## Book Corner

Title: Garden Retreats, Creating an Outdoor Sanctuary by Barbara Blossom Ashmun

From the library of Jo Anne Allen and she gives this book 5 green thumbs out of 5.

As simple as a low bench next to a garden of wildflowers or a chair placed under a huge shade tree, a garden retreat offers a quite, relaxing place in which to read a book, share conversation with a friend or do nothing at all. Author Barbara Blossom Ashmun understands that the most restorative outdoor spaces are expressions of those who create them and Garden Retreats encourages you to find your own style as you build your outdoor sanctuary. Chapters include: Introduction, Finding Your Style, Sheltering Walls: Enclosure for Privacy and Intimacy, Looking Up: Sky, Trees and Canopy, The Entry: Portal of Transition, The Inviting Path, Melding Color and Texture to Set the Mood, Structures, Furnishings and Ornamentation, Plants for All Seasons and A Few Last Thoughts.