



Kentucky Extension
Master Gardener
Fayette County



The Prez Sez...

BY SUSAN MCDANIEL

New Year, New FCMGA Board and One More Annual Meeting in the Books!

Happy 2024! I'm so excited to see what this year brings to all of us as gardeners and as an association! The weather wasn't the best for the annual meeting, but for those of you who made it, I hope you enjoyed seeing everyone as much as I did. Is there any better feeling than hanging out in a room full of gardeners?

As the new president of the FCMGA Board of Directors, I want to first say a big thank you to Ann Henry, our immediate past president, who took on the position early when a previous president had to take a medical leave, stayed on through COVID, and then led the organization in updating our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws this past year, which were voted in at the meeting. Thank you, Ann, for 3 years of leadership and commitment!

And to Kay Fisher who served a whopping 24 YEARS as the association treasurer! Holy cow, Kay! Thank you so very, very much!



We have hit the ground running already with our first meeting Feb.23; the new e-directory will be distributed soon (ANOTHER BIG THANK YOU TO JUDY WORTH FOR THAT!) and watch this space and your email boxes for news of upcoming new opportunities to spend time together.

*Happy Gardening!
Susan McDaniel*

Newsletter Committee:

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

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“My garden is my
most beautiful
masterpiece”
— Claude Monet



The Fayette County Master Gardeners Association Annual Meeting was held on January 28, 2024. New Officers were elected and revised Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were passed,

The 2024 Board of Directors and chair/co-chairs of the Association committees are:

- Susan McDaniel, President (FCEMG class of 2018)
- Graham Rowles, Vice President (FCEMG class of 2018)
- Pam Dorrel, Treasurer (FCEMG class of 2022)
- Marilyn Gall, Secretary (FCEMG class of 2016)
- Ann Henry, past President (FCEMG class of 2014)

Association Committees are:

Social Events:

- Co-chairs Judi Daniels (FCEMG class of 2022) and Patte Crampton (FCEMG class of 2022)

Technology and Communication:

- Nisa Hanna (FCEMG class of 2022) - technology
- Susan Miller (FCEMG class of 2016) - newsletter
- Mary Miller (FCEMG class of 2016) – newsletter

Continuing Education:

- Co-chairs Fran O'Connor (FCEMG class of 2022) and Graham Rowles (FCEMG class of 2018)

Nominating Committee:

- Co-chairs Ken Johnson (FCEMG class of 2018) and Ellen Ferguson (FCEMG class of 2018)



The Fayette County Master Gardener Association
2024 Board of Directors

Back row, left to right: Judi Daniels, Ellen Ferguson, Susan McDaniel, Graham Rowles, Susan Miller, Pam Dorrel, Ken Johnson;
Seated, left to right: Marilyn Gall, Fran O'Connor, Ann Henry



A new Directory of Master Gardeners with photos included is on the way! The Board hopes this will encourage a sense of community.

Spring is here!



Lexington Lions Club Bluegrass Fair



Show What You Grow!
The Bluegrass Flower & Vegetable Show

Annual Horticulture Contest and
NGC Standard Flower Show

June 8 - 9, 2024

MASTERTON STATION PARK

3051 Leestown Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40511

Sponsored by
THE FAYETTE COUNTY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS
and
THE LEXINGTON COUNCIL GARDEN CLUBS

Member of:
National Garden Clubs, Inc.
South Atlantic Region
The Garden Club of Kentucky, Inc.
Blue Grass District

SHOW HOURS: 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Free with Fair Admission

THE PURPLE TOMATO THAT'S SO GMO BY PAM DORREL

Seeds that produce healthier tomatoes are not nearly as fascinating as flowers that glow in the dark (see page) , but vegetable gardeners may be excited by this news. In early February Norfolk Healthy Produce, a new online seed company in Davis, California, announced their first product for sale: The Purple Tomato.

The Purple Tomato seeds are the first ever GMO (genetically modified organism) seeds to be sold directly to home vegetable gardeners in the US. And home gardeners have reason to be excited because the flesh and skin of these new tomatoes are loaded with anthocyanins, the purple antioxidant found in blueberries, blackberries and eggplants.

The tomato was genetically modified with two genes from the edible snapdragon plant to alter its color and enhance its nutritional quality. The result is that the tomato's purple, antioxidant rich pigment is produced in the flesh and the skin of the tomato, so even the juice is a rich source of antioxidants. The USDA has approved the tomato variety after determining that it's unlikely to pose an increased plant pest risk relative to other cultivated tomatoes. It's an indeterminate cherry tomato and can be grown using the same gardening methods used for other indeterminate varieties.

Seeds are available at www.norfolkhealthyproduce.com. A packet of 10 seeds costs \$20 (with free delivery in Kentucky), and is only available in the US.

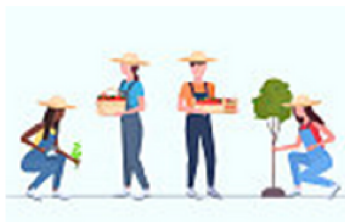
If you're cautious and want to wait to hear how other home gardeners fare with the new seeds this year, you can still try the tomatoes this fall to see how they taste (or if they slow down the aging process!). The company plans to have fresh tomatoes for sale in grocery stores later this year. The future of health is technology!



Photo courtesy of Isaaa.org



Photo courtesy of Norfolk Plant Sciences



Continuing Education

Nobel Prize-winning novelist Doris Lessing once wrote that learning is when “You suddenly understand something you’ve understood all your life, but in a new way.” So it is with gardening, the more we learn, the more we are able to enjoy and appreciate our passion for digging in the dirt. The Continuing Education (CE) Committee is committed to providing opportunities for us all to grow and is working on arranging a variety of educational activities that not only will enable us to fulfill the Extension Master Gardener requirement to complete 10 hours of continuing education each year but also become better and more informed gardeners. Two presentations are scheduled for March 21, 2024. The first is Injury Prevention in the Garden, to be held at the Extension Office from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm. The second is Horticultural Therapy, the Impact on Mental Health, which will be held at the Lexington Senior Center from 2:00 – 3:00 pm. An email notice was sent out for each of these events.

These offerings are the first of a number of proposed activities under consideration for the coming year. After our March meeting we anticipate being able to distribute a comprehensive list of educational opportunities for 2024, a list that will be periodically supplemented throughout the year as we become aware of additional events for which CE credit is approved.

We are also planning a hands-on event in collaboration with the Technology Committee for April 10 at 6:00 pm in Room A at the Fayette County Extension Office that, especially for those of us who may be technologically challenged, will clarify procedures for entering CE hours after participating in approved events as well as share ways in which we hope to improve communication and information exchange within FCMGA. Nissa Hanna will present, take questions, and hopefully help with hands-on. We'll also try to plan to have refreshments. Bring your own electronic device if possible. Nissa has also provided step-by-step instructions, found on page 9.

If you have any activity or event recommendations for the Committee, please contact Graham Rowles (growl2@uky.edu) or Fran O'Connor (fsoofssi@gmail.com), Co-Chairs of the CE Committee.

Meet Reena Martin



Reena Martin is the new Horticulture Assistant at the Fayette County Extension Office. She graduated from Berea College in 2014 with a B.S. in Agriculture & Natural Resources with a focus on Sustainability & Environmental Studies. After graduation she joined FoodChain, which models innovative forms of urban agriculture, such as indoor aquaponics, and demonstrates what a sustainable food system can look like. She became their Education Director and developed much of their youth programming. She then took a new position as Community Engagement Manager at GreenHouse17 which serves survivors of intimate partner abuse in 17 counties in central Kentucky. Their emergency shelter is located on 40 acres in rural Fayette County and advocates work with survivors to produce a cut flower CSA as well as fruit and vegetables to serve in daily meals. She is looking forward to new opportunities in her role as Horticulture Assistant.



BEWARE THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY!

by Susan Miller

You might have a hitchhiking pest lurking around – the destructive spotted lanternfly. This invasive planthopper is a native of Asia and was first discovered in the United States in 2014. It was reported in Pennsylvania and has spread to at least 14 other states, including sightings in Gallatin County Kentucky in October, 2023.

This insect has become a major agricultural, forestry and residential pest and could potentially cause billions of dollars in economic losses in areas where it has spread. It feeds on over a hundred species of valuable plants, including grapes, apple trees, maples, hops, but its preferred host is the invasive tree of heaven plant. On top of all this destruction, it leaves a mess of honeydew when it's around. Unlike our other ugly Asian invader, the stink bug, the spotted lanternfly is a pretty insect, but don't be fooled!

The lanternfly lays its eggs in the fall and attaches the egg masses to hard surfaces, including vehicles, firewood and outdoor furniture. You could even transport the eggs when you visit another state where they are prevalent because they can hitch a ride on cars, trucks, trains, and lumber. The egg sacs look like mud or putty and hatch in the spring, so now is the time to destroy them.



Egg masses are pictured above.

As we move into warmer weather, keep an eye out for nymphs and adults. The adults do look like several other moths, so if you're not sure, go to the informative website entomology.ca.uky.edu/files/ef465.pdf for everything you ever wanted to know about the lanternfly. Or take a photo and email it to the extension office. And by all means - you heard it here – Smash it!

Extension Garden News



Spring is here and the Extension Gardens are coming to life! The group is under the leadership of Martha Taulbee, and they are already hard at work on vegetable gardens, herb gardens, and flower beds. New raised beds are being constructed by Natalie Gray with help from Ken Johnson and others in the group. Esther Mach is the coordinator for vegetable gardens and is striving to make those as organic as possible. Judi Daniels is leading the herb gardens.

If you'd like to join the Extension Gardens group working with flowers, vegetables, or herbs, please contact Martha at martha.taulbee@gmail.com. Coming soon are QR codes for the gardens, which will allow anyone to access information about growing the plants in these gardens in their own yards. Nisa Hanna is assisting Jamie in this new venture.



The Extension Gardens group is currently working together on Mondays and Thursdays, when weather permits, and it's a wonderful way to build up your volunteer hours.



BUTTERFLIES GALORE!

by Susan Miller



Who wouldn't love more butterflies in the garden? A University of Kentucky entomologist accidentally found that a particular variety of zinnia called Lilliput is the magic attraction. It's a flower with a pretty petite bloom and vibrant colors.

UK Entomology Professor Ken Yeargan and Graduate Research Assistant Sarah Colvin found that Lilliput zinnias attracted more than twice the number of butterflies than State Fair, Pinwheel and Oklahoma cultivars during a seven-week period.

Yeargan first noticed an unusually large number of butterflies when he grew Lilliput zinnias in his backyard. So he set up a trial at U.K. with 16 garden plots planted with different cultivars. "Many people wish to include zinnias in their butterfly garden so this study was intended to help them determine which cultivar to use to attract the most butterflies," Yeargan said.



The four cultivars planted are some of the most popular because they come in mixed colors. He speculates that Lilliput has better quality nectar and more of it than other cultivars, and he was surprised at the impressive increase in butterfly activity with Lilliputs. One note – The butterflies must be in the area to be attracted to the flowers; the zinnias will not attract them from long distances. Lilliput seeds are available from most mail order garden supply sources,



Volunteer projects - Information from Jamie

Thanks to those of you who have signed up for volunteer projects. Projects include Growing Community, Flower Show at the Bluegrass Fair, the MG Newsletter, Continuing Education Committee, Seedleaf, FoodChain, Demo Gardens at the Extension Office, The Arboretum, Signups sheets were available at the Annual Meeting, but it's not too late to volunteer! Contact Suzann Smith at the Extension Office if you're interested in volunteering at srsmith@email.uky.edu.

After signing up with Suzann, anyone volunteering with The Arboretum will need to contact them about additional requirements and volunteer position options at Arboretum@uky.edu. Those volunteering with Seedleaf will need to reach out to Christine Smith- christine@seedleaf.org. Volunteers for FoodChain should contact Leandra Forman at leandra@foodchainlex.org to learn more.

We do not have a chair to support our usual Farmer's Market table, but those interested will be able to work at the Lexington Farmer's Market as Foodchain volunteers. Foodchain conducts the Power of Produce activities at the market for children and can use our volunteers to help. They have many other options as well. We have fewer volunteers who are willing to serve as chairs for projects and our volunteer options are shrinking as a result. If anyone would be willing to chair an activity, please let us know.

Volunteers are required to perform a minimum of 20 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours each year to maintain certification.

I appreciate all the support you bring to the MG program!! Jamie Dockery

Glow in the Dark Petunias are Here

by Pam Dorrel



Photo courtesy of usda.gov

The concept of glow in the dark plants has always been popular with gardeners around the world. The scientists at Light Bio researched the concept for years and came up with an ornamental bioluminescent plant called the Firefly Petunia (*Petunia hybrida*).

The plants don't look any different from other white flowering petunias during the day but at night the plant emits a continuous gentle green glow like the light of a full moon in the darkness. The budding flowers and leaves, which are growing the fastest, will glow the brightest. The plants glow even brighter if they get enough sunlight and are kept healthy. You don't have to worry, though, because they aren't bright enough to keep you awake at night!

The Firefly Petunia isn't the first genetically modified bioluminescent plant, but it is the first to be approved by the USDA. The science behind the new plant is groundbreaking because the plants glow (bioluminesce) bright enough to be seen by the naked eye, but they don't need special food to make them glow continuously, as other modified plants have in the past. Researchers used genes from bioluminescent mushrooms and "directed evolution" to produce petunias that glow "naturally".



Scientists have tried to create glowing plants since 1986 using fireflies and marine bacteria with some success. Some of the results were fluorescent plants that glow in the dark after being exposed to the ultraviolet light of the sun or fluorescent bulbs. The aquarium creatures called GloFish and the miniature succulent plants that go on sale every autumn at Aldi Stores get their night time glows by reflecting back the light they've stored up.

Light Bio experimented with petunias because they're popular ornamental plants. They don't pose any risk to indoor environments as houseplants or to outdoor environments as garden ornamentals. While petunias aren't native to North America, they're not considered an invasive species, so there's very little chance that the modified genes will ever spread to native plants and disrupt the ecosystem. The USDA approved the Firefly Petunia after finding that it's not likely to pose an increased plant pest risk compared to other cultivated petunia. That means the genetically modified plants can be safely grown and bred in the United States.

Firefly Petunias are sold at Light Bio, a biotechnology company in Sun Valley, Idaho. You can check out their website and purchase plants at <https://light.bio/the-only-plant-you-see-when-lights-go-off/>. If you want to pre-order them, you'd better hurry; only 50,000 plants are being pre-sold to residents in the 48 contiguous US states for shipment next month. They won't be available anywhere else, yet. The cost is \$29 per plant and shipping will be another \$24.

By the way, Light Bio owns the patents for the biotechnology, but one of their top researchers, Karen Sarkisyan, told *Nature* that they're not worried about gardeners sharing cuttings from this plant with their friends. The company's goal is to continue creating exciting products for gardeners and houseplant lovers. They're currently experimenting with plants that can communicate to satellites or drones if they're stressed or infected by a virus. The future of plants is technology!

Logging Volunteer Hours for Fayette County Extension Master Gardeners

By Nisa Hanna

Step 1: Go to the Fayette County Extension Office's website, at <https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/mg> and then click on "program areas" then "horticulture", scroll down to "Extension Master Gardener Program" and click Learn More, scroll down to link that says "Click here to enter your volunteer hours"

Step 2: Log into your account, have your username and password handy.

Step 3: Once logged in, look at the far left menu options and click on "My Certifications"

Step 4: Go to the far right under "Enrolled Certifications" and click on "Master Gardener Fayette Extension"

Step 5: You should now see two graphs with your lifetime education and lifetime volunteer hours

Step 6: Go down the page to the two tabs that read "Education Hours" and "Volunteer Hours." Please note that Education Hours are defaulted, so you need to click on Volunteer Hours.

Step 7: Click on the Volunteer Hours tab.

Step 7.5:

Troubleshooting note:

When trying to scroll down to view hours, it may seem as if the section on Volunteer hours is cut off on the screen. This could mean a few things...

Be sure you are scrolling inside the middle of the page, NOT the main bar on the far right side of the page. The larger web page itself will not allow you to scroll down any further, which makes it look like the page has been cut off. If you have tried the first step (scrolling down the center of the page) and that does not work, try holding down the CTRL button and while holding the button, clicking the minus sign (-) a few times. This should make your font on the page smaller. Your hours should now be visible.

Step 8: Click "Add More Volunteer Hours"

Step 9: Enter in your information for the volunteer experience.

Step 10: Once finished entering information, click "Save" at the bottom of the page

Step 11: After you hit save, it should take you back to the two graphs displaying your total Education and Volunteer hours.

A Note About Education Hours:

If you are entering Education Hours instead of Volunteer Hours, go back to Step 6. You need to make sure you are on the Education Hours tab, which is defaulted when you're on the page. Click "Add More Education Hours" and follow the remaining steps to input and save.

Please note that when entering hours on a mobile device, like a smartphone or tablet, the format may cause some issues due to screen size. If you are having issues in this regard, please let me know and we can work through it. I will say it is much easier to log hours if you have access to a laptop or desktop computer.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or to schedule an in-person tutorial. On Wednesday, April 10 at 6pm, there will be a **How Do I Enter My Hours?: Tech Ed Session** in room A at the Extension Office.

Kindly,
Nisa Hanna
nisabhanna@gmail.com