Happy New Year Master Gardeners!

I hope everyone has had a safe and enjoyable holiday season with your family and/or friends!

Up and down then down and up! This recent 4 states weather has been a roller coaster ride for sure… But, I have faith that spring is on the way (eventually)!

It’s at this point in my article that I usually tell you all what I have been doing lately. Well, trying to stay on top of the fallen leaves by mowing and mulching them and feeding the cows daily is about it. In my old age I seem to have become a little bit lazier than I once was. 😊 Oh yes, I almost forgot, I have been spending some time lately getting the needed materials together and obtaining the building permit necessary for the installation of electric service on our metal building (the one next to the greenhouse) at the Crosslines facility. I am hoping to get a couple of volunteers to help with the installation of the customer side equipment sometime in January. After that is complete, the City of Joplin will need to inspect our work. Once we pass the inspection, we will get Liberty Utilities Empire District to install a transformer, run the service wires and install the electric meter. Slow progress, but we will get there eventually.

Guess what?? It won’t be long until it’s time to start getting ready for our annual OGMG plant sale. Time flies, so start planning now, because before you know it, it will be time to start dividing perennials and planting your seed flats. Speaking of the plant sale, I am looking for a volunteer to take on the project lead for the 2019 plant sale. If there are no takers, I will definitely be looking for volunteers to help me with organizing said plant sale. If you are interested in helping, please let me know!

We have a new OGMG Facebook page! Here is a link you can use to access the new OGMG Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2154310008142449/ Only OGMG members will be able to join and view the page. Once you get to the new page, click the button and ask to join. Then you will be added as soon as possible. Note: You must have a Facebook account before you can access and join the page.

Happy New Year!
I want to thank EVERYONE for making 2018 another successful year for the Ozark Gateway Master Gardeners. We had fun, made new friends, and helped others learn to grow. This could not have happened without your loyal support of the program and enduring love of gardening.

We have many successful projects that keep growing and getting better. Our traditional projects continue to be the backbone of our presence in the community, and continue to thrive. Along with those, there are new ideas, new contacts and new interests in gardening that keep us growing as a group and make our impact in the community even greater. As we begin the new year I look forward to seeing what the Ozark Gateway Master Gardeners will do next!

Thanks for all you do!
Robert Balek, Coordinator
Milk Jug Greenhouses

A few years ago I read a magazine article on how to use plastic milk jugs to start seed. Since we have an ongoing supply of these containers at our house and a greenhouse does not fit our budget nor our property, I thought this was worth a try. I have been pleased with the results and will continue to use this method to start some of the plants that need stratification, that process of winter temperature exposure that ensures good germination due to the seed’s dormancy phase being broken.

I have shared this idea now because this is the perfect time to set the jugs outdoors. I have placed them as late as mid-February, but who knows what the weather will do? Exposure to cold is a big part of the key to success.

I have started a number of plants this way, but some varieties excite me more than others. I have grown both milkweed and butterfly weed with very good success. This delighted me since I am in the process of incorporating more native plants into my garden in the hopes of helping local pollinators and wildlife. I have grown lavender, and several varieties of common flowers, including coneflowers and the results were good.

You will need:
- gallon milk jugs, washed and rinsed (the translucent kind, not the solid white ones)
- soil (use a good potting soil type product)
- duct tape
- knife
- scissors
- seed
- water
- ruler
- marker
- spray bottle

Mark the jug up three inches from the bottom all around and draw a line to cut on.

Thoroughly moisten the soil.
Put your seed on top and then lightly cover to the depth on the seed packet. Spray down with water.

With either the knife or scissors, cut the jug into two parts.
Turn the bottom portion over and make 4 slits, one on each side toward the outside. This is for drainage.

Now let nature do its work. There should be enough moisture in the jug to keep the soil moist and if it rains or snows, just let it sit and do not replace the lid. When conditions are right, the seeds will start to germinate. Since our temperatures seem to fluctuate so much in the early spring, after a couple of months you may want to keep an eye to make sure the seedlings are doing ok, but don't panic if you don't see anything. The biggest troubles I have had are

1) getting too impatient for them to germinate and
2) that plants get larger than the space in the jug, although they have so far made it to time for them to be uncovered and transplanted into new pots or the ground. They can be protected easily enough if they outgrow the height of the jug before planting time.

I had great success with the milkweed plants on this, both the common milkweed and the butterfly weed. I think it is easy enough children could do it. It is possibly a way to start plants to bring to the plant sale, particularly perennials that will spread in which case, after you have planted them you can divide them in a year or two and bring some to sell! If you had the space and the jugs, you certainly could start a large number of plants this way.

Submitted by Kathy
Continued from page 1

Your OGMG Board of Directors is looking for help with the following items:

1) Volunteers to host one of the OGMG monthly meetings in 2019.
2) Volunteers to do a continuing education presentation at one of the monthly meetings in 2019.
3) Ideas for monthly meeting locations and educational opportunity topics for 2019.

Our annual gift exchange and pot luck meeting will be on Thursday January 17th at 6:00pm. You can read more about it elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope to see you all there! I’ll see ya when I see ya!

Chuck

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**University of Missouri Extension**

**Jasper County**

Ask A Missouri Master Gardener

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**Jasper County Master Gardener**

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**Ozark Gateway Master Gardeners**

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**January Gardening Calendar**

Here is the link to the monthly Garden Calendar.

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**Log in to report your hours**

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**Jasper County Horticulture**

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**My Master Gardener Group (Chapter)**

**OGMG**

The MG Group List is a report of all the Master Gardeners who have accounts in this system and who are members of the same group or chapter as you.

Please login to view:

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**Newsletter Deadline**

Please send information, photos and articles for the February issue of Grow For It no later than January 26, 2019 to: Anne