Greetings

Fellow Master Gardeners,

Up and down and down and up. A roller coaster ride for sure this recent SW Missouri weather. But, I have faith that spring is on the way.

Our holiday party meeting on January 17th was a great time. Good food and fellowship, new Master Gardeners and as in the past our annual gift exchange. I believe a good time was had by all.

Some of you are aware that my wife Mona has been under the weather for quite some time now. On January 23rd she received a heart pacemaker and now she is feeling a little better every day! Thank you for the prayers, calls, texts and concerns. Right now Mona can't raise her left arm until three weeks have passed so I have become a temporary "nurse/house husband" for the time being. I haven't been out much except to check the cows water and make sure they have hay and feed. So, I have been spending A LOT of time perusing the scores of seed catalogs that December and January always bring to my mailbox.

Start planning now, because it won't be long until it's time to start getting ready for our May plant sale. Before long you can start dividing perennials and planting your seed flats.

February OGMG Chapter Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on February 21st, 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Empire District Electric Kodiak Facility on the SE side of Joplin. The building is located at 3400 Kodiak Road. The building is about 1 mile east of Flying J Truck Stop on the SW corner of State road FF (32nd street) and Kodiak Road. Park in the south end of the parking lot and come to the south door. This is not a potluck, but PLEASE feel free to bring any snacks or other goodies to share. Bring some seeds to share if you have any to spare! Drinks will be furnished.

If it is all right, I will begin on a bit of a down note. The Fresh Ground Seed Library has been discontinued. This was not an easy decision, nor a welcome one, as Bev and Bert, and so many others, have put so much time, money, effort into starting and running the project. The mission of the Fresh Ground Seed Library was to provide seeds to new gardeners, especially those who may have never grown vegetables, and those who may not have been able to afford their own seed. The library did not receive enough seed donations this year to continue that mission. However, the web site is still up at http://freshgroundseedlibrary.org/ . Visit the web site for seed saving information that you can use and share. Thank you, Bert and Bev, for initiating such a noble project, and gracefully acknowledging this unfortunate turn of events.

In other news, plans are for this year's Master Gardener Core Training sessions to be in Carthage beginning April 2. We have had evening classes for several years, so these will be day classes. The classes are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-12:00 at the Annex. Cost will remain at $100 per trainee. Deadline to register is March 15. Please help spread the word. Time is short, and we would like to fill the room.

In closing, I want to tell you I appreciate all you are doing, and plan to do, for gardeners. There are so many benefits to gardening, and sharing the knowledge of good gardening has its rewards, too.

Thanks for all you do!

Robert Balek, Coordinator.
I keep getting asked, as the Crosslines/OGMG coordinator, to write about the goings-on with the Crosslines garden project. Since this is a slack time in gardening and I don’t know how much all the members know about the project, I will just give you an update on what the project is and where we are to date.

The project is to provide fresh vegetables to Crosslines Ministries clients at no cost to them. All produce from the garden goes inside the Crosslines building to be provided to the clients. The garden is located on Crosslines property and consists of a greenhouse, fifty-eight raised bed plots (approximately 4’ x 8’ each), and a flat bed area for melons, etc. Twelve of the beds are in the greenhouse. The whole area is enclosed by a six-foot chain link fence which keeps out most critters (including two-legged) except ground hogs.

We had the plots soil tested and the analysis indicates we have very good soil for vegetable gardening. The seed order for this year was recently placed with a plan for approximately fourteen different variety of veggies with more than one type of some, i.e. tomato, cucumber, etc. In the past a considerable amount of money has been provided by Crosslines, usually through grants, to provide soil for the beds. Our plan in the future is to meet that requirement for soil by building our own soil thru composting on site.

There is a very dedicated group of MG’s on our committee who put in many, many hours each during the year to make the project a success. In future editions I will identify them as we progress thru the many steps required for successful gardening continues.

As they say "Stay tuned."

Tommy

Continued on page 3
Got Winter “Blahs”?  
For some of us, these long, cold and dreary days of winter just seem to drag on and on. You may find yourself just waiting for those nice, warm and sunny days to return so you can enjoy being outdoors and gardening again. But why not use these hours of waiting productively and work on some gardening benefits that there may not be time for once it warms up and you are busy tending your garden and growing things again? Following are several things to consider to use those garden-free hours of winter:

**Peruse seed catalogs, gardening magazines and books, and the internet** for information and ideas you want to try this coming gardening season.

- Plan what plants you are going to grow this year, refresh in your mind what care existing plants need, review what tasks were left undone from the fall and make a plan to get your garden or yard in shape for the spring.
- Learn more about landscaping and common trees and shrubs used in foundational plantings. I find that next to help for the vegetable garden, landscaping questions are second in the advice questions I am frequently asked.
- Learn about herbs. This seems to be of interest to a growing number of people and fortunately just about anyone, regardless of their garden space or lack thereof, can grow at least a couple types of herbs.

**Get out your core manual and brush up on the information.** Each of us have areas we excel in, but we have so much yet to learn! And that core manual is jammed packed with information.

- Review what you learned in class by re-reading your manual and class notes, or going on-line to read up-dated publications from the extension service.
- Look into areas you know you are weak in. If you mostly grow vegetables, then look at the publications on flowers or shrubs. If you really can’t identify one tree from another, use one of the great publications available to become more familiar with common and native trees. Learn about natives and how to begin to substitute them in the garden and landscape. Review the use of chemicals in the garden and alternatives for their use.

**Plan how you will be involved in the Plant Sale.** Although May seems far off, from the vantage point of the plant sale, it is not too early to plan how you would like to be involved in in the sale. It really takes all of us to pull this off and make it successful. Seeds have been made available, so if you can, start some at home and either continue to grow them there or bring the seedlings to Crosslines in a few weeks for transplanting, where they will be grown in the greenhouse. Take a look at your houseplants, if you have them. Perhaps there are some that you can divide and get ready for the sale. Take a walk around your place and think through what can be divided, dug up or grown for the sale. Gather the supplies you will need – pots or containers, soil, markers, etc. Also go through your gardening items and look for good items you no longer want that you could bring to the sale. In the past we have had containers and planters, books, tools, decorative items and so on. Research the information on plants you will have and keep track of it so labeling them will be quicker when it comes time to price and label the plants.

**Learn to take better photographs.** As they say “a picture is worth a thousand words” so why not learn to take the best ones you can?

- Take your camera or phone camera and learn how to adjust for lighting, color, zoom and other features. Digital photography is wonderful since you are able to see your work immediately and repeat the attempt until you are happy with the result.
- Learn about composition details as to what makes a good photograph. Try experimenting with the placement of subject matter in the frame. Try it in each corner and then right in the middle. Compare them. Learn about the “rule of thirds” in composition. Simply google “rule of thirds for photography” and you will easily be able to find an explanation with great illustrations.
- Learn how to crop your photos. Still life photo opportunities abound in winter. So take a picture then play around with cropping it in a variety of ways. Zoom in as much as you are able and really examine your photo. Crop it to match the “rule of thirds” principle. Perhaps you can experiment with some things you are able to see right now…twigs, bark, rocks, evergreens, nuts, seeds and pinecones, fallen leaves and perhaps some wildlife that venture across your path or into your yard. These would all help you learn how to use your camera better, how to crop photos, and end up with some great pictures!
- Take a number of pictures at varying times of the day or at varying distances and then compare how they look. Usually morning and later afternoon are the better times to take photos. Full sun is difficult, as is dealing with shadows. Try taking pictures on cloudy days or make use of shade. This will all help to train your “photographic eye” and when spring and summer come around, you will be better equipped to capture some of those shots that you only wish you had now.

**Start stretching and exercising now.**
Let’s face it, a good number of us Master Gardeners are preretirement or retiree age. I find I love gardening as a great exercise program, but from about October to March, my physical activity level diminishes quite a bit. Many of us have felt the pain of those first few days of attacking spring gardening chores. Sometimes we can barely move the next day as we suffer from all the discomfort and muscle soreness after bending, twisting, reaching and so on. Think of the things you do while gardening…lifting, digging, pruning, weeding, planting…just to name a few. They all use many muscles and often in differing muscle groups. Oh how the knees and back can hurt! So staying active in these winter months will only benefit us as spring rolls around. There are a number avenues to find stretches and exercises. Of course the Library and internet have resources for this. Perhaps your local hospital or health...
facility has a short term fitness class or a publication with illustrations of simple stretches or exercises to do at home. I have a book Garden Your Way to Health and Fitness by Bunny Guinness and Jacqueline Knox that has some great advice as we begin to exercise (both as preparation for gardening and once you are hard at it:  

- Pace yourself gradually  
- If you feel dizzy, faint, or very short of breath, stop immediately and seek medical advice  
- Never exercise having just eaten and allow time after a meal before doing so  
- Stay hydrated and wear a hat if appropriate  
- Stop if you feel pain  
- Change position regularly  
- Get a medical check-up before the gardening season begins  
- Never plunge into an intensive session if your body isn’t ready

If you consider how much lifting, pulling, bending and digging gardening can entail, some simple strength training exercises would also be beneficial. Hopefully, these ideas will jump start each of us to think about how we can be the most productive on those days when the winter blahs settle in and getting into the garden seems like it will never get here!

Kathy  
Class of 2011

---

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:

Log in to report your hours

---

### February Gardening Calendar

[https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2019/1/](https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2019/1/)

### MU Extension Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/MUExtensionJasperCounty/](https://www.facebook.com/MUExtensionJasperCounty/)

### Missouri Environment & Garden recent articles

[https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/](https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/)

### Jasper County Master Gardener web page

[http://extension.missouri.edu/jasper/mastergardener.aspx](http://extension.missouri.edu/jasper/mastergardener.aspx)

### Ozark Gateway Master Gardeners Facebook


### Jasper County Horticulture

[http://extension.missouri.edu/jasper/horticulture.aspx](http://extension.missouri.edu/jasper/horticulture.aspx)

---

### Newsletter Deadline

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