



roots

The monthly newsletter of the Sevier County Area Master Gardeners Association

OCTOBER 2025



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On The Cover

The Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) is a beautiful native Tennessee tree known for its vibrant fall colors and valuable hardwood.

It grows best in rich, well-drained soils and can reach heights of 60 to 80 feet. In autumn, its leaves turn brilliant shades of yellow, orange, and red, making it one of the most striking trees in the eastern forests.

Beyond its beauty, the Sugar Maple is also prized for its sap, which is used to make maple syrup, and its dense, durable wood, often used in furniture and flooring. It's both an ecological treasure and a symbol of natural heritage in Tennessee's forests.

September Meeting Info

Monday, October 20, 2025 6:00 pm

Speaker: Dr. Natalie Bumgarner

As an assistant professor and Extension specialist, she leads the planning, execution, and evaluation of statewide residential and consumer horticulture programs. The demand for research-based and accessible information in non-commercial fruit, vegetable, and ornamental crops based on enhancing quality of life and resource stewardship in Tennessee is being met through the trials that UT has been conducting. Dr. Bumgarner will discuss the trials and findings during our meeting.

She also serves as the statewide coordinator for the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener (TEMG) program. She oversees the program administration and planning as well as training curriculum development and conference and meeting planning while supporting local agents who coordinate TEMG programs across Tennessee.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Master Gardener program, she is the one to ask!





Presidents Message

Here is a list of chores for October. The first frost date for Sevierville is October 23rd. Keep your eye on the weather and HAPPY FALL!

Week 1 (Oct 1–7)

- Harvest summer veggies still producing (tomatoes, peppers, beans).
- Sow last rounds of cool-season greens (spinach, arugula, lettuce, radishes).
- Plant garlic, shallots, and overwintering onions.
- Start planting spring bulbs (daffodils, hyacinths, early tulips).
- Check tools and supplies — sharpen pruners, stock up on mulch, row covers, etc.

Week 2 (Oct 8–14)

- Continue bulb planting (tulips, crocus, alliums).
- Divide/transplant perennials (hosta, daylily, iris, coneflower).
- Bring tender potted plants indoors before nights dip into the 40s.
- Sow a fall cover crop (rye, clover, winter peas).
- Overseed and fertilize cool-season lawns.

Week 3 (Oct 15–21)

- Harvest apples, pears, persimmons, and late squash.
- Prune out spent raspberry canes, tie up new ones.
- Mulch strawberry beds lightly (wait until after frost for heavy mulching).
- Plant pansies, violas, and

ornamental kale for fall/winter color.

- Rake and shred fallen leaves for mulch or compost.

Week 4 (Oct 22–28)

- Watch for frost alerts — cover tender fall crops at night if needed.
- Finish planting trees and shrubs (great root-establishing time).
- Apply a 2–3" mulch layer around perennials and new plantings.
- Cut back faded perennials (leave ornamental grasses & seed heads for winter interest/wildlife).
- Drain hoses, birdbaths, and irrigation lines before first hard freeze.

Week 5 (Oct 29–31)

- Harvest remaining tender crops before frost hits.
- Do final mow of lawn (around 3" tall).
- Mulch strawberry beds heavily once you've had a couple frosts.
- Clean, oil, and store tools.
- Stack leaves or start a new compost pile for winter breakdown.

Diane McCullen

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Meeting Minutes September 15, 2025

Program

Granny's Medicine Basket.
Appalachian/Mountain
Medicine presented by Susan
Morey, RN Herbalist.

Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order
by Diane McCullen at 7:30 PM.

President's Report

New Email –
dmccullen11@gmail.com
Diane reminded everyone of her
new e-mail listed above.

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the August
meeting were published in the
last newsletter. There were no
corrections or additions so the
minutes will stand as printed.

Vice President's Report

Absent
Patsy Farmer has volunteered
to take this position for next
year. Please give her any names
or ideas you might have for
programs. Also, let her know if
you are willing to do a program.

Treasurer's Report

John reported that there have
been no transactions since July.

JMG's Report

Diane stated that a Lead

Teacher is needed. She
explained that Adam had
several ideas that might be
applicable. Ideas from Adam
included starting a
Junior Gardening Program or
youth class that would run
from March – June.
There would be a charge for
the classes.
An evening class from
6:00 – 7:30 p.m. was also
suggested to allow public
school students to attend.
Anyone interested in this
opportunity should contact
Diane.

Extension Agent

Absent.

Committee Reports

Demo Garden

Diane related that she needs
one person to volunteer to
plan and organize events for
the demo garden. She also
stated that the fair was a
success. Donna Stinnett had
an educational table that
displayed antique garden
tools and she demonstrated
how to bandage a wound
using folk remedies. About
650 people toured the garden.
Additionally, 80 to 90
individuals would like to
receive the newsletter.

Senior Center

Glenna is looking for someone

to oversee the Senior Center
Garden. If interested, please
contact her. There will be a
Butterfly presentation at the
center this Thursday at 10 AM

Newsletter

Please submit all articles and
information to Mandy by
October 1st.

Greenhouse

The breaker is shutting off
randomly. This will need to be
fixed this fall. John has
volunteered to check on the
progress of this repair.

Wilderness Wildlife Week

No updates at this time.

Fair

Angela reported that the fair
was successful. It has
generated interest in the Master
Gardener program, and a list of
potential new interns was
generated at the fair.

International MG Conference

Leo reported that this
conference was well attended
and highly informative. He
stated that Orlando is being
considered for the next
conference.

Old Business Christmas Party

Diane asked that members have
a talent or a craft and would like
to create something special or
donate an item to contact her.
These will be used for BINGO
prizes at the party.



Meeting Minutes Continued:

New Business

Fall classes

These classes will be held on September 20th and October 25th at 10 a.m. Please contact Diane if you are interested in presenting. Topics include Putting the Garden to Bed, Bulb Planting, Seed Saving 101.

Farm Days for 2nd Graders

Help is needed on October 7th and 8th to assist with the tours. Please contact Diane if you can help.

Master Gardener Directory

Lynn has volunteered to oversee this project.

Apparel

Please contact Debbie by tomorrow morning if you would like to place and order.

Adjournment

The meeting was called to a close at 8:10 PM.



It's that time again! Our Christmas Party and Awards Ceremony will be on December 1st at 6:00pm. We will have the party at the Sevier Golf Club located at 1444 Old Knoxville Hwy.

The dinner will be served at 6:00 and Awards and BINGO will follow. The cost of the meal will be \$25.00 this year. We will have a sign up sheet for the dinner at the October and November meetings.

We will need your payment by the November meeting. And of course you may bring a guest!!! This is always such a fun evening. I hope you all can come.

Volunteer Opportunities

Senior Center Work Days, Wednesday, October 15th and Saturday, November 1st 9:00 AM

No Demo Garden workdays in October.

Wilderness Wildlife Week, January 5th through 8th, 2026.

Meetings and Events

Monthly Meeting, Monday, October 20th, 6:00 PM

Board Meeting, Tuesday, November 11th, 3:00 PM

Monthly Meeting, Monday, November 17th, 6:00 PM

SCMGA Christmas Party, Monday, December 1, Sevierville Golf Club.

Save the Date—Wilderness Wildlife Week, January 5th through 8th, 2026.

Save the Date—TEMG State Conference, Knoxville, Wednesday through Friday, May 27-29, 2026.

Educational Opportunities

UT Hort Friday Office Hours, June 13th, July 11th, September 12th, and October 10th, 10:00 AM.
[LINK HERE](#)

Wilderness Wildlife Week, Monday through Thursday, January 5th through 8th, 2026.

Save the Date—TEMG State Conference, Knoxville, Wednesday through Friday, May 27-29, 2026.

Melody's Monday Musings (Greene County).
[LINK HERE](#)

Buncombe County (NC) Master Gardener Video Series, [LINK HERE](#)

Discover Life in America from our own GSMNP offers a variety of online educational resources, including a podcast and archives from the popular Science @ the Sugarlands (pre-pandemic).
[LINK HERE](#)

August Financial Report

Sevier County Area Master Gardener Association August 2025 Financial Report

<u>Item</u>	Month Account Summary			Year Summary as of Month End				
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Budgeted</u> <u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Funds</u> <u>Remaining*</u>
Beginning amount	as of 07/31/25		9652.97					
Added approved items	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	134.00	(134.00)
County Fair	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
December meeting	0.00	0.00	0.00	930.00	930.00	0.00	0.00	930.00
Demo garden	0.00	173.45	(173.45)	0.00	800.00	0.00	504.36	295.64
Dues	0.00	0.00	0.00	900.00	0.00	825.00	0.00	825.00
Greenhouse	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	112.50	87.50
Plant sale	0.00	0.00	0.00	3800.00	1200.00	4266.90	349.27	850.73
Senior Center	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tomato seed project	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	750.00	0.00	470.97	279.03
Virtual meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	175.00	0.00	0.00	175.00
Wilderness Wildlife	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4H Scholarship	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00
Ending: 08/31/25	0.00	173.45	9479.52	5630.00	4655.00	5091.90	2171.10	3308.90

* Budgeted expense minus actual expense; for Dues, actual income

First Frost

The “first frost” is the first time in fall when overnight temperatures drop to 32 °F (0 °C) or below, enough to damage frost-sensitive plants. It essentially marks the end of the safe growing season for many warm-season vegetables, flowers, and herbs. Knowing this date helps gardeners time their planting, harvesting, and protective measures.

Typical First Frost Date in Sevierville
According to climate and gardening sources, Sevierville’s average first frost window falls between October 21 and October 31.

Using the Frost Date in Garden Planning:

Late-Season Crops & Harvesting

- Plan to pull or protect sensitive plants (tomatoes, basil, peppers) before the expected first frost window.
- Use cold frames, row covers,

or bring containers indoors as protection if frost threatens early.

Planting Cool-Season Varieties

- After the first frost, you can continue or begin planting hardy, cool-weather crops (spinach, kale, lettuce) that tolerate light freezes.

Autumn Garden Cleanup & Prep

- Work on mulching, soil amendments, and clearing spent plants before hard freezes set in.
- Plant spring bulbs before the ground freezes.

Backup Planning

- Since frost timing can vary, monitor local weather forecasts toward late October.
- Be ready to take protective measures a few days before the average first frost window just in case.

Sevierville Frost Risk Calendar

Low Risk

Early October (Oct 1–10)
Frosts are rare — overnight lows usually stay well above freezing.

Moderate risk

Around October 10–15
Some nights may approach the freezing point in exposed or low-lying spots.

Elevated risk

Oct 15–25
Likelihood of light frost increases, especially in clear, calm nights.

High risk

October 21–31
This is the historical average window for first frost in Sevierville.

Very high

Early November
Frost is almost guaranteed by early November in most years.



Demo Garden News

The Wildlife Sanctuary is finished for the fall. These Backyard Sanctuaries are important because they give wildlife safe spaces right where people live.

Even small yards can:

Provide food and shelter – with native plants, water, and nesting spots for birds, bees, butterflies, and small animals.

Support pollinators – which are vital for fruits, vegetables, and flowers.

Create green corridors – linking city or suburban areas to larger natural habitats.

Improve the environment – reducing pollution, cooling the air, and helping soil and water health.

Connect people with nature – offering relaxation, beauty, and a chance to learn about local wildlife.

In short, backyard sanctuaries turn ordinary spaces into mini-habitats that benefit both people and wildlife.



List of nominees for the 2026 SCAMGA Board

President - Karen Less

Vice President - Patsy Farmer

Secretary - Shauna Bayless

Treasurer - Darlene Kemp

Member At Large - Steve Greenwell

If there is anyone who wishes to run for one of these positions please let me know. We will vote on nominees during the November meeting.

Diane

Tool Tips: End of Season Care for Lawn and Garden Tools

As the end of the active lawn and garden season approaches, there are things you can do to keep your tools in good condition as they begin to hibernate until next spring. Just a few basic steps will help ensure your tools last longer and will be ready when you need them again – and help avoid having to replace them.

For gas or electric tools (mowers, clippers, blowers, etc.)

Thoroughly clean all accumulated debris (this should be done after each use).

- Lubricate any wheel bearings.
- For mowers, clean all grass from under the deck (a scraper will work). After cleaning, spray WD-40 under the mower deck. This will remove moisture which can lead to rust (the WD stands for water displacement).
- Spray WD-40 on cutting blades (mowers, clippers); wiping on a light coat of oil also works for this.

Electric powered tools

- Follow the owner's manual on battery care when not in use for a long period.
- For corded tools, inspect the entire cord and the connectors. There should be no cracks in the insulation and individual wires should not show (this is common at the connector ends). Don't just put tape on the damage! If you can't fix it

correctly or get it repaired professionally, replace the whole cord.

Gas powered tools

- Run the gas tank dry: start the engine and let it run a few minutes. Stop the engine and drain the gas tank. Start the engine again and wait until it runs out of gas.
- When running an engine dry, be sure to do it outdoors, well away from open windows or doors, and do not run a combustion engine inside a garage, even with the doors open. This applies to generators as well, which can see use anytime.
- Add gas stabilizer to any leftover gas, so it will be useable the following year. A better option is to use the leftover gas in your car and start fresh the next season.
- If you use a gas stabilizer, it is all right to let the gas remain in the engine tank over the winter, although running the tank dry is the preferred practice. If you do not use an additive, empty the gas tank and run the engine dry. If you leave gas in the tank (with stabilizer), be sure to store the machine away from any heat source – treat it like you are storing a container full of gasoline – because you are!

Hand tools

- Thoroughly clean all hand tools.
- Wipe metal surfaces with a light

coat of oil or use WD-40.

- Wooden handles can be lightly coated with linseed oil or other treatment. There are good videos on YouTube about this as well as how to restore old handles

During the winter

- This is a good time to sharpen and balance mower blades.
- Sharpen other tools such as hoes, clippers (motorized and manual).
- After sharpening, spray metal areas with WD-40 or lightly wipe with oil.
- Do not operate any gasoline engines in temperatures lower than 50 degrees F, unless you have the correct oil in the motor. The owner's manual should have a chart showing what oil to use at what temperatures. This applies to 4-cycle engines, which are used on most mowers.
- It is OK to operate 2-cycle engines (gas chain saws, weed eaters, etc.) at temperatures lower than 50 degrees F. To be sure, check the manual because there are some exceptions out there!

If you all have any questions, I will do my best to answer them – send me an e-mail or call.

John Oakberg