



## 2013 Advocate Alliance Board

### Eastern Region

#### **Johnny Suthers**

NETN Master Gardener (Sullivan County)

Johnny has served as President of the NETMGA group for two years and is currently the Projects director for the 15 projects in the seven-county area of NETMGA. He has been a Master Gardener since 2006. He has served with several volunteer organizations including the United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees), Ruitan National, Greater Indian United Way and the Boy Scouts of America. He retired as a Principal Chemist from Eastman Chemical Company after working 41.5 years in their Color Technology Center. He has served in several leadership positions in professional organizations (Society of Plastic Engineers Color and Appearance Division, Inter Society Colour Council, Color Marketing Group, International Society of Plastic Engineers, and the Detroit Color Council) representing Eastman Chemical Company. He also is a 45 emeritus member of the American Chemical Society. In addition to gardening he enjoys working with people.



#### **Carol Burdett**

Cumberland County Master Gardener

Carol has been a Master Gardener since 1998 and has resided in Cumberland County, TN since 1973. She lectures at new intern classes and in various community groups, but her main focus is in leading landscaping projects within her county. She contributes periodic newspaper articles on behalf of her association and is the editor of TMG's statewide newsletter *TAKING ROOT*. She lives on 42 acres of her own land, 10 of which is landscaped and where most of her time is spent in upkeep and thinking up new projects. Each year the new MG interns come to her place for a walking, talking tour about perennials or organic growing. Having four children, 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren gives her great joy; as do her church, her cats, dogs and horse. Carol's life is never dull!



Her county association enjoys a close working relationship with AgResearch and the community gardens they've established there. Carol was one of the founding members of that project and is now branching out into TV broadcasting, many segments of which use those UT grounds. Her main focus within the Advocacy board is to implement networking between Alliance members so that they can learn from each other and grow together.

## **Patsy Boles**

Hamilton County Master Gardener

Patsy became a Master Gardener in 1994 in Texas where she served for 12 years. She worked with The Junior Master Gardener Club. She served as treasurer of The Men's Garden Club of Austin for eight years. She has been on the board of directors for The Shores at Lake Travis for over 25 years. She grew up in a 4-H family in Kansas where her parents were leaders before she was born. She says "volunteering is in my blood".



She had an accounting and income tax business in Texas and still has clients there. In 2007 she moved to Tennessee where she also retook the Master Gardener course. She has served as Treasurer and President of the Master Gardeners of Hamilton County and is a lifetime Master Gardener. She is active in the Bud Sprout program having 5 Sprouts in 2012 who all completed their hours in the first 6 months. She is presently the vendor chairman for the "Master Your Garden" Expo. She is a volunteer at the Tennessee Aquarium in the butterfly garden. Her yard has been on The Chattanooga Area Food Bank Garden Tour and she decorates her yard for all seasons.

She has 3 children, 4 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. She is active in her church and went on mission trips to Jamaica and Costa Rica in 2012. Patsy has traveled all 48 continental states and Hawaii where she visited many botanical gardens. Her plans for 2013 include the International Master Gardener Cruise to Alaska (that makes all 50) and a mission trip to Peru. She enjoys people and always has a "hug" for everyone.

## **Chris Ramsey**

Sullivan County Extension Agent

Chris Ramsey began working with the Northeast Tennessee Master Gardeners in 2001 in Sullivan County. He has been with UT Extension since 1994 where he began working as a 4-H Agent in Carter County. His group started the Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Association in 2003. His group has grown from 20 members to 150 members. He also works with livestock producers, vegetable and fruit growers, and farmers' markets.

Chris is a member of Colonial Heights Baptist Church, the Kingsport Bicycle Association, and the Sullivan County Livestock Association. He is married and has two children. Chris enjoys fitness cycling, including multi-day bike camping trips. He also enjoys camping and target shooting with his son and thrift store shopping with his daughter.



## **Central Region**

### **Cynthia Winfield**

Wilson County Master Gardener

A Wilson County Master Gardener since 2009, Cynthia came to Middle Tennessee in 2008 to reinvent herself as a small farmer. An educator, author, amateur vermiculturist, hobby farmer and now holistic nutrition/health counselor, Cynthia is building the soil on her patch of rocky hillside with the aid of goats, horses, alpacas, chickens, and—of course—worms. Since coming to Tennessee, Cynthia has benefited from UT Extension program offerings in several Middle Tennessee counties and foresees continued work with UT/TSU Agricultural Extension for years to come. In addition to co-chairing the Advocacy Board's 3 R's Committee (Recruitment, Recognition and Retention), she serves as Editorial Assistant for the Taking Root newsletter. Cynthia loves life in Tennessee and does not miss New England's winter weather. Inspired by all that she has learned on her farm, Cynthia has recently undertaken a new career path as a holistic nutrition counselor / health coach. A graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition and certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners, Cynthia holds informational workshops and webinars, and works with individuals, groups and companies. She invites those interested to visit her on any of the following websites: [www.cultivatehealthnow.com](http://www.cultivatehealthnow.com), [www.pandcworganicfarm.blogspot.com](http://www.pandcworganicfarm.blogspot.com), [www.facebook.com/cultivatehealthnow](http://www.facebook.com/cultivatehealthnow) or [www.cultivatehealthnow.blogspot.com](http://www.cultivatehealthnow.blogspot.com).



### **Meg Georgiades**

Sumner County Master Gardener

Meg is a lifetime Sumner County Master Gardener, which she joined in 1997. She served as President of her Association for three years and as Vice President for four years. She has been instrumental in helping her Association to grow to over 70 members. She currently serves as co-chair of the 3R's Project (Recruiting, Retention and Recognition) for the TMGAB. She was responsible for helping develop the Gold Leaf awards and for redesigning the posters, brochures and the new folding business card for the state Master Gardener program. She is goal oriented, organized, extremely competent and multi-tasks when needed to complete projects.

Meg gardens with her Master Gardener husband Wayne on 10 acres in Sumner County. They also raise Nigerian Pygmy goats, Pyrenees and Karakachan dogs, and chickens. She has antique booths and enjoys doing craft projects and re-purposing objects. She is also active in her church. With 3 daughters, 4 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter, her life is full. She retired as an Insurance Agent in 2008 with 27 years' service from Liberty National Insurance Co. Meg is a well- rounded person who loves people, especially other Master Gardeners.



## **Bob Ary**

Sumner County Extension Agent

Bob Ary, Extension Agent in Sumner County, began working with the Master Gardener program in 1998 while an Extension Agent in Davidson County. Bob and Master Gardener Doris Weakley began the first Junior Gardener Day Camp in Tennessee, a week-long program that continues annually. Since moving to Sumner County in 2005, the number of Master Gardeners has more than doubled. Bob attributes the growth to be the result of actively involving interns in the county Master Gardener association and in volunteering.



Bob began his Extension career in 1978, working for 18 years with the 4-H programs in Bedford and Robertson counties and seven years in Davidson County with 4-H, agriculture, consumer horticulture and the Master Gardener program. Bob's horticulture responsibilities in Sumner County include consumer and commercial horticulture, the Master Gardener program, row crops, commercial fruits and vegetables, and Agritainment.

Bob has a BS degree from Middle Tennessee State University and a MS degree from the University of Tennessee.

**\*\*One Central Region Advocate seat is vacant.**

## **Western Region**

### **Denisa Cate**

NWTN Master Gardener

Denisa has been a Master Gardener since 2001 and has served on the TMG Advocacy board since 2007. She has held several offices in her NWTN club including president, committee chairs, and leader of the Master Gardener classes. Denisa received her BS and MS degrees at the University of TN, and her RD (Registered Dietitian) from Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She is employed as Director of Nutrition Services at Henry County Medical Center in Paris, TN, and has been a nutrition manager since 1992. Denisa is on the national board of directors and is a former national president for the Association for Healthcare Foodservice (AHF), affording her the opportunity for many public speaking engagements. She travels around the country for AHF and frequently tours gardens in these areas. Denisa also serves on the Henry County Health Council, Henry County Coordinated School Health Council, is Media Spokesperson for TN Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, and serves on several other volunteer committees.



Denisa and her husband, Randy, have two farms in west TN, and garden on four acres of one in Bradford. She considers gardening her "therapy" for long work hours and stress.

### **Jean Ward-Jones**

Memphis Area Master Gardener

Retired from FedEx, Jean is grateful and appreciative of the experience and the training she received as part of the FedEx family. FedEx was instrumental in enabling her to obtain a Masters Degree in Journalism from the University of Memphis. Now, as a member of the FedEx Retirement Club, she produces a bi-monthly newsletter featuring retirees and their passions. In 1997 she and husband, Stan, bought a new home. She wanted a beautiful landscape and learned quickly that gardening had become her passion. Determined to have a



position related to horticulture, she became the Volunteer Director at Memphis Botanic Garden and became a Memphis Area Master Gardener. Once officially retired in 2004, she began to devote even more time to the Master Gardener organization. She chaired the Education team where the Through Our Garden Gates project was born and chaired that project committee for the first two years. In its third year, 2012, Jean's garden was on the tour. And in 2013 the Through Our Garden Gates project won a Search for Excellence award. In 2011, Jean began the three-year commitment of leadership, first as Vice-President, then President, and now Past-President. She also serves on the Bartlett City Beautiful Commission as Treasurer. With a wonderful husband, five offspring, four granddaughters, two great grandsons and her garden, she seldom finds herself with idle hands.

### **Kathy Perez Laughlin**

Hardeman County Master Gardener

Kathy has been a Master Gardener since 2008. She has been a committee chair, vice president and is currently the president of the Hardeman County Master Gardener Group. She started gardening at an early age spending time with her grandfather in his one acre garden. She is thrilled to finally have a few acres on which to test her skills since moving back to Tennessee from El Paso, Texas. While in Texas she became what she likes to call a “professional volunteer”, following the example of her father who was a volunteer community organizer in a small Hispanic community in central California. She served on several community boards including the Boy Scouts of America, Susan G Komen Race for the Cure, the El Paso Wind Symphony as well as elementary, middle school and high school PTA organizations.



Kathy and her husband, Don, live on 200 acres in Hardeman County. They have four children and four grandchildren who love to spend time at “The Farm”. Kathy hopes to pass on her love of gardening and volunteering to future generations as well as the joy of just being outdoors.

## **Interim State Program Coordinator**

### **Chris Cooper**

Shelby County Extension Agent

Chris is starting his fifth year as the UT Extension Service's Horticulture Agent and Coordinator for the Master Gardener Program. Chris can be found throughout Shelby County conducting educational programs addressing issues that affect urban and home horticulture.

Chris has a B.S. degree in Soil Science from Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA., and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Physiology from Alabama A&M University, Huntsville, AL. He has worked for Monsanto as a Technology Development Manager and as an Assistant Horticulturist at the Memphis Botanic Garden.

Chris has interned with the New York State Cooperative Extension Service in Geneva, New York and with the Environmental Protection Agency in Corvallis, Oregon. He was also selected to participate as an intern in a minority program at Purdue University.

Chris is the host of the series **The Family Plot: Gardening in the Mid-South** which can be found on WKNO/Channel 10 on Thursday nights at 8:00 pm.

