

Wednesday October 9th, 2024- Ed Jones Auditorium at Ellington Ag Center in Nashville (416 Hogan Rd, Nashville, TN 37220) <https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/departments/ellington-ag-center/about-ellington-agricultural-center.html>

4:00-6:30 Excellent Outreach, Awesome People, and Great Plants Opening Event

Our 2024 conference will begin with all the things we love best- plants, people, and food. We'll begin with hors d'oeuvres around 4:00 with time to mingle and visit folks from around the state. Then, our local hosts will welcome everyone to middle Tennessee and our 2024 state conference. A celebration of search for excellence winners and fun and games with great plants for Tennessee prizes to take with you will finish out our time together. We'll celebrate great work and get you connecting with new and old friends from around Tennessee. You don't want to miss this fun kickoff to the conference!

4:00-4:30 Food, people and some plants!

4:45 Welcome and Greetings

5:00 Search for Excellence Awards

Thursday, October 10th, 2024- Williamson County Ag Expo Park (4215 Long Lane, Franklin, TN 37064) <https://agexpopark.info/>

9:00-11:30 AM **Morning Horticulture and Outreach Tours**

Breakfast is provided at the hotel, so we'll begin our day at the tour locations. Feel free to carpool or drive yourself, the choice is up to you. Tours are planned, led, and hosted by both of our host counties in conjunction with local farms, gardens and partners. There is a focus on local food as well as middle TN agriculture, public gardens, and arboretums.

9:00-11:00 AM **Tour 1- Ellington Ag Center – led by Davidson County EMGs- meeting at Central Region Office at Ellington**

Learn about some great outreach of our middle TN EMGs as you are introduced to the new arboretum as well as the ever changing and growing EMG demonstration gardens at the Central Region Extension Office. This volunteer developed and managed garden focused on youth education, food crops, landscapes and pollinator support. Then, the tour will visit Cul2vate urban farm also on the premises of Ellington Ag Center showcasing urban food, fruit, and flower production that links with grower training. (Limit 50) <https://www.cul2vate.org/>

8:30-11:00 AM **Tour 2- Cheekwood Botanical Garden – hosted by Davidson County EMGs- meeting at Starbucks before carpooling to Cheekwood**

After a meetup and carpool, you will take a guided tour of one of Tennessee's most well-known public gardens and estates with a member of the Cheekwood team and then have a bit of time to wander and shop. From the Japanese garden to wildflowers, beautiful seasonal displays to traditional favorites like the herb garden, boxwood and rose garden, spend the morning with Tennessee horticulture at its best. Entry fee covered by conference registration. (Limit 75) <https://cheekwood.org/>

9:00-11:00 AM **Tour 3- Arrington Vineyard and Devlin Farms – hosted by Williamson County EMGs- meeting at Williamson County Ag Expo Park to carpool**

With this great two-part tour, you will see a wide range of the local agriculture of Williamson County. After meeting up at the Ag Park for carpooling, the tour will kick off at Arrington Vineyards, one of Tennessee's most well-known. The focus will be on grapes and horticulture (but feel free to come back for a tasting) and then the second stop will be at Devlin Farms where you'll see fall strawberries, leafy greens and more from a producer who sells locally across the region. (Limit 30)

9:00-11:00 AM **Tour 4- Giving Garden – led by Williamson County EMGs- meeting**

If growing food and feeding people is your passion, then you'll love the visit to the Giving Garden where they measure their local food security contributions in tons. From field to greenhouse production and across the seasons, this farm relies on dedicated and skilled volunteers to produce a wide range of crops to address food security in the middle Tennessee area. You'll learn about everything from plant production to soil management and the vital connection of EMGs with local partners and community volunteers that makes it all happen. (Limit 50)

11:30-1:00 Lunch at Ag Expo Park- Return from your morning tour to the Expo Park for a Taziki's lunch and time to reconnect and visit with friends old and new before our afternoon sessions

1:00-4:00 PM Afternoon Breakout Sessions

1:00-1:45 PM Breakout #1

- 1) ***Edible Landscaping***- Join Williamson County horticulture agent and one of our fabulous hosts, Taylor Reeder, for a fun tour of great edible options for your landscape. Whether adding to an existing edible landscape or just beginning to dream and plan for a new one, Taylor will provide great information to get you excited and prepared for some fun and tasty new crops for your residential space.
- 2) ***Working with Homeowners Associations***- One of the most frequent questions and challenges for our EMG volunteers is navigating HOA rules, regulations or discussions. This panel discussion led by Amy Dunlap and Drs. Becky Bowling and Natalie Bumgarner brings together perspectives of Extension agents, specialists and local volunteers to discuss issues that often come up with HOAs including plant selection, water use and conservation, turfgrass selection and management and noise issues. This session will provide tips and suggestions but also discuss needed resources to support your or others you encounter in engaging HOAs with research-based stewardship efforts in Tennessee.
- 3) ***Leadership in our Local EMG Groups- Part 1 of Double Session***- This session is the third and final in our 2024 EMG local leadership series. It is the in-person capstone to our April and June zoom sessions led by Melody Rose and Emily Richards from our EMG workgroup. If you are interested in local leadership but missed one or both of the previous sessions, have no worries because we will send you the video links prior to the conference. Join in and be a part of leading your local EMG group in great growth and outreach.
- 4) ***Native Plants of Tennessee- Knowing and Using Them*** – Join Dr. Andrea Ludwig, Celeste Scott and Justin Stefanski for a tour of Tennessee native plants. They will take you on a tour of our digital resources to learn and use native plants as well as dive into details about some of their favorites for Tennessee gardens and how these plants and resources can support you in outreach in this important area and link with Tennessee Smart Yards and other stewardship educational opportunities.

2:00-2:45 PM Breakout #2

- 1) ***Turfgrass for Skeptics*** - Many EMGs have questions about how turfgrass connects with sustainable landscapes and our current environmental realities. You aren't the only ones hearing them. In fact, our turfgrass specialists hear them all the time. So, we are excited to have Dr. Becky Bowling joining us with her experience with not only turf, but landscape plants, and water quality in a session on rethinking some of the hang-ups people have about turfgrass and getting excited about a future that integrates grasses, plants, and sustainability in Tennessee and beyond.
- 2) ***Supporting Community Food Production- From Teaching to Trials***- From the cities to the countryside, home fruit and vegetable growing is a huge area of interest in Tennessee and outreach for our EMG program. This session led by Dr. Natalie Bumgarner, Gregg Upchurch and Seth Whitehouse will connect you with new resources, share results and opportunities to connect with Tennessee fruit and vegetable trials. Plus, we'll focus on the application of this edible crop information by EMGs across the state in community gardens and in outreach and teaching. Join in to get info for your garden and info that can help you help others!
- 3) ***Leadership in our Local EMG Groups- Part 2 of Double Session***- This third and final leadership session is going to be a double session to provide time for interaction and engagement and will be led by Melody and Emily.

4) **Supporting Urban Food Production- From Containers to Rooftops** – One of the most exciting aspects of the rising interest in growing food is the opportunity to connect with new generations and new audiences! Some of our most urban counties, Hamilton and Davidson, are leading the way in urban food production. So join Haley Treadway and Amy Dunlap, agents and EMG coordinators with a passion for urban food and urban food growers, for a tour of the many methods of urban food production from containers to indoor growing to the rooftops.

3:00-3:45 PM Breakout #3

1) **Native Plants of Tennessee- Knowing and Using Them (repeated session)** – Join Dr. Andrea Ludwig, Celeste Scott and Justin Stefanski for a tour of Tennessee native plants. They will take you on a tour of our digital resources to learn and use native plants as well as dive into details about some of their favorites for Tennessee gardens and how these plants and resources can support you in outreach in this important area.

2) **Edible Landscaping (repeated session)**- Join Williamson County horticulture agent and one of our amazing hosts, Taylor Reeder, for a fun tour of great edible options for your landscape. Whether adding to an existing edible landscape or just beginning to dream and plan for a new one, Taylor will provide great information to get you excited and prepared for some fun and tasty new crops for your residential space.

3) **Supporting Pollinators in Tennessee**- The opportunity to use our residential and community landscapes to support pollinator habitat and health is an exciting area of research and outreach. This session led by Dr. Monika Pretz, biologist and pollinator program lead of the Tennessee Environmental Council will provide foundational information about pollinators and share techniques and efforts underway in Tennessee.

4) **Supporting Urban Food Production- From Containers to Rooftops (repeated session)** – One of the most exciting aspects of the increasing interest in growing food is the opportunity to connect with new generations and new audiences! Some of our most urban counties, Hamilton and Davidson, are leading the way in urban food production, so join Haley Treadway and Amy Dunlap for a tour of the many methods of urban food production from containers to indoor growing to the rooftops and get connected with our efforts and new resources in these areas.

4:00-6:00 PM Afternoon Break

Dinner and Evening Event – The Barn at Sycamore Farms [4866 Murfreesboro Rd. Arrington, TN 37014](#)

6:00-8:00 PM **An Evening of Local Food- from the Farm to the Community** - Our whole evening will be focused on local food from production to distribution to addressing middle TN food security. Our meal will be provided by a local farm and caterer and after dinner we'll hear from a panel of guests representing different aspects of local food and food security efforts. From local farms to the Nashville food project, you'll learn about the real people and local efforts that support local agriculture and improve health and nutrition for residents in the region.

Friday, October 11th, 2024- Williamson County Ag Expo Park (4215 Long Lane, Franklin, TN 37064)

Breakfast will be available at the hotel, light snacks and drinks will be available at the conference location.

9:00-9:15 AM **Morning Welcome**

9:15 AM-12:00 PM **Morning Workshops** – Sessions will be hands on or interactive rather than a traditional lecture format, so participant limits are in place

9:15-10:30 AM Workshop #1

- 1) **Tree Pruning and Tools of the Trade** – Uncertain about the techniques or tools of tree pruning in your own landscape? Join Colby for a practical and fun session. Colby Jenkins knows trees and is the manager of Maple Hills Nursery specializing in Japanese maples and other rare and fun species. (Limit 40)
- 2) **Flower Pressing and Preservation**- Join Celeste Scott for a hands-on session focused on enjoying the beauty of your garden all through the year with flower pressing and preservation techniques. (Limit 30)
- 3) **Food Preservation with a Focus on Home Canning**- Enjoy the tasty fruits of your summer garden through the year with home fruit preservation. Williamson County EMG and local grower Leigh Funderburk will lead this demonstration that will focus on jams, jellies and other fun with fruits. (Limit 20)
- 4) **Indoor Small-Scale Hydroponics** – Interested in going soilless and growing food indoors? Well, join with Davidson County Master Gardener James Hearn for an introduction to the joys of hydroponic growing and fun ways to get started using mason jar growing. (Limit 20)
- 5) **Diagnostics for EMGs** – “What is this?” and “What do I do about it?” are the two most common questions EMGs hear in community outreach and often in their families and neighborhoods. So, join Williamson County EMG diagnostics guru Jerry Alldredge along with agents Gregg Upchurch, Seth Whitehouse and Justin Stefanski for a session that will help you help yourself and others diagnose and address residential plant questions. (Limit 40)

10:45 AM-12:00 PM Workshop #2

- 1) **Plant Propagation** – Join Taylor Reeder for a fun and hands on workshop focused on plant propagation and learn basic techniques as well as tips and tricks for replicating the plant joy in your own home or landscape. (Limit 40)
- 2) **Fabulous Fungus (ie mushrooms)**- Join local mushroom grower and business owner Rowan Miller for a demonstration and discussion of mushroom growing on a large scale and what it could look like on a smaller scale. (Limit 30)
- 3) **Food Preservation with a Focus on Fermentation**- Join the owners of a local fermenting business for an introduction to lacto-fermentation through a hands-on demonstration and teaching to make your own sauerkraut using fresh cabbage and spices. (Limit 20)

4) **Grow Your Own Gourmet- Home Microgreens-** Join Natalie on a tasty tour of home microgreens that will include some tasting as well as tips and tricks to growing your own vegetable confetti. (Limit 20)

5) **Diagnostics for EMGs (repeated session)** – “What is this?” and “What do I do about it?” are the two most common questions EMGs hear in community outreach and often in their families and neighborhoods. So, join Williamson County EMG diagnostics guru Jerry Alldredge along with agents Gregg Upchurch, Seth Whitehouse and Justin Stefanski for a session that will help you help yourself and others diagnose and address residential plant questions. (Limit 40)

12:00-1:00 Lunch Buffet and Closing Remarks

1:00-3:00 **Local Nursery and Garden Center Visits (sign up is required as participant limits apply)**

1) **Riverbend Nursery** – Trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and all the fun of pottery and accessories. Address: 2008 Lewisburg Pike Franklin, TN 37064

2) **Grow Wild Nursery-** Guided tour of nursery with native trees, shrubs, vines, wildflowers and perennials landscape. Address: 190 Hill Hughes Rd, Fairview, TN 37062 (Limit 30)

3) **Bates Nursery and Garden Center-** Short tour of local nursery with trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and all the fun of pottery and accessories. Address: 3810 Whites Creek Pike Nashville, TN 37207