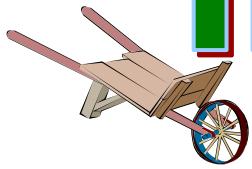


The Wheelbarrow



www.saps.us

Southern Appalachian Plant Society

January 2026

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A World of Discovery: Nurturing sensory wildscapes through creative land-healing practices

Nancy Lawson

Author, naturalist, and founder of The Humane Gardener

Thursday, January 15, 2026, 7 pm EST

This is a ZOOM presentation.

The link to register will be sent by email to members and will also be on the SAPS website. A recording will be available for members.

Much has been written about landscaping to create a sense of place for humans. But who has a better sense of place than the plants and animals who've inhabited our communities for millennia? What do we miss when we focus more on the human-cultural sense of aesthetics than on the sensory experiences of our wild neighbors? Conventional practices interfere with other organisms' abilities to interact with their environment in hidden and unintended ways. The lexicon of landscaping often reinforces these dynamics. Through science, heart, our powers of observation, and a more expansive language for our approaches to land-healing, we can learn to mitigate these disruptions and create sensory refuges in an increasingly noisy world.

Nancy Lawson is the author of *The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife* and *Wildscape: Trilling Chipmunks, Beckoning Blooms, Salty Butterflies, and other Sensory Wonders of Nature*. A nature writer, habitat consultant, public speaker, and founder of The Humane Gardener, she pioneers creative wildlife-friendly landscaping methods. Nancy co-chairs Howard County Bee City in Maryland and co-launched a community science project, Monarch Rx, after observing a little-known butterfly behavior in her own garden. Her books and other works have been featured in Science Magazine, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Oprah Magazine, Entomology Today, Ecological Entomology, and American Gardener. Her most recent book, *Wildscape*, received an honorable mention in the American Horticultural Society's national book awards and was a finalist for the 2024 AAAS/Subaru Prize for Excellence in Science Books.



Tennessee Tree Day is March 21, 2026!

Tennessee Tree Day 2026, a project of Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC), is the largest community tree-planting project of its kind in America. Tennessee residents will collectively plant more than 100,000 native tree seedlings in all 95 Tennessee counties during the weekend of March 21st. Reserve your native trees now through March 1st. The trees are yours to plant on your own property and will enhance our environment and communities for generations to come! Tree species this year include: baldcypress, bur oak, eastern redbud, eastern white pine, elderberry, northern red oak, pecan, persimmon, river birch, smooth sumac, and tulip poplar! Prices for tree seedlings are available for a suggested donation ranging from \$3.99 to \$4.99. You may pick up your trees at various locations in NE Tennessee. Reserve your trees at <https://www.tecn.org/tennesseetreeday.html>.

Upcoming Events

January 1

Light up the Night - New Year's Hike. 12 Midnight to 2 am. Warriors' Path State Park. Moderate 2 mile hike lit with old-timey kerosene lanterns (carried by adults). Children should bring small flashlights. Dress for weather and wear sturdy hiking footwear. Free, but register: https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/warriors-path/#/?event=light-up-the-night-new-year-hike-WPSP-2026

January 1

First Day Hike. Bays Mountain Park. 10 am to noon. Meet at Nature Center entrance. Free. <https://www.baysmountain.com/event/first-day-hike-2/>

January 1

First Day Hike to Birchfield Camp. Rocky Fork State Park. 9:30 am – 2 pm. Meet at Interstate Welcome Center on I-26, Exit 46 (Clear Branch). https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/rocky-fork/#/?event=bcfdh2026

January 5 – 8

Wilderness Wildlife Week. Pigeon Forge. Celebrate the natural features, creatures and cultures of the Great Smoky Mountains. Free. Wide range of programs and activities for children and adults. <https://www.mypigeonforge.com/event/wilderness-wildlife-week/>

January 8

Beyond Your Backyard - Meet Your Feathered Wildlife Neighbors with Stephen Lyn Bales. 7 pm. Zoom. We're all familiar with the birds in our backyards, but we don't have to venture too far afield to find the species that live hidden in other habitats. Learn what these species are and where to look for them with Michelle Campanis, education coordinator with the UT Arboretum, and Stephen Lyn Bales, naturalist/author. Register for program and recording at: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/beyond-your-backyard-meet-your-feathered-w-tickets-248685>

January 10

Winter Edible Plants. 1 - 3 pm. Asheville Botanical Garden. \$35. Introduction to edible winter plants and how to find them in our local ecosystems. After a short indoor discussion of the basics of plant id and foraging best practices, we will head out into the garden to learn in the field. Wear weather appropriate clothing and footwear. This course is primarily outside and will involve a lot of walking. <https://ashevillebotanicalgardens.square.site/classes>

January 14

Winter Activities for Invasive Plant Control. 11:30 am - 1 pm. Free webinar. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-activities-for-invasive-plant-control-registration-1978710921632>

January 15

SAPS meeting. 7 pm. Nancy Lawson. The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife and Wildscape. Zoom.

January 17

Winter Garden Seminar. Warriors' Path State Park. Growing Native Wildflowers from Seed. Expert Naturalist and TN Native Plant expert Rosanna Ohlsson will teach us how to start native wildflowers from seed, and how to keep them thriving in our yards & gardens. \$5. 423-239-6786, marty.silver@tn.gov. https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/warriors-path/#/?event=winter-garden-seminar-WPSP-2026

January 29

Methods for Ecological Restoration at Home. 7 pm. Joanna Currey and David Bellangue from Piedmont Discovery Center will share the Center's approach to ecological restoration as well as resources and step-by-step instructions for adapting that approach to your own back yard. Presented by Wild Ones Appalachian Highlands Chapter. Free. Zoom. No registration required. https://appalachianhighlands.wildones.org/upcoming-events/?wo_event_id=11118

February 5

Herb Saplings meeting. 7 pm at Exchange Place. Kat Hayes, owner and director of Herbalachia, will speak on Herbal Support for Stress and Resilience. Bring an herb snack to share if you have time.

February 19

SAPS meeting. 7 pm. Randi Eckel. On Beyond Monarchs and Honey bees - The Case for Diversity. Zoom

March 6 - 8

Organic Growers School Annual Spring Conference. Mars Hill University, Mars Hill, NC. Supports, inspires and educates people to farm, garden and live organically by providing affordable, practical and hands-on education. <https://www.organicgrowersschool.org/spring-conference>

Master Gardener Training Begins in January

The 2026 Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Intern Training begins on February 3, 2026 and concludes May 12, 2026. Applications due January 15, 2026. For more info, go to: <https://sullivan.tennessee.edu/2026-tennessee-extension-master-gardener-program-training/>

Washington County Virginia Master Gardener classes will be held from 6 pm – 9 pm on Monday evenings, beginning January 26, 2026 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, I-81 exit 14. Classes run until early May. For details see: https://washington.ext.vt.edu/content/washington_ext_vt_edu/en/programs/_jcr_content/content/vtmultitab/vt-items_0/download_copy/file.res/Application%20for%202026%20Master%20Gardener%20Training.pdf

22 Low Light House Plants

Contributed by Hugh Conlon

Enjoy the winter months by revamping your collection of house plants with some of these 22 lovely gems that thrive in medium to low light in most home and office environments. Their beautiful tropical leaves do not tolerate direct sunlight. The best location in your home or office is near a window that captures a few hours of bright not direct sunlight such as a south or east facing window. These plants also flourish under fluorescent and LED lighting. Direct sunlight may scorch and damage their foliage.

Philodendron (*Philodendron spp.*) - a trailing vine with pointed, heart-shaped green leaves, often variegated with white, yellow, or pale green.

Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema*) is a popular no-fuss indoor plant with slow growth and an upright habit. Things get interesting (and expensive) when choosing from among myriad variegated and stunning forms with beautiful shell-pink or red new growth.

Anthurium "Flamingo Plant"- requires bright, indirect light; colorful spathe flowers.

Bird's nest fern (*Asplenium nidus*) - long, lance-shaped, bright green fronds grow from a central rosette and develop gentle ripples; loves a well-lighted warm, humid, lighted bathroom and moist, well-draining soil.

Cast iron plant (*Aspidistra elatior*) - a tough low light and drought tolerant plant; broad deep-green leaves and look for variegated forms; hardy outdoor garden shade plant in zones 7b-10.

Bromeliads (many genera and species) - a low-light house plant popular for colorful long-lasting bloom(s) and plant architecture.

Calathea (*Calathea*) - boldly marked colorful foliage; closely related to prayer plant (*Maranta*).

Spider plant (*Chlorophytum*) - popular hanging potted plant with colorful striped foliage and winter blooms; often tagged "airplane plant".

Dumb Cane (*Dieffenbachia spp.*) grows 10 feet tall with leaves usually green with blotches of creamy white.

Dracaena (many species) - highly dependable shade foliage plants; also called "corn plant".

Snake plants (Dracaena, formerly *Sansevieria*) - tough as nails house plants.

Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) - lovely heart-shaped foliage similar to philodendrons.

Nerve plant (*Fittonia albivenis*) - deep-green, ovate veined leaves in red, pink, white, or green.

Prayer plant (*Maranta spp.*) - shade plant tolerates wet soils with many beautiful leafy varieties.

Monstera (*Monstera deliciosa*) needs lots of space and requires support of strong stake, trellis or pole.

Lady's slipper orchids (*Paphiopedilum*) - easy to grow flowering orchid; grow in an east-facing window or under grow-lights.

Moth Orchids (*Phalaenopsis*) thrive in bright, indirect light with showy flower spike(s) annually.

Peperomias (*Peperomia spp.*) - many new varieties at garden centers.

Schefflera, aka dwarf umbrella (*S. arbicola*) plants thrive on low-light; variegated varieties available.

Peace lily (*Spathiphyllum spp.*) - low light green foliage and colorful spathe flower.

Arrowhead vine (*Syngonium podophyllum*) - extremely low light tolerant; colorful leaves with markings.

ZZ Plant (*Zamioculcas zamifolia*) – one of the most carefree foliage plants. Water and dust leaves occasionally.

Care Tips: Many tropical houseplants respond negatively to the fluorine and chlorine found in most municipal water sources. These chemicals burn the leaf edges (margins and tips) brown. Marantas, calathea, and dracaenas are particularly affected. The simple fix is to let irrigation water stand in an uncovered container, such as a watering can, for several days to allow the chemicals to dissipate into the air before watering plants.

All plants listed here are not heavy feeders. Use a water-soluble fertilizer such Miracle-Gro™ or Schultz™ that is formulated for houseplants once every 3-4 week during the plant's active growth period in the spring and summer. Feed plants sparingly from mid-autumn thru winter.

Sanseveria



Maranta



Fittonia albivenis



Across the President's Desk

By Earl Hockin

January is a great time to review options and order seeds that are not commonly available in local stores. Every year I grow one or two vegetables or varieties that I have not grown before. Some I have truly enjoyed and grown regularly since.

One example is Long Pie Pumpkin, a heritage pumpkin which stores all winter if kept at about 50°. It is best to sow the seeds at the beginning of the warm season. The immature green fruit is a good summer squash.

When it starts to develop orange on the bottom it is time to harvest. The pumpkins will turn bright orange in storage where it sweetens making it great for pumpkin pie.



Another vegetable not commonly grown locally that I enjoy is Asian yard long beans also known as Chinese long beans, asparagus beans, or snake beans. The vines can easily reach 6 to 8 feet in length and should be grown on a trellis. They do well in the heat of summer. The beans are slender thin pods 18 to 36 inches long. When cooked in oil they are good in stir-fries and curries. Used fresh they are crisp and do well in salads.



Tromboncino is a versatile Italian squash. It grows as a vine, producing fruit that is long and curved at the end. When young the squash is green and at 8-10 inches long is a good summer squash. Through the summer it will continue to grow, turning brown to be eaten as a winter squash. Preparation is the same as for



such winter squashes as butternut squash and must be peeled and deseeded. A mature squash harvested in October stores well in a basement or similar environment to be used through the winter.

This year I plan to try two new vegetables. One is a lettuce that is promoted as being very heat tolerant with a nutty, buttery flavor. Batavian lettuce, or summer crisp, can be harvested as either whole heads or individual baby leaves. When baby leaves are harvested, new small sweet leaves continue to be produced. If left to grow, it forms a dense crunchy lettuce head. Leaves are green or red bronze.



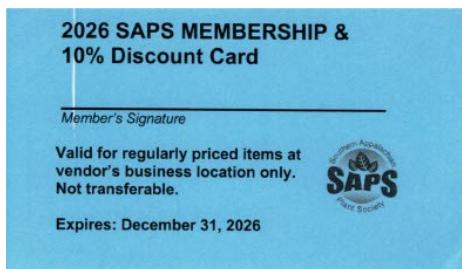
I also plan to try Egyptian spinach, Molokhia, a nutritious leafy green (*Corchorus olitorius*) popular in Middle Eastern and North African cuisine, cherished for its unique slimy texture when cooked.



Like okra it's ideal for soups and stews seasoned with garlic and coriander and served with rice and meat. Despite its name, it's a member of the mallow family, not a true spinach, and is a good source of vitamins and minerals. It can grow up to 6 feet tall. The leaves and stems should be harvested when they are young and tender and can be continuously harvested throughout the summer. Another common way to prepare it is sautéed with garlic and cilantro as a side to a meat dish.

SAPS Membership

SAPS membership is an annual membership that covers the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st. Remembering when we renewed our membership can be a bit difficult. To help with this our membership cards have an expiration date and are a different color every year. Check your card. If it's blue with a December 31, 2026 expiration date, you have paid your 2026 dues and are good for another year. If not the membership renewal form is on the next page.



Southern Appalachian Plant Society 2026 Membership

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____

Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

For new and renewing members: I am paying \$20.00 for annual membership.

This can be an individual or family membership.

With an additional donation of \$_____ I am providing gift membership(s) to the person(s) whose membership data is attached to this form. Each gift membership is \$20.00. Include complete membership information for each gift membership.

I am further supporting SAPS programs and activities with an additional tax-deductible donation of \$_____

I choose to receive the online Wheelbarrow. (The preferred method of providing The Wheelbarrow is digitally. Those who are unable to receive it by email may have a paper copy mailed to them.)

Please send your check made payable to SAPS for the total of your membership, donation and gifts along with this form to:

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Bristol, TN 37620