

# CHRIS' CORNER



## SHELBY COUNTY GARDENING CALENDAR

The Memphis Area Master Gardener Calendar came about because we were looking for a fundraising opportunity that would be educational for the public and would be of interest to both novice and experienced gardeners.

The calendar project mission is to provide horticultural information specific to Shelby County organized by calendar date. Integrated in our calendar is a user friendly compilation of current gardening-related meetings in our area. We have thoughtfully incorporated contact information for horticultural resources and societies for further reference. Additionally, the calendar provides research-based information such as monthly horticulture “to do lists” for the urban home gardener, plant lists specific to Shelby County and articles related to frequently asked horticultural practices/issues in Shelby County. Another unique feature of the calendar is the eight pages of supplemental research-based information that address common questions that are addressed by the Shelby County Master Gardener Hotline.

Need another reason to buy the Memphis Area Master Gardener Calendar? That's easy...it's pretty! Each month reveals magnificent seasonal photography. The retail price for the calendar is \$15 and is distributed by participating retailers. You can also order the calendar on our website: [www.memphisareamastergardeners.org](http://www.memphisareamastergardeners.org). We produce 1,000 calendars annually and typically sell 800+ copies.

It's easy to measure success in terms of dollars made and number of units sold. Success is also measured in many other ways. I think my favorite and possibly the most important aspect of the calendar project is the public relations element. I measure success in the faces of the people as I present them with a calendar! This simple act of kindness has tangible rewards. Most notably, it establishes goodwill in the community and raises the public profile of the Master Gardener program.

In today's digital world people may argue that calendars are outdated. Based on the success of the Memphis Area Master Gardener Calendar I would say that it is still a creative way to indulge your interest in gardening. The calendar project works well for many of the same reasons the UT Master Gardener program works. Because it's fun and people enjoy it! Until next time, have a great Thanksgiving!



*Christopher Cooper*

