

Special Garden Column for the Salisbury Post
Darrell Blackwelder
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Despite the unusually day weather in May, the horticultural demonstration garden at the West End Community Park is now a showcase of color with bedding plants and other plantings. Located near the railroad tracks on Brenner Avenue, the garden is part of the City of Salisbury Parks and Recreation, but maintained by Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. The name West End Community Park often confuses many that think the gardens are maintained by area residents. The garden is actually a series of on-going urban horticulture demonstrations for home gardeners. These demonstrations include: raised bed gardening, drip irrigation, on-going composting demonstration, grape trellising demonstration, shade garden, an insect and butterfly habitat, wetlands area, asparagus demonstration plot, enabling garden for physically challenged and newly planted turf variety trial demonstration plot.

Beginning in March on Friday mornings, weather permitting, Master Gardener Volunteers congregate at the garden planting, weeding, pruning and other general gardening chores. Under the shelter, the group takes a well deserved break at 10:00 a.m. not only for needed refreshments but also for educational conversation and discussions about various topics in the garden, home or questions posed by the general public.

Master Gardener Volunteers have worked tirelessly over the past 5 years to make this a viable educational program for Salisbury-Rowan residents. This on-going demonstration would not be possible without financial resources and in kind services from the City of Salisbury, City of Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department, Salisbury Community Development Cooperation, The Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation, Hurley Foundation and the Rowan County Master Gardener Association.

On Saturday, July 14, 9:00-11:00 a.m., Master Gardener Volunteers will sponsor a Demonstration Field Day. This is an excellent opportunity to ask Master Gardener Volunteers about on-going demonstrations and ask gardening questions. The field day is free and open to the general public.

Darrell Blackwelder is an agricultural agent in charge of horticulture with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service in Rowan County. For archived garden columns or other information, visit the Rowan County Master Gardener web site at www.rowanmastergardener.com , e-mail Darrell_Blackwelder@ncsu.edu