

# Upcoming Free Class

## 3 Season Gardening

### What's Bugging My Garden?

June 20<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 6:00pm

Join UT Extension Washington County Agriculture Agent Adam Watson to learn how to effectively scout your garden for garden pests and some great resources to help you deal with issues that you find. In person location at Jonesborough Farm Bureau Basement Meeting room, 1103 Boones Creek Rd Jonesborough.

**In- Person Registration:** <https://tiny.utk.edu/inpersonbugging>

**Zoom registration:** <https://tiny.utk.edu/bugging>

### Identifying Bumble Bees

Have you ever considered that bumble bees are a NOT a single species? In fact, across the US there are 49 bumble bee (*Bombus*) species. [The Xerces Society has a handy reference for identifying bumble bees found in the southeast US.](#)

#### When is it NOT a Bumble Bee?

Carpenter Bees (*Xylocopa virginica*), aka borer bees, are NOT bumble bees despite looking similar. A very easy way to tell them apart is to look at the top of the abdomen. Carpenter bees have a shiny, hairless top of the abdomen while bumble bee species are fuzzy.



## NEVER Add Sand to Clay Soils!!!!

I recently had a discussion with a local gardener where he was told that adding sand to clay soils would “improve” them. I want to explain why this is a horrible plan to improve heavy clay soils.

Basically, this idea asserts that by adding sand which has large pore spaces and is very free draining to clay soils, you would impart the large pore space and therefore, drainage characteristics to the clay soil. However, what actually would happen is the exact opposite. It all comes down to particle size.

To the left is a graphic showing the relative size of soil particles. Even fine sands are ginormous when compared to the clay particle. This means that as we add sand particles to clay soils their inherent pore space will become filled with the clay particles. You could also visualize this by thinking of a bucket filled by baseballs (sand

particles) and then adding airgun BB's (clay particles) to fill in the voids between the baseballs. You're basically making bricks in the soil.

So, what can you do to improve heavy clay soils? Add organic matter. Using organic mulches, adding organic matter rich soil amendments such as compost, cover cropping, and limiting tillage are all ways to increase and preserve soil organic matter. Keep in mind that heavy clay soils are not a death blow for plants. Most of our native plants thrive in the native clay soils.

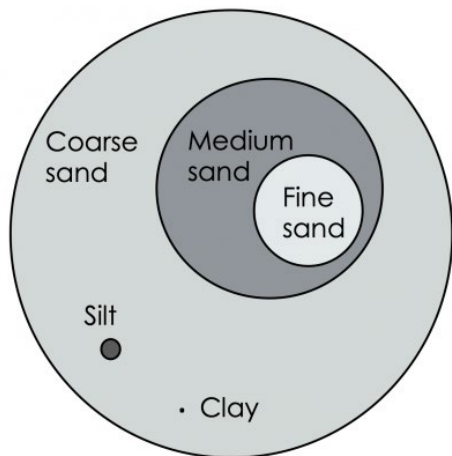


Image from [Soil Physics \(rockefeller.edu\)](http://Soil Physics (rockefeller.edu))

## The Trusty Trowel-June 2024



### June 17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> is National Pollinator Week

One way that we can support pollinators is by creating gardens that are ecologically sound. The Tennessee Smart Yards program aids gardeners in doing that. <https://tnyards.utk.edu/> offers a host of resources and even a way to certify your yard as a Tennessee Smart Yard. The program consists of online modules that explore the nine principles of a smart yard.

*Did you miss one of my gardening classes? You can find the recording on our YouTube Channel:*



<https://tiny.utk.edu/washingtonvideos>

# WHAT IS A TENNESSEE SMART YARD?



SMART YARD PRACTICES BENEFIT YOUR HOME, YOUR COMMUNITY, AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Use these 9 principles on your own property to support healthy landscapes and *clean water in Tennessee!*

**Right Plant, Right Place-** select plants that will flourish in your site and soil

**Manage Soils and Mulch-** protect soils from erosion and use mulches to support plant and soil health

**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle-** use lawn clippings and plant trimming as mulch or in compost

**Water Efficiently-** use irrigation only when needed and capture runoff in rain barrels to reduce water use

**Fertilize Appropriately-** maintain soil pH in the recommended range and use fertilizers according to soil test recommendations

**Manage Yard Pests-** scout for pests and identify properly, use cultural and biological practices for control and only treat when required

**Reduce Stormwater and Pollutants-** use permeable surfaces and rain gardens and disconnect downspouts to retain rainfall on site

**Provide for Wildlife-** select plants that support wildlife and pollinators and provide water and shelter

**Protect Waters Edge-** maintain vegetation along streams and creeks to protect from soil loss and support stream health

[tnyards.utk.edu](https://tnyards.utk.edu)

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TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

For questions about your home and garden please feel free to contact me, Adam Watson, Agriculture Extension Agent [watson@utk.edu](mailto:watson@utk.edu).

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References made to commercial products or brand names is with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Be sure to read and follow all pesticide label instructions.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.