

SPRING

2026



Hubricht's bluestar
(*Amsonia hubrichtii*)

 YEW
DELL
BOTANICAL
GARDENS™



“Never yet was a springtime, when the buds forgot to bloom.”
- MARGARET ELIZABETH SANGSTER

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As much as I enjoy my time working in the garden – the pruning, the planting, the problem solving – I have to admit there’s nothing quite like getting home from work after a long day, mixing up a long, tall gin and tonic or iced tea and just sitting on the back porch. If my lifestyle were more cooperative, I could sit there for hours, watching the birds and soaking it all in. Sometimes it’s nice to enjoy the garden you spend so much time and energy to create.

That theme couldn’t be more appropriate for Yew Dell as we wander our way into the peak of spring. Over the last few years, the planning, building and rebuilding have been moving at a pace just this side of completely nuts. The Castle Gardens, new greenhouses, expanded trails and woodland pavilion – each one requiring concepts and construction plans, contractors and clean-up. It’s time to put all those pieces to use.

For 2026, we’ve re-tooled a few of our blockbuster events to provide season-long reasons to visit. The Annual Spring Plant Sale – the area’s premier plant geek event of the season – just happens to open the same day as our first of the season, Fabulous Friday Happy Hour event. Free admission. Awesome plants. Happy Hour. Food trucks. And this year, we’re adding a farmers market to these monthly Friday happenings. This is going to be one awesome event and one awesome year.

And not to be outdone, Yew Dell program guru, Susan Lucas, has pulled out all the stops with the longest and most varied class/workshop list we’ve ever offered. You pick a topic and she’s got a program – paper quilling, flower preservation, chocolate making . . . even wool felting the Yew Dell Castle. We’re bringing back a few of our long-time favorites like the Secret Garden Party (don’t bother asking where . . . it’s a secret!) and expanding weekend garden walks with our horticulture staff. Of course, our annual Bourbon and Botanicals music series will be better than ever!

Did I leave out THE BIG BLOOM . . . tens of thousands of the brightest and coolest bulbs that are blooming right now all around the grounds?! If you know anything about our amazing garden team, you’ll not be surprised to hear that they’ve added a very cool horticultural curveball this year. Don’t miss it! After all, it’s your support that helps make it all happen.

I hope you can take some time this spring to enjoy the fruits of your labor in your own garden and enjoy the fruits of your support in Yew Dell’s gardens.

Happy spring!
Paul Cappiella



The Big Bloom

Spring starts here!



Sayde Heckman
Garden and Arboretum Manager

It's spring 2026. With the Castle Garden construction now complete, we're looking forward to spending less time building and more time gardening! And the big spring kick-off for the gardening year is The Big Bloom!



Star Magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*)



Barrenwort (*Epimedium x versicolor* 'Sulphureum')

During the summer of 2025, our garden team spent time poring through supplier lists and bulb grower websites as they designed this year's more than 21,000-bulb display. Some of those plantings are perennial bulbs that will continue as part of our permanent collection, while others will make their show just for the one spring. Together, they will make a display you'll want to see in person all through the spring as early bulbs fade and later bulbs come into bloom.

And we've added a new twist to *The Big Bloom* this year – **cool-season annuals**.



Plant walks



Summer annuals



From seeds to cuttings



The Big Bloom



Bulb planting



***Beta vulgaris var. cicla* 'Bright Lights'**

When our crew planted all The Big Bloom bulbs last fall, they left a few "no planting zones" in the center of some of the bulb beds. In March, those beds were filled with varieties of **Swiss chard** (*Beta vulgaris var. cicla*), **kale** (*Brassica oleracea var. sabellica*) and **violas** (*Viola x wittrockiana*) to add more color and different textures. We're pretty excited for you to see this fun new addition. And it's pretty awesome that all those cool-season annuals were grown in our own nursery by our tremendously talented nursery team!

The Big Bloom display will run through March and April, with a few even making it to Derby season. And our garden staff offer **plant walks** each weekend, so be sure to check out the program pages and the website.

And while you're on the grounds for The Big Bloom, be sure to check out all the other early-blooming specimens around the gardens. It's so easy to miss the fleeting blooms of the early magnolias (along the entrance path and in the arboretum) and the so-delicate epimediums (Castle Gardens and Fairy Forest Path), along with so many other blooms that take advantage of the early warmth and sunshine.

Spring Transitions to Summer

Once the vibrancy of spring bulbs starts to fade, we quickly transition into the bold colors of summertime. Summer annual planting begins after our Spring Plant Sale and the Kentucky Derby and is my second favorite time of the gardening year.

To make way for annual planting, the annual spring bulbs (those that don't survive our climate) get removed and composted, making way for new plantings. Over 3,500 summer annuals, started in February from cuttings or seed, have been nurtured in our nursery. They are held in the greenhouses until the fear of frost passes, and then the fun begins. Our talented team of horticulturists and a flock of amazing garden volunteers then lay out and furiously plant for two solid weeks, transforming the gardens into something new and exciting for your next visit.

So, grab some lunch at Martha Lee's Café, join us for a workshop, get your hands dirty as a volunteer or come for a plant walk as we all enjoy the beauty of the seasons in the gardens.

Classes and Events

B-Movies and Real Plant Science: The Thing from Another World (1951)

Saturday, April 4 | Noon–2 p.m.

Members \$20, Non-Members \$25

We heard you, B-Movies and Real Plant Science returns with a matinee! Learn from our Horticulture Team about “super carrots,” blood-drinking plants and cool things like telegraph vine, century plants and what other “alive” botanical specimens do in the real world. Bring your best “would plants really do that?” questions for our team to answer after the movie. Come early to visit the Gardens and grab lunch or snacks from Martha Lee’s Café to enjoy during the movie.

Photography with Murphy’s Camera

Sunday, April 12 | 10 a.m.–Noon and 1–3 p.m.

Members \$30, Non-Members \$40 | Combo: \$55 Member, \$75 Non-Members

Spend a spring Sunday sharpening your photography skills with Murphy’s Camera. Photographer Ayrica Bishop leads two hands-on workshops set among Yew Dell’s spring gardens. Photography Basics (10 a.m.–Noon) is perfect for beginners and hobbyists, covering light, composition, exposure and how to get the most from any camera – even your phone. Macro Garden Photography (1–3 p.m.) takes a closer look, diving into close-up techniques, depth of field and capturing intricate details often overlooked in nature. Take one class – or save with a combo ticket.



Spring Flower Preservation with Sayde and Gabby

Saturday, April 18 | 10 a.m.–Noon

Members \$45, Non-Members \$55 (includes all supplies)

Join our team of horticulturists as they share tricks of the trade to preserve the bounty collected in our spring gardens. From pressing and hanging to drying and saving, you’ll learn how to preserve flowers, petals, leaves and entire blooms – techniques which can be used for wreaths, ornaments and other decor items. Attendees will go home with a filled plant press to continue the experience on their own.



Girl Scout Patch Day

Saturday, May 9 | 10 a.m.–Noon and 1–3 p.m.

\$17 per Scout | Adults General Admission

In partnership with Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana, scouts can earn a custom Yew Dell Botanical Gardens patch while learning about our Arboretum, Fairy Forest, Woodland Trails, Gardens and Glasshouse. We provide a custom Patch activity guide booklet and all supplies. Content is geared to Brownie level, but all ages are welcome to participate.

Mother’s Day Celebration

Sunday, May 10 | Noon–4 p.m.

Timed Ticketing | Members: Free, Non-Members: General Admission

Spend a lovely day in the garden celebrating your Mom – or the Mom figures in your life. Enjoy delicious bites from local food trucks and Martha Lee’s Café. Throughout the grounds, our horticulture team will be on hand to share seasonal tips, favorite plant picks and inspiration for your own garden at home. Every visiting mom will receive a complimentary lavender plant (while supplies last) to take home and enjoy. Visit our website for timed ticket information.

Perennial Propagation from Cuttings with Jeff Margreiter

Saturday, May 16 | 10 a.m.–Noon

Members \$60, Non-Members \$70

This hands-on workshop will help you understand both the art and science of rooting vegetative cuttings to produce new plants. You’ll learn correct technique, process and materials to help you propagate a wide diversity of plant types by cutting. You’ll choose from a variety of different species to take cuttings from and build a plug tray that will stay in our nursery until the cuttings are rooted and ready to take home!



Design Your Summer Annual Container

Sunday, May 17 | 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Members \$75, Non-Members \$85 (includes all supplies)

Houseplants, herbs, annuals, perennials and bulbs – there’s very little you can’t have fun with in your favorite planter. Join our team of horticulturists for a deep dive into crafting your very own summer annual container to take home and enjoy all season.



Secret Garden Party

Thursday, May 21 | 4–9 p.m.

One of our most popular offerings each year – a party, a garden and a big secret. You’ll come to Yew Dell, hop on a minibus and we’ll whisk you away to one of our favorite private gardens – and you won’t know where we’re going ‘til we get there! Follow our garden staff for a guided tour of the gardens or just sit back and enjoy a glass of wine and a few light snacks in one of the most beautiful spots in town.

Paper Quilling Workshop with KMAC

Saturday, May 30 | Noon–1:30 p.m.

Members \$30, Non-Members \$40 (includes all supplies)

Participants will be introduced to the traditional craft of paper quilling and explore the process of decorating with paper. No experience is needed! You’ll learn multiple quilling techniques and how to use special tools, then create your own butterfly and tulip designs and make a small paper sculpture to take home. Workshop is geared to adults, and children will need their own ticket to attend.



Botanical Dye: Watercolor Painting

Saturday, June 6 | 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Members \$70, Non-Members \$80 (includes all supplies)

Join local botanical artist, Briahna Michalsky, for this informative, hands-on session on botanical dye processes. She will guide participants through the process of making watercolor inks from collected material, then we’ll have time to paint with dyes she cured in her studio. You will take home your custom artwork. No experience needed.

Level Up Your Next Cocktail Party with this Botanical Cocktail Workshop

Friday, June 12 | 6–8 p.m.

Members \$50, Non-Members \$60 (includes all supplies)

Kick off the weekend with a one-of-a-kind craft cocktail experience led by Yew Dell’s Chef Mike, where you’ll create cocktail syrups, bitters, floral craft ice and more. We’ll harvest ingredients fresh from the gardens, shake cocktails, savor small bites and enjoy the Gardens after hours. We’ll have take-home recipes to help you kill it the next time you have friends over for a few drinks.

Saturday Plant Walks

Saturdays 1–2 p.m.

Included with Admission

Level up your gardening skills or just enjoy a guided plant walk with our horticulture staff – every Saturday! Themes vary with the seasons based upon what is blooming or showing off. So, bring your questions and join us for an amazing season!

March Arboretum – Enjoy early spring among this diverse and magical tree and shrub collection.

April Spring Blooms – Enjoy The Big Bloom, magnolias (if the weather cooperates!) and more.

May Nursery – Get a behind-the-scenes look at where all those amazing plants come from.

June Seed Collecting – Learn the tricks of the trade from our plant pros.

July Edible Plants – Learn about edible plants in our area.

August Summer Annuals – Join this walk to learn which are the winners and losers for 2026.

September Drought Tolerance – If a plant looks good in September, it’s likely a good plant!

October Fall Pollinators – The overlooked pollinator season. Can you say garden mum?

November Winter Interest – Pick up ideas to juice up your garden for the cooler season.



Sunday Plant Walks

Sundays, 1–2 p.m. | March 8–April 26

Included with Admission

Catch the fleeting magnolias in bloom, follow the spring season as The Big Bloom emerges, learn a few cool facts about plants you walk by every day, or just enjoy a relaxed, guided walk around the spring grounds as spring unfolds.



Ready to Learn?
Scan and Sign Up!

Classes fill up quickly. All listed programs are scheduled to be in-person unless otherwise noted.

Fabulous Fridays returns, now with a Farmers Market!

Last Friday of the month | 4–8 p.m.



Take a Friday, add in a Happy Hour, throw in a Farmers Market and just for the heck of it, make it all admission free! What a deal! Enjoy specialty cocktails, live music, food trucks, special treats from Martha Lee's Café and a lively mix of Farmers Market vendors. Or just grab a drink and relax in your favorite spot in the gardens.

And to kick it all off, the April edition (4/24) just happens to coincide with the opening of our annual Spring Plant Sale!

Plant Sale Kick-off: Friday, April 24

Our first Happy Hour of the season is extra special – it coincides with the opening evening of Yew Dell's Spring Plant Sale, making it the perfect night to sip, shop, stroll and stay awhile.

The Spring Plant Sale features an exceptional variety of plants, including heirloom vegetables, hard-to-find favorites and what many consider the best selection of perennials anywhere. Yew Dell's horticulture experts will be on hand to answer questions and help you choose the right plants for your garden.

Come for Happy Hour and to browse the Farmers Market, leave with plants – and inspiration – for the season ahead. Events like this help sustain the gardens while bringing our community together.



Plant Sale Hours:

Friday, April 24 | 4–8 p.m.
Saturday, April 25 | 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Events like this help sustain the gardens while bringing our community together.

Discover Spring at Yew Dell

These seasonal highlights are part of Yew Dell's ongoing commitment to accessible, science-based horticulture – made possible by community support.

April May June



1
Dogwood
(*Cornus Venus*)
Rock House Parking Lot



2
Bluestar
(*Amsonia tabernaemontana* var. *salicifolia*)
Pavilion Garden



3
Itoh Hybrid Peony
(*Paeonia* 'Callie's Memory')
Pavilion Garden



4
Ground Orchid
(*Bletilla striata*)
Secret Garden



5
Oyama Magnolia
(*Magnolia sieboldii* 'Colossus')
Walled Garden



6
Indian Pink
(*Spigelia marilandica* 'Little Redhead')
Castle Gardens



7
Eastern Prickly Pear
(*Opuntia humifusa*)
Sunken Rock and Glasshouse Terrace Garden



8
Bigleaf Magnolia
(*Magnolia macrophylla*)
Serpentine Garden



9
Betony
(*Stachys officinalis* 'Hummelo')
Castle Gardens



10
Smooth Hydrangea
(*Hydrangea arborescens*)
Shrub Evaluation Garden



11
Yellow Wax Bells
(*Kirengeshoma palmata*)
Serpentine Garden



12
Sweetshrub
(*Calycanthus x raulstonii* 'Hartlage Wine')
Pavilion Garden



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What's Blooming Next

Weekly Summer Fun



Sunday Edible Garden Demo
Sundays, May 3–October 25 | Noon–2 p.m.

Included with admission

Every Sunday from May through October, join members of our garden team and education staff in the Edible Garden for hands-on planting and harvesting demonstrations, creative activities, accessible horticultural science and tips for growing at home. Learn about plant life cycles, engage in sensory experiences with a variety of herbs, florals and vegetables, craft with natural materials and more. Activities change each week, so come see what we're up to today!



Children in the Dell 2026
Saturdays, June and July* | 10:30 a.m.–Noon

Included with admission

This long-running, family favorite returns for summer 2026! This year, we will feature a variety of hands-on and informal educational activities focused on the many creatures (birds, pollinators and fairies) that call our Gardens home. Come weekly – often – for a whole new perspective on Yew Dell!

**No program on July 4, Yew Dell is closed*

Signature Summer Events



Fairy Day Celebration 2026
Sunday, June 7 | Noon–4 p.m.

Included with admission

We invite all the wee folks – fairies, elves and gnomes – and their families and companions to join us for Fairy Day 2026! Thanks to our friends at the Gettelfinger Family Foundation, come see our re-envisioned Grace and Clara Marie Gettelfinger Fairy Forest. The Gettelfinger family will host a special ribbon cutting at 12:30 p.m. to officially open the Fairy Forest for the season. Enjoy the Tree Faces scavenger hunt along the Woodland Trail, search for Fairy Doors tucked away in the Arboretum, purchase special treats from Martha Lee's Café and visit the hands-on Edible Garden activity while supplies last.

**Blackout date for Hounds on the Grounds*



Bourbon & Botanicals 2026
Thursdays, July and August | Doors open at 5 p.m., Plant Walk 6–7 p.m., Concert 7–8:45 p.m.

Bourbon & Botanicals music series returns! Plan to spend Thursday evenings at Yew Dell throughout July and August for an ever-changing lineup of great local music, crafty cocktails and seasonal bites from food trucks and Martha Lee's Café. Bring a lawn chair and plan to sit back, relax and let the delights of a summer evening in the garden help you start a little early on the weekend wind-down. Whether your jam is bluegrass, R&B, country or blues, we've got you covered. Our garden staff will offer pre-concert plant and garden walks starting at 6 p.m. So, bring your plant questions and make an evening of it.

**Please no coolers on the grounds during open hours*

From Martha Lee's Café:

A Taste of Spring

Spring is here, and we couldn't be more excited to welcome the season at the café. This spring, Yew Dell-grown produce is making its way onto the menu – from garden-fresh herbs in seasonal dressings to vegetables featured in salads, sandwiches and a new grain bowl, plus spring flower petal syrups that add a delicate lift to desserts and beverages. It's a bright, flavorful celebration of the season, grown just steps away. Below, Chef Mike shares a simple herb oil recipe so you can bring those fresh spring flavors into your own kitchen.

Every purchase at Martha Lee's Café supports Yew Dell's mission and the gardens.



Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh parsley
- 1 cup fresh basil
- 3 cups neutral oil

Directions:

Pick leaves from parsley and basil stems. Blanch in boiling water for 15 seconds. Transfer immediately to an ice water bath. Press excess water from herbs using a strainer or cheesecloth. Place herbs in a food processor with oil. Blend until smooth. Transfer to an airtight container and place in the refrigerator for 12–24 hours. Strain mixture using cheesecloth.



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Outstanding Volunteers of the 2025 Growing Season!

Yew Dell's volunteer community is brimming with talent and passion. Here are stand-outs from our 2025 season!



Volunteer of the Year
Lisa LeCompte

Youth Volunteer of the Year
Marcus Southworth

The Golden Tub Trug Awards:

Our fun take on awards season!



Garden Adoption Program Volunteers:
Julie Koehler, Holly Cooper & Chelsea Ashton



Nursery Volunteer:
Brook Morse



Workday Volunteer:
Beth Linder



Behind-the-Scenes Volunteer:
Stacy Meyer



Events & Education Volunteer:
Debbie Lorence



Decor prep



Garden Ambassadors Program

Join Us this Season!

Volunteering at Yew Dell is a great way to meet new people and develop new skills in a beautiful setting. From gardening and growing to educational and creative endeavors, there's an opportunity for YEW.

These volunteer shifts occur every week:

Weekly Workdays in the Garden: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Let's get our hands in the dirt! Needs on the grounds change seasonally, but may include specialized tasks such as pruning, plant cut back, plantings, trail work and weeding.

Saturday Workdays in the Garden are held the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. No orientation is required for these workdays, so come check us out!

Décor Prep: Thursday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Want to engage in the more creative side of garden tasks? Join us for a Décor Workday! Work with staff to prepare materials for fall and holiday décor. On these afternoons we will be harvesting, cutting and deconstructing plants, crafting, drying and dehydrating materials, working with resin and more!

Garden Ambassadors Program: Shifts occur Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and on Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Group tours are scheduled upon request.

Do you enjoy interacting with visitors and sharing cultural, historical and scientific knowledge? Join us as a Garden Ambassador!



Interested in getting involved?

Scan the code for more information, or email Emma Bryan at emmab@yewdellgardens.org.

Fresh Cuts from the Garden

Grown for the garden, the season and the moments that matter

Yew Dell's cut flower garden brings beauty to every corner of the season. From blooms featured throughout the gardens to floral décor for signature events like Twilight in the Garden and Yuletide, our flowers are grown with intention. Cut flowers are also available for private events at Yew Dell, including elopements, ceremony-only weddings and special gatherings.

Located beside the nursery, the cut flower garden invites visitors to explore and pick up tips for growing flowers at home. Extra seasonal bunches are available in the Garden Gift Shop while supplies last.



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Inside the Nursery

Extending the Growing Season with Jeff Margreiter



2025 was an incredibly busy year for the Yew Dell Nursery as we capped off the Castle Gardens Project. While soil was moved, irrigation lines laid, concrete poured and garden beds formed, nursery staff were simultaneously **growing thousands of plants** to bring the landscape design to life. Nearly everything – aside from large trees and shrubs – was grown in-house, showcasing the nursery’s role as a tool for efficient, cost-effective plant production and long-term care of the gardens.

While no planting project of that scale is planned for 2026, the momentum from last year is carrying forward through several exciting nursery improvements. In January, while the grounds rested under a blanket of snow, **staff installed a new partition in the front third of the Annual House**. Using a wooden frame, polyethylene plastic and newly installed wiggle wire channels, the team created a distinct growing zone that can be kept significantly warmer for seed starts and annuals, while reducing energy use in areas not yet filled with plants. Improving efficiency is an ongoing focus in the nursery and allows us to provide optimal care for every plant we grow.

Plans are already underway to **add a second partition in the Annual House**, creating three distinct zones with adjustable bottom heat and environmental controls tailored to different plant needs. Over time, the temporary plastic will be replaced with more permanent polycarbonate walls, further improving efficiency and flexibility. These upgrades allow us to start frost-intolerant annuals earlier and propagate an even wider variety of plants from seed.

This year, the nursery will also be converting the raised bed area located behind the Horticulture Center to a vegetable and herb garden, composed mostly of leafy greens and flowers for garnishes, that Chef Mike and the Martha Lee’s Café staff can conveniently access to use in the many great meals they prepare.

Plant sales and nursery events directly support the continued care and growth of Yew Dell’s gardens.

Sponsored by:



Mark Your Calendars!

Nursery Open House

March 28 | 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

March 29 | Noon–4 p.m.

Spring Plant Sale

April 24 | 4–8 p.m.

April 25 | 10 a.m.–4 p.m.



Growing Together

Meet Stacy Gordon-Funk

We’re excited to welcome Stacy to Yew Dell as our new Director of Philanthropy and External Affairs!

With a passion for community-building and a deep appreciation for the role gardens play in bringing people together, Stacy is focused on growing meaningful connections that help Yew Dell thrive.

From supporting our volunteers and members to strengthening the programs you love, her work ensures this garden continues to be a place for curiosity, learning and inspiration for everyone.

Become a Member!

Membership is a simple way to support the gardens, programs and people that make Yew Dell thrive. When you join or renew, you’re helping keep this space welcoming, inspiring and growing for everyone.



Scan the code to learn more. Gift memberships will be mailed to the recipient at the address you provide.

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A Little Whimsy for Spring

Spring brings color, creativity and a touch of whimsy to the Garden Gift Shop. Discover fresh finds for both indoor and outdoor living, from playful accessories to thoughtful accents inspired by the season. You'll also find garden-ready essentials – seeds, books and trusted tools – for hands-on growers of every level. Whether you're shopping for yourself or picking up the perfect gift, there's something blooming for everyone this spring. Every purchase supports Yew Dell's mission and the gardens you enjoy.

