

Pulaski County Master Minutes

July, 2008

<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org> <http://www.uaex.edu/pulaski/>

Volume 18, Issue 7

Join us for an
**Ice Cream Social at the home of
Chris Olsen's home**
July 15th
11:30-12:30



EYE OF THE BEHOLDER AWARD

If you know of a beautiful garden in Little Rock that is worthy of attention and a special award

Eye of The Beholder Award.

Please contact the Little Rock City Beautiful Commission:

Debra Redding at debredding@hotmail.com or 804-9750
Kay Tatum at kay.tatum@yahoo.com or 375-5197
Christy Marvel at cmarvel@littlerock.org or 371-4864

If the gardener accepts the nomination, they will receive a certificate signed by the Mayor and the Commissioner with a letter from the City and a beautiful sign to display in their yard!

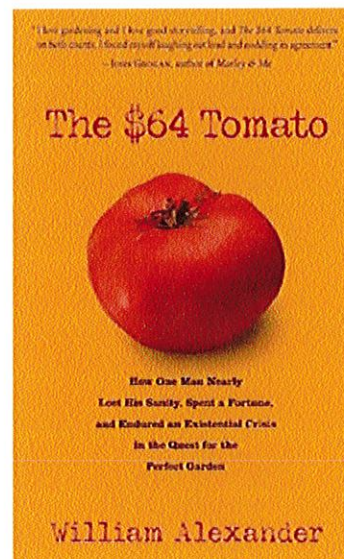
As Master Gardeners, we bet you have some gardens in mind ...Thanks for your Nominations!!

Debra's Book Club

By Debra Redding

The \$64 Tomato

How one man nearly lost his sanity, spent a fortune and endured an existential crisis in the quest for a perfect garden
Author: William Alexander



When the author of this hilarious gardening memoir plants a large vegetable garden and a small orchard on his Hudson Valley farmstead, he finds himself at odds with almost all of creation.

He had always dreamed of having his own garden and got his wish and a whole lot more. Working all day at a nearby research institute, he comes home to his second full-time job...his garden!

This book makes a great read at the pool this summer and every gardener will laugh as they relate to this man. William Alexander has been gardening and small-scale farming for more than 25 years. He lives and gardens in New York's Hudson Valley.

Arkansas Is Our Campus

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Employer.

New House Story – Part 3 – The Water Feature

By Bren Coop

When I last wrote about the saga of our new house/new yard, the **French-drain** had not yet been finished in the front yard—now it is, and the drain helps immensely when we have these heavy rains known so well to this area. We also added a gravel-filled narrow ditch beside the fence on one side of the back yard and a small dry creek bed on the other side of the yard to catch the neighbors' runoff.



The **water feature**, formerly a very large vase in the yard, was a nightmare in the making. If you're as inexperienced as we were with having a back yard pond bigger than five feet around—**hire the experts!!** It would have been much quicker and no more expensive. Our water feature turned out to be two ponds connected by a walkway between them, and a water flow over the rocks, forming a short waterfall into the lower pond. *The waterfall in the upper pond has about a 3-3½ foot drop. The water circulates 24/7, through a skimmer, a UV filter, and a biofilter.*

"Installers" were hired; the holes were prepared in November '07, the under-layment and liner were put down; rocks were placed; the pump was installed, etc. We were really excited that it was going to be working by Thanksgiving! However, rain happened. The pump (which is housed in a somewhat large black box where the skimmer is) was pushed up out of the ground by the underlying mud....(This was not good.)

By way of shortening this saga, let me say that after two months and several attempts, many more rains, a lot of frustration, replacement of part of the liner because of puncture wounds, we found someone who was able to get the pond going around the end of January. It has been working ever since...and we like it more all the time.

Through a friend of a friend we were fortunate to get 14 fish (including 3 large koi)! Everyday is a new experience with this project. We didn't know about pond plants. We didn't know how much or what kind of food for the fish. We didn't know that koi would eat the \$15 worth of water lettuce we put in the pond, or that they would try to dig up all the other plants we add. We didn't know that fish spawn when the water temperature changes. We didn't dream that water plants cost so much! (They don't come in 6-packs from the big box stores or from the master gardener plant sales. They come in individual packages priced from about \$4 to \$30.)

New experiences; lots of learning! This water feature has become a huge focal point of our yard – the way it is wasn't part of the original vision for the yard, but it's working out fine, and I believe we'll be glad we have it!!

Next time... backyard plants.



Seven Sun Flower

By Cathy Fakouri

Flowering shrubs – To have a healthy garden choose plants that are well adapted to the environment. Make sure the climate zone for the shrub you want work with where you live. Bear in mind, though, that USDA climate zone ratings are only for cold, but are not adapted for long, hot humid summers! In areas like Arkansas where summers can be stressful, check with nurseries, extension offices or research the plant on the internet to be sure the shrub can tolerate our summer.

Common Name – **Seven Son Flower**

Scientific Name – Heptacodium

Zones – 5-8

Site Requirements – Tolerates a wide range of soils

Size – height – up to 20ft. spread 8-10ft.



©2005

Flower/fruit –white flower in late summer, purple fruit

Plant 0- full sun to light shade

Prune – late winter

This is a large arching shrub or small tree with an irregular, loose, and open habit. It grows at a medium rate and gets 10-20 feet tall and about 5-10' wide. It has an exfoliating bark with great foliage. It emerges in the spring with a soft green then turning to a dark green. The flower buds set early but don't bloom until August and linger to

September. Flowers are creamy white, fragrant and are borne in 6" terminal panicles. Butterflies enjoy this flowering plant. The fruit changes from green to rose-purple; the fruit is showier than the flower. This shrub works best in borders, great foliage, interesting flower, attractive bark, and fruit characteristics. It is not bothered by pests or diseases. Seven Son shrub must have ample water in dry times.

Smoke Bush

By Cathy Fakouri

Flowering Shrubs – The type of soil you have affects the success of a shrub. Woodland plants such as azalea, mountain laurel, and holly all prefer acid soil with a low pH. You can try to grow these plants in soil with a pH above 7.5, but you will need to constantly add acidic fertilizer to lower the pH. On the other hand shrubs like mohonia prefer a more alkaline soil. Also keep in the back of your mind the plant's tolerance of clay or sandy soil.

Common Name – **SMOKE BUSH**

Scientific Name – COTINUS COGGYRIA

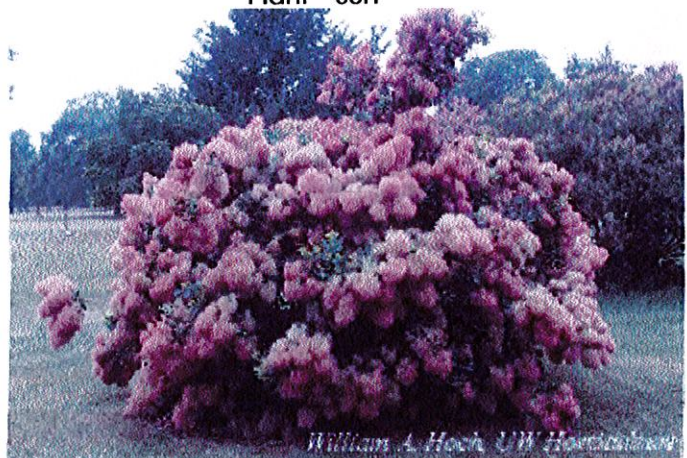
Zone – 5-8

Site Requirements – well drained soil/dry side

Size – height 10-15ft.

Flower/Fruit –

Plant – Sun

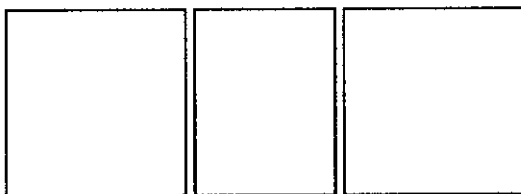


William A. Hoch, UW Horticulture

Smoke Bush is a rounded, broadly spreading, and sometimes multi-stemmed shrub. The upright

branches become open and loose as the plant ages. The purplish brown stems have a waxy bloom when young and develop thin blocky light gray bark as they grow older. The leaves are smooth and bluish green. In the fall, they turn bright shades of yellow, orange, purple, and red.

The actual flowers are inconspicuous little yellowish green blossoms that appear in early summer, but the long pinkish filaments on the stems of the bloom clusters create a striking cloudlike effect through the summer. The fruits are tiny kidney shaped brown berries. Pruning promotes intense foliage color. Since smoke Bush shrub flowers on new growth, it can be cut to the ground each winter and grown as a cutback shrub. This treatment yields spectacular growth with heavy flowering and dramatic foliage color on a cluster of 3-5 ft. shoots. Alternatively, older shrubs can be limbed up to create attractive small trees. Smoke Bush shrubs may be affected by rusts, leafspot, verticillium wilt but it is notably resistant to honey fungus. The purple leaved cultivars are susceptible to mildew.



DRAINAGE

By Lorraine Hensley

Gardens must have good drainage if we want our plants to thrive. The word is a lot simpler to define than it is to achieve but effective drainage truly makes the difference between weak plants and healthy ones. Soil drainage speaks to the rate at which soil allows water to pass through or percolate. Plants will die without water but too much water can leach nutrients right out of the soil resulting in no food for our plants and those plants fail to thrive. If your soil test showed a good mix of sand, silt, and clay your soil is probably well drained. A simple way to get a general idea which areas of the yard have poor drainage is to take a walk around the area following a good rain and note where the puddles are.

However, conditions below the surface may make our soil drain differently than our soil test would indicate. Sunset Ideas for Landscaping notes, "if your soil is shallow and under laid with a compacted layer that is impervious to water and roots the impenetrable should be removed. If this layer is too difficult to dig out, bring in soil and garden in raised beds." For whatever soil exists over these barriers will have poor drainage. Good directions and illustrations of "how to test" for your soil drainage or perc time are in Time-Life Garden Design. Like many other things in gardening we will need more tools: shovel, hose, our trusty yardstick, watch, and a sheet of notepaper. Use a fresh overlay sheet from our previous adventures.

Go out to the yard when the sun is shining and the soil is fairly dry. Pick up a handful of soil and squeeze it. It's bad news if the soil forms a sticky lump. While still out there examine it not only for low spots but also for areas where the soil changes composition. These areas should be tested for drainage prior to any planting. Next dig 2 to 4 flat-bottomed holes with a depth of at least 1 foot in desired planting areas. Dig these holes about mid-morning or a bit later. Fill each hole, one at a time with water. Immediately after filling the hole, write the exact time and water depth on your notepaper. Record the water depth in each hole and every quarter hour. Do this for 1 hour. Soils with adequate drainage lose about 1 inch of water per hour. Note which areas drain well and those that drain either too rapidly or slowly. Devise another colored pencil code for those areas just tested. With the overlay sheet placed on the plot plan mark these areas accordingly. Be sure to write the color code on the overlay sheet.

The soil amendment process can then begin. Add organic matter like compost, leaf mold or well-rotted manure. If your soil drains too quickly these amendments improve it ability to retain both moisture and nutrients. In heavy clays and silts, compost helps loosen and aerate the soil allowing the water to drain more quickly. For soils that REALLY drain slowly your best bet may be a raised bed.

**PHOTOS BY
CHERYL KENNEDY**

Contemplation Garden



Arkansas Arts Center





Checklist By Carol Randle

Summer is really here with hot, dry weather, so add mulch to your garden now and save time later. Mulching will help to keep out the weeds and pests and will preserve moisture so that you don't have to water as often, and will improve your soil and your garden's overall appearance. Continue to watch for and get rid of weeds before they go to seed. Water according to the weather. Remember to avoid peak hours when watering. Pay close attention to raised beds and container plants.

FLOWERS

Keep flower beds well weeded. Remove faded blooms. Make sure you keep the soil moist but not soggy around ferns. They may become dormant if they get too dry. Now is the time to pick those beautiful perennials for a fresh bouquet indoors. This will also encourage more blooms on most perennials. Salt deposits can build up in the soil of container plants. This will cause the foliage to burn. Flush out these deposits with water once during the summer. If your Gardenias and Hydrangeas need pruning because they are big and overgrown, now is the time to do it as they finish blooming. They set buds in the fall. Shear back Gardenias by selectively thinning branches and growth. Hydrangeas need older canes to be removed down to the ground line. Lightly fertilize after pruning. Clip back every other leggy annual by half. As these recover and begin to bloom, cut back the other half. Replace spent annuals now for fall color.

FRUIT

Rabbiteye Blueberries, Blackberries, and Peaches are in season. Keep canes that are bearing fruit moist throughout the summer. Remove old canes after they have finished producing fruit. If your fruit trees appear to be producing too much fruit, make sure you thin it out some. Keep grass around your fruit trees short. Grass deprives the trees of nitrogen. Throw away any fruit you find that has been affected by scab (a fungus).

HERBS

Harvest blooms of lavender now to keep the plant tidy and encourage more blooms. Cut sprigs of Rosemary and freeze whole for future use. Cut back about three-quarters of the new growth on your Thyme plants regularly throughout the summer. For a nice fragrance in your kitchen, tie several

branches of sage together and hang it upside down in your kitchen. Pinch the stems of Basil regularly to prevent flowering. Harvest about once a week. Clip the flower stalks off garlic. Once the leaves have turned brown, garlic can be harvested.

LAWNS

Deep water lawns, trees, and shrubs to encourage deep rooting and to avoid heat stress. Watch out for yellow patches, leaf curl, or poor growth. Increase watering if you notice any of these signs. Set your lawnmower at a higher level. Longer grass will shade the roots from heat. Don't forget to save your clippings for the compost pile but never add your cuttings after a weed treatment. Feed lawn and outdoor potted plants with slow release nitrogen fertilizer.

VEGETABLES

Keep tomatoes supplied with mulch, lime, calcium, and ample water. Blossom end rot is a calcium deficiency controlled by Stop Rot. Even moisture helps prevent rotting and fruit cracking. Upper 90 degrees daytime and above 75 degrees night time temperatures cause blossom drop on tomatoes. Mothballs around the base of cucurbits control vine borers. Harvest vegetables as they ripen. Decrease watering cantaloupes when they are half their mature size.

ROSES

Lightly prune bush roses to encourage fall bloom. Continue spraying Roses for black spot. Use a registered fungicide (i.e. Funginex) or an organic one (i.e. 4 t. baking soda + 1 t. liquid soap/and or vegetable oil per gallon of water) on affected foliage (try not to spray the soil) for fungal problems.

JULY BLOOMS

Althea, Anise Mint, Artemisia, Balsam, Beautyberry, Belamcanda, Buddleia, Butterflyweed, Cannas, Chive, Cleome, Clerodendrum, Coneflower, Coreopsis, Crape Myrtle, Crinum, Dahlias, Daisies, Echeveria, Euphorbia, Feverfew, Gaura, Gladioli, Hibiscus, Hostas, Hydrangea, Kerria, Lantana, Liatris, Lillies, Lythrum, Lycoris, Marigolds, Marjoram, Miscanthus, Nicotiana, Oxalis, Petunias, Phlox, Portulaca, Roses, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Scabiosa, Snapdragon, Tuberosa, Verbena, & Zinnia.

**Pulaski County Master Gardener Meetings' Highlights By Debra Redding
Pulaski County Master Gardeners Board Meeting
10 a.m. Tuesday, June 17, 2008 St. James United Methodist Church**

Members Present: Don Davis, Beth Phelps, Debra Redding, Mary Roark, Marilyn Tilley, Mary Freeman, Judy Woodard and Martha Basinger

Minutes were approved.
Treasurer's Report was approved.

Old Business:

Advanced MG Training-- having a program in Pulaski County was discussed. Don Davis suggested we read the guidelines on-line. The training must be a minimum of 6 hours and would require a number of people to help plan and run the meeting...teaching and set-up. More discussion on this next board meeting.

New Business:

1. County 76-Garden Voices--We must select one person for each of the 4 areas from Pulaski County. Selection will be made by screening applicants. Persons selected will be required to teach the subject to others-maybe several times. They will be required to organize, set-up and be responsible for the entire event. *A motion was made by Marilyn Tilley that we pay the \$30.00 registration fee for the four people selected from Pulaski County. Motion was approved.* Marilyn Tilley made the motion to first present this opportunity to the 3P's, Photography, Master Minutes and Continuing Education committees. Motion was approved. An e-mail will be sent to these committees tomorrow. Martha Basinger will draft the letter with Beth Phelps' assistance.

2. National Trails Symposium--The National Trails Symposium organizers asked if the MG's would set up *an indoor garden for their conference. This was discussed and was denied since it does not fit our goals.* Our volunteer efforts need to be focused on our on-going projects and commitments. We would like to invite their participants to tour our MG projects, if they are interested. We could arrange for a MG to be at the projects to give a tour and answer any questions. A list of the MG Projects will be forwarded to them.

3. The Board will have a meeting/board work day on Tuesday, July 29th at 9am in Beth Phelps' office to review applications for the training and evaluate projects.

Announcements:

- 1. Sabrina Childs will be our speaker today.
- 2. Ice Cream Social at Chris Olsen's Home/Garden on July 15

- 3. Social Committee--Thanks for the hard work at our Spring Picnic
- 4. Old Mill Committee--Congratulations on Project of the Year

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 17, 2008 St. James United Methodist Church

President Don Davis called the meeting to order and congratulated the Old Mill Project Committee for being selected the Arkansas Master Gardener Project of the Year. Beth Phelps reported that the plaque will be on display at the Burns Park Visitors Center.

President Don Davis gave a special thanks to the Social Committee for all their hard work at our Spring Picnic and a special thanks to the Wildwood Park project committee for having everything looking great-good job!

Marcella Grimmitt reported for the Travel Committee -

- The trip to Blue Eye, Missouri will be a carpool trip instead of a bus trip.
- There will be a wine and cheese party at the Good Earth Nursery on Sept 19th at 5:30pm.
- Grier's Daylily Farm trip will be this Friday, June 20th.

David Werling reported that the MG photo gallery website has new photos added from our Spring Picnic, Wildwood and Maumelle projects--please visit our photo site.

Steve Lopata announced that he has plenty of purple coneflowers to share, if you are interested just stop by *the house, calling first is not necessary.*

Sandy Harrison reminded us of the Ice Cream Social on July 15th at Chris Olsen's home/garden from 11:30-12:30. Carpooling is encouraged. It is ok to park at the Ice Skating arena on Bowman and carpool from there.

Beth Phelps announced that Nan Gaylor has plants to share outside the Worship Center front door following the meeting.

Beth Phelps asked if anyone was going to the Regional Meeting Master Gardener Meeting in Oklahoma City.

Martha Basinger introduced our guest speaker, Sabrina Childs from Ball Horticultural Company and her topic was Landscape Industry Trends.



DIG IN HERE...

For answers to your gardening and horticultural problems, try these helpful resources:

➤ **Master Gardener Website:**
<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/mastergardener/mastergardenersonly>

Username: mastergardener
Password: compost

➤ **PC Cooperative Extensions Website:**
<http://www.uaex.edu/pulaski/mastergardeners/default.asp>

➤ **U of A Cooperative Extension Website:**
<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org>

➤ **Pulaski County Cooperative Extension Service**
2901 W. Roosevelt Road
Little Rock, AR 72204
501-340-6650



Pulaski County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers working with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Service and Pulaski County Government to provide demonstration gardens and horticultural – related information to the residents of the county. In 2007, these volunteers gave **22,160** hours of service.
Elisabeth J. Phelps, County Extension Agent,
Staff Chair



Everyone is encouraged to submit interesting information, committee reports, newsworthy photos, etc. to the newsletter.

Bring your information to the Master Gardener meeting, or send it to:

Jennice Ratley
22 Cobble Hill Road
Little Rock, Ark. 72211
gardenerkat@comcast.net
412-8299

The deadline is the **second Friday** of each month. For late breaking news after the deadline, send

information to:
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Master Minutes Staff



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Susie Gilliam	Jennice Ratley
Lorraine Hensley	Carol Randle
Dave Hermanson	Debra Redding
Helen Hronas	Libby Thalheimer

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