

## Pulaski County Master Minutes

November, 2008

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

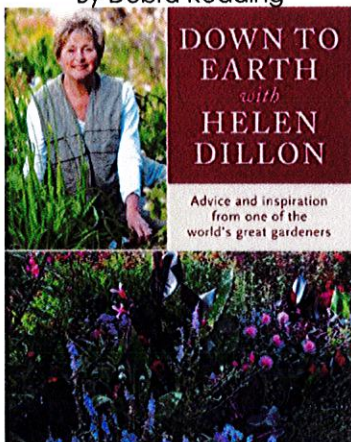
Volume 18, Issue 11

Join us for the New Member Reception immediately following November 18th meeting Thank you to everyone who signed up to bring food. You can drop it off in our old meeting room before the meeting.



### Debra's Book Club

By Debra Redding



Down To Earth With Helen Dillon

Author: Helen Dillon

Helen Dillon has been gardening for over 30 years in her Dublin, Ireland garden. In this book, she shares her vast experience, her hits and misses and provides In-dispensable advice on what she has learned over the years.

The book is divided into three sections: Beginner's Stuff, Middle Ground and Fancy Stuff. All the photos are from her own garden and her sense of humor is refreshing.

She's not afraid to share with us the many plants that have died in her garden and she lovingly calls them "victims"... A down to earth, humorous look at gardening!

Christmas Party.

Date: Thurs., Dec. 11, 2008

Time: 6:30 - 8:30

Place: Park Hill Christian Church

4400 JFK Blvd., NLR

Price: \$12.50 per person

Make checks to: Pulaski County

Master Gardeners (PCMG)

Mail Checks to:

Phoebe Crocker

1625 Mountain Dr.

Little Rock, AR 72227

### 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.

## NOVEMBER PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

By Carol Randle

Located at 2901 W. Roosevelt Road in Little Rock is the County Extension Office. Master Gardeners felt that the public looked to the Extension Service for gardening information; however, the landscaping was uninspiring. Beth characterized it as "disgraceful"! So, in 1996 the decision was made to give it project status. The goals were: to have something interesting in the beds twelve months of the year; and to make the Extension Office look like a place where you could confidently go for gardening and landscape information. Those goals have clearly been reached. In 2003 the project was awarded the KEEP ARKANSAS BEAUTIFUL CRYSTAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE.

Co-chairmen of this project are Chris Oxner and Glenda Arledge. They are assisted by: Bernice Johnson; Betty French; Bonnie Bradford; Dianne Formby; Dolores Le Compte; Jim Bowling; Joan Humphries; Julia Loyall; Linda Chakales; Mary Wildgen; Neita Nattin; Phoebe Crocker; Susan Marsh; and Vande Southerland.

The committee members meet on the second Wednesday and the fourth Thursday of the month. They maintain a large herb garden. They readjust plantings as beds, plants, and shrubs mature. They use Violas, Pansies, and many other annuals to put more color in the landscape. The goal of the committee is to adjust beds that are mature (for example . . . the circle bed has

been converted to a shade garden as mature Crape Myrtles next to the building are providing more shade). More shade results in extended shade borders.

Now the look at the County Extension Office is beautiful. We can be very proud of our fellow Master Gardeners when we look at this gorgeous view. Those who drive by or come in now will know that help is waiting for them at the County Extension Office.



As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. ~John Fitzgerald Kennedy

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For each new morning with its light,  
 For rest and shelter of the night,  
 For health and food, for love and friends,  
 For everything Thy goodness sends.  
 ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

\*\*\*\*

What we're really talking about is a wonderful day set aside on the fourth Thursday of November when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving? ~Erma Bombeck, "No One Diets on Thanksgiving," 26 November 1981



## Talkin Yard Naturally

By Betty Deere

### WASTE NOT (OR HOT TO ROT)

Paper and food scraps make up more than half of the municipal solid waste in the USA. SO if we compost this same stuff at home, we can make a real difference in our horrific problem of overflowing trash/waste landfills. Now that winter is coming on, some people might think

you can't keep a compost pile steaming in frigid weather, but the truth is yes, you can. And the sight of steam rising from a compost pile on a cold winter day is sure to warm the heart of any master gardener.

Frigid weather can indeed slow down the decomposing process, but you can maintain a core of heat (which means that all-important microbes are working away inside the pile). What's so all-important about microbes? "Microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, and actinomycetes account for most of the decomposition activity in a compost pile", says Dave Wilson, research agronomist at the Rodale Institute. The word for that breaking-down action is exothermic which produces heat (just in case you ever need to impress somebody with your master gardener knowledge).



When cold weather arrives, the microbe's metabolism slows down (which is why we keep food in the refrigerator or freezer). In winter, then, your goal is to create an ideal habitat for microbes. How? First is by feeding; that is, serving them a well balanced diet: a mix of carbon- and nitrogen-rich food (better known as browns and greens vegetable and fruit peelings, coffee grounds, houseplant trimmings, egg shells, etc.) is all handy sources of nitrogen-rich stuff.

Also, manure from chickens or rabbits are loaded with heat-generating nitrogen. Most of us in the Little Rock area don't have access to that stuff, but in lieu of manure you can add alfalfa pellets (rabbit food) or blood meal to give your pile a booster shot of nitrogen. Then for carbon-rich stuff you can use straw (left over from Halloween maybe), your brown fall leaves, shredded newspaper, sawdust and the like. Also you can toss in small amounts of ashes from the fireplace, which also enhances the calcium, phosphorus, and potassium content of your finished "garden gold" (compost). So much for the diet. The second thing to pay attention to is the size of the food you are feeding your microbes. They have sluggish digestion in cold weather and like small portions. So it is best to chop or shred both browns and greens about 2 inches or smaller before putting them on the pile. This way the pile heats uniformly and also the particles form a kind of mat that shields the piles warm core from the cold. Number three: layering. In summer you can just toss stuff on your pile but for insulation purposes it is different in winter. Take time to add layers of brown, then green, and so forth, which insulates your pile and traps heat and gases inside.

Number four is watering. Microbes need moisture to survive and winter winds and low humidity can suck the pile bone dry. Water in warm spells, but leave it damp, not soaked.

Last but not least is number five: fresh air. No, not adding fresh air, but keeping fresh air out! Unlike in summer when frequent turning is the best way to keep microbes churning, in winter you want to leave it alone. Why? So you don't mess up your layers of insulation. Wait until spring to turn your pile, even though it makes you sad (since we all just love to turn the compost pile) (ha-ha!).

#### COOL BINS: HOMEMADE INSULATED COMPOSTER

1. Cut the bottom out of a plastic trashcan.
2. Drill holes around the sides of the can, 6 to 12 inches from the top, for ventilation.
3. Dig a 1-foot hole and sink the can into it.
4. Insulate the aboveground part of the can with straw bales, stuffing dried leaves into the gaps.
5. Put a few scoops of soil or compost in the bottom; then layer brown/green/brown/green, as it becomes available. Keep the lid closed tight.

THE DIRT on coffee grounds: Starbucks gives them away in big bags for free.



### State Extension Office Project

*Photos Courtesy of Laetitia East*

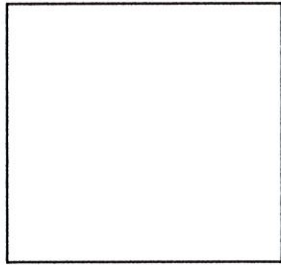


Hilda Boger, Laetitia East, Earline Zahn, Hilda Boger  
and Jane Gulley

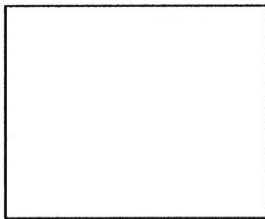


Jane Gulley applying fertilizer





The Arkansas Unit of the Herb Society of America  
 presents  
 Celebrating Herbs  
 Sat., Nov. 8th  
 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
 Arkansas Governor's Mansion  
 Tickets \$30.00 which includes a \$5.00 coupon off  
 the cost of a copy of the cookbook, a tour of the  
 Mansion Herbarium and Gardens and herbal  
 tastings by Chief Jason Knapp, Exec Chief  
 Arkansas Governor's Mansion and Scott  
 McGehee of Boulevard Bread. For tickets or  
 more information call 868-6004.



The Master Gardeners of Southern Nevada will be  
 welcoming you to Las Vegas and the fabulous 2009  
 International Master Gardener Conference in just five  
 short months and we can't wait! **Early bird registration  
 is open through November 15th.**  
 Please visit our conference website at  
[www.unce.unr.edu/imgc](http://www.unce.unr.edu/imgc) for complete conference  
 details and to register or make your hotel reservations.

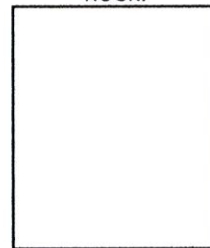
The Travel Committee has planned a trip to Garvan  
 Gardens to see the Christmas Light display.

When: Monday, December 8, 2008

We will board the bus at 4:00 p.m. in the commuter  
 parking lot at Shackleford and I-630.

Upon arriving at Garvan Gardens you will be on your  
 own to enjoy the gardens and light displays. After  
 touring the gardens, we will have dinner at The  
 Hamilton House. After dinner, we will return to Little

Rock.



Dinner will be a set menu with salad, dessert, tea or  
 coffee. If you would like a glass of wine or alcoholic  
 beverage, it will be extra. You will make your selection  
 that evening.

Cost - \$53.00 for those who are not members of  
 Garvan Gardens \$47.50 for Garvan members  
 Non-refundable after November 18th.

Golf cart tours of the garden are available at the  
 garden for \$4.50 a seat. Stop by the gift shop to  
 purchase your seat.

We must have 30 registered by November 18th for the  
 trip to happen. If the trip makes, additional  
 reservations will be accepted after November 18th.

Make your checks payable to the Pulaski County  
 Master Gardeners and mail them to 2901 W. Roosevelt  
 Road, Little Rock, AR 72204.

If you have questions call Wanda Bray 753-4867.

## Bibliography for Basic Landscaping Articles

By Lorraine Hensley

When I first contemplated researching and then writing articles on basic landscape design for the Montgomery County Master Gardener's newsletter, comPOSTing I had second and third thoughts about making this kind of long term commitment. If so, what did I know about landscape design—basic or otherwise? The word that came to mind was: Zilch. But I learned a lot and had some fun and frustrations in doing so. While cleaning out files (a New Year chore) I found an old legal pad I had used to write these articles and decided to share the fun and information once again. So—re-edited several times and placed now in my pc files, here they are. This annotated bibliography is for those who want to further explore those areas we have touched upon or other aspects of landscape design.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Ajay, Betty: Guide to Home Landscaping, McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Perhaps the best all-round book on basic landscaping I found. She covers everything from planning to pools, terraces, driveways and planting. Ajay generally gives a little history concerning "why" things are done to the very explicit "how to" do them. Her illustrations are quite good and flow well with her narrative.

2. Hill, Amelia Levitt: Gardens and Grounds That Take Care of Themselves, Prentice-Hall, 1970.

This may be one of the books you pick up to gain a fairly comprehensive view of growing "things" from lawns to more esoteric plants. The emphasis is on low maintenance and should be of general interest. As plants were way outside the scope of my purpose I simply skimmed the book. However, I was unable to determine, on a consistent basis, which plants simply survive or thrive during our hot and dry summers.

3. How to Garden Designs: Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia.

This book discusses garden designs and then some. The first few pages are pretty basic but well written with very good illustrations. It comes into its own with designs for individual gardens. The book's structure consists of an illustrated layout for a specific design purpose. Small icons are added to let the reader know these plants need to do well. Explicit planting directions are also included. Then we have a full page of alternative low-maintenance plants for that same specific design purpose. All in living color!! This continues for well over 100 pages of interesting material, which is well presented. The last few pages are devoted to the "how to" of a simple trellis and birdbath.

4. Ideas for Landscaping: Sunset Books & Sunset Magazine, Lane Books, Menlo Park, California.

Discusses effective landscape planning with good information on basic design principles that range from proportion to

effective grouping. Structural elements such as walks, walls, outdoor lighting fixtures and decks are also pretty well covered. The largest section appears to be that of selecting appropriate plants to complete your landscape design needs. Very helpful for browsers.

5. Landscaping for Privacy: Hedges, Fences, Vines, Arbors, Sunset Publishing, Menlo Park, California.

Does exactly what the title suggests and does it well. Practical comments and mouth-watering illustrations.

6. Practical Guide to Home Landscaping: Readers Digest, 1977.

Informative no matter what you are looking for as long as it pertains, in some fashion, to landscape design. Subjects range from gardening in a limited space to directions for working with concrete, flagstone, or wood for garden projects. There are wonderful sections on shrubs and grasses for your area with clever icons indicating specific plant properties.

7. The Backyard Landscaper: Ireland-Gannet Associates, Inc., 40 Professional designs for Do it Yourselfers, Home planners, Inc. 1992

Absolutely beautiful designs for any landscape purpose. This book is a must have. However, use a little caution when reviewing this material. The more I looked at the designs the more I tried to force-fit the designs over my yard. Sometimes that works and sometimes not.

8. Landscaping: Step-by-Step: Planting, Planting and Building, Better Homes & Gardens, Meredith Corporation, Des Moines, Iowa, 1991. Another must have for your reference shelf. Takes one by the hand through creating an outdoor environment to illustrated instructions on installing irrigation systems.

That's about it for the bibliography. Although I looked through other books these are the books that were most helpful on one point or another. They can be found at your local library or through an inter-library loan. Or, most bookstores will order for you if you wish to purchase specific book. Good luck and have fun. I did!!

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"A weed is a flower with a bad press agent."







## Checklist By Carol Randle

### PERENNIALS AND BULBS

Are you cleaning and dividing your perennials? Don't throw the extra plants away, pass them along. After a killing frost, mulch your beds three inches deep. Plant any bulbs now through December. Planting in masses looks better than planting in rows.

### VEGETABLES AND HERBS

Fall and winter are quieter times in our vegetable gardens but there are still things to do. After you have planted the winter vegetables, cleaned up, and composted, try to prepare some of the beds for spring planting. Then in February, instead of waiting for the soil to dry out, you can plant sugar and snow peas. Plant a cover crop in the other beds.

### TREES AND SHRUBS

If you have a question about when to plant or when to prune. A good general rule is "fall is for planting and spring is for pruning". Do you have any trees and shrubs you want to move to new locations? This is the best time to relocate them. The soil is warmer now than it will be in the spring and the roots will have time to establish new roots and will give them a good start next year. Want new plants? Try some of our native trees and shrubs (dogwood, fringe tree . . . Chionanthus virginicus sourwood and hawthorn) or plant for edible fruit such as persimmons, figs, serviceberry, and pomegranates.

### ANNUALS

If you didn't get all of your winter annuals planted, now is the time. They must have their root system established before it

gets too cold. Be sure to fertilize when you plant and side dress during the winter on warm days. In addition to pansies, consider dianthus, dusty miller, snapdragons, and violas. For vertical interest, try mustard, kale, collards, or chard. If you didn't get any plants from the Master Gardeners' Greenhouse, check out the local nurseries for other winter annuals.

### INDOORS

After Thanksgiving, stores will be filling up with Poinsettias, Christmas cactus, and Amaryllis bulbs. Poinsettias will last for several months if given the right conditions . . . warmth, bright light, and even moisture. Amaryllis bulbs should be potted at least six weeks in advance for holiday use. Larger bulbs usually have bigger flowers and multiple bloom spikes. If you buy bulbs, select a pot slightly bigger than the bulb. Amaryllis prefers to be crowded.

### GENERAL YARD

Rake leaves and compost. Keep your water gardens and fishponds free of debris. Putting a net over the water can help catch any leaves when they fall. This is a good time to send in a soil test because labs are less busy now. Soil test kits are available at the Pulaski County Cooperative Extension Office. Before putting your tools away for the season, clean and lightly coat with oil to prevent rusting.

### MONTHLY COLOR

Asters, Ornamental Cabbage, Camellias, Chrysanthemums, Clerodendron, Dahlias, English Daisies, Dianthus, Euonymus, Eupatorium, Gaura, Ginkgo, Ornamental Grasses, Gums, Oakleaf Hydrangea, Kale, Larkspur, Maples, Poppies, Roses, Rosehips, Snapdragons, Solidago, Sourwood, Stock, Torenia, Tricyrtis, Verbena, Viburnum, Viola, Virginia Creeper, Wallflowers, and Witch Hazel.



## DIG IN HERE...

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

- Master Gardener Website:  
<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/mastergardener/mastergardeneronly>  
 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  
 gardenrat@comcast.net  
 412-8299

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

Beth Phelps  
 Pulaski County CES  
 2901 W. Roosevelt Road  
 Little Rock, Ark. 72204  
[bphelps@uaex.edu](mailto:bphelps@uaex.edu)  
 340-6650

### Master Minutes Staff



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 Debra Redding  
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### Photographers



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