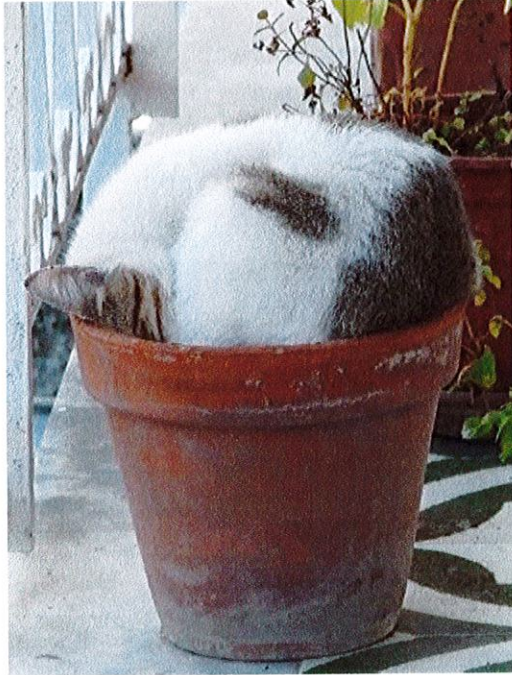


Pulaski County Master Minutes

August 2010

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

Volume 19 Issue 8



Terra cotta pots aren't just for gardening anymore! Photo by Debra Redding

We will make another trip to Greer's Daylily Farm September 16th. She will be having an overstock sale with all at HALF PRICE. This will be a good chance to get more of those beauties you wanted but thought you couldn't afford. To carpool we will meet at 9:30 a.m. J.C. Penny's back parking lot at 9:30 a.m.

October 1st, we will once again have an evening at The Good Earth Nursery for wine and cheese... We will receive a 20% discount and they will have a short talk for us that will give us some education credit. More details later.

Don't forget the trip September 10th to Arkadelphia. It is going to be really spectacular! More details later.

Elections are just around the corner at the Pulaski County Master Gardner Meeting Tuesday, September 20, 2010. The new officers and board will assume their duties at the October 19, 2010 Master Gardener meeting.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The nominating committee proposes the follow slate of officers and board members for the Pulaski County Master Gardeners in 2010 - 2011

President - Jet Cuffman

1st VP (project committees) - Debra Redding

2nd VP (programs and standing committees) -

Marcella Grimmett

Secretary - Arline Jackson

Treasurer - Bren Coop

Assistant Treasurer - Judy Woodard

Member-at- Large - Dewayne Hancock

(Member at large is a 2 year term)

Respectfully Submitted,

Don Davis, Lu Elliott, Marilyn Tilley



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.

Garden Uses for Epsom Salt

By Phyllis Barrier

At one of my recent garden club meetings, Epsom salt came up in our discussion. Did you know that Epsom salt is good for gardens as well as sore muscles? Well, I didn't.

Epsom salt is made up of a naturally occurring mineral that is found in water. More properly known as magnesium sulfate, Epsom salt derives its popular name from the town of Epsom, England, where the compound was first distilled from water.

A few days after our garden club meeting, one of our club members emailed information from the Epsom Salt Council (<http://www.epsomsaltcouncil.org>).

The council website says "studies show that magnesium and sulfur, two components of Epsom salt may:

- Help seeds germinate
- Make plants grow bushier
- Produce more flowers
- Increase chlorophyll production
- Improve phosphorus and nitrogen uptake



The council's website also "states that crop researchers have determined that magnesium is:

- A critical mineral for seed germination.
- Vital to the production of chlorophyll, which plants use to transform sunlight into food.
- An aid in the absorption of phosphorus and nitrogen, two of the most important fertilizer components.

Sulfur, the other major component of Epsom Salt, is also an important plant nutrient. Sulfur may:

- Contribute to chlorophyll production.
- Make the primary nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) found in most fertilizers more effective.

"Although magnesium and sulfur occur naturally in soil, they can be depleted by various conditions, including heavy agricultural use over time. But unlike most commercial fertilizers, which build up in the soil over time, Epsom Salt is not persistent so you can't overuse it. Tests by the National Gardening Association confirm that roses fertilized with Epsom Salt grow bushier and produce more flowers, while the compound makes pepper plants grow larger than those treated with commercial fertilizer alone."

The Epsom Salt website also gives these specifics for use in the garden:

- **Peppers:** Apply 1 tablespoon of Epsom salt with a gallon of water as a foliar spray at bloom time and again 10 days later.
- **Houseplants:** 2 tablespoons per gallon of water; feed plants monthly.
- **Tomatoes:** 1 tablespoon per foot of plant height per plant; apply every two weeks.
- **Roses:** 1 tablespoon per foot of plant height per plant; apply every two weeks. Also scratch 1/2 cup into soil at base to encourage flowering canes and healthy new basal cane growth. Soak unplanted bushes in 1/2 cup of Epsom salt per gallon of water to help roots recover. Add a tablespoon of Epsom salt to each hole at planting time. Spray with Epsom salt solution weekly (1 tablespoon per gallon of water) to help discourage pests.



- **Shrubs (evergreens, azaleas, rhododendron):** 1 tablespoon per 9 square feet. Apply over root zone every 2-4 weeks.
- **Lawns:** Apply 3 pounds for every 1,250 square feet with a spreader, or dilute in water and apply with a sprayer.
- **Trees:** Apply 2 tablespoons per 9 square feet. Apply over the root zone 3 times annually.
- **Garden Startup:** Sprinkle 1 cup per 100 square feet. Mix into soil before planting.
- **Sage:** Do not apply! This herb is one of the few plants that don't like Epsom salt.

I also watched a short video on www.facebook.com showing a gardener comparing two tomato plants, one grown with Epsom Salt and one without. She concluded that the plant grown with Epsom salt was larger, greener, and healthier looking.

I searched the web for any problems concerning Epsom salt use in the garden. I only found one warning at www.gardenguides.com: "If your soil pH is on the acidic side, use Epsom salt carefully. The sulfur is acidic, and it can speed up the breakdown of nutrients in the soil, allowing them to leach away before they can be used by the rose. Use lots of compost and a good soil-enrichment program, and leaching should not be a problem. Most plants, including lawns, shrubs and trees, benefit from Epsom salt. However, watch where runoff from Epsom salt watering goes. Some plants, such as sage, will not tolerate Epsom salt."

If you're interested in using Epsom in your garden, you can buy it in bulk. Check the web and compare prices.



Upcoming Events

By Libby Thalheimer



August, 2010

Monday, 9th
6:30 P.M.

West Little Rock, Library Napa Valley Rd. Mark Brown with the Pulaski County Extension Service with his water-wise program.

Thursday, 19th
6:30 P.M.

Thompson Public Library (Rahling Road). Mark Brown with the Pulaski County Extension Service with his water-wise program.

Saturday, 21st
9:00 A.M.

2010 Mount Holly Garden Series, suggested donation of \$5.00. Plumerias by Dewayne Hancock. Bring a lawn chair, wear your gardening hat and bring items from your garden to share. In the Victorian tradition we share plants, bulbs, seeds, seedlings, cuttings, fruits, vegetables, etc. For more information contact Kay Tatum kay.tatum@yahoo.com

Tuesday, 24th
Wednesday, 25th

Master Gardener Leadership Training at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute in Morrilton, Ark.

Saturday, 28th
8:00 AM. till SOLD out

Iris Rhizome & Plant Sale Central Arkansas Iris Society Tall bearded & Louisiana Iris-Daylilies-Perennials @ Grace Lutheran Family Life Center North of Mt. St. Mary's, Hillcrest St. & Kavanaugh
Call for more Information [455-1478](tel:455-1478)

From Seedlings to Servings: 11 Yr Old Grows Tons of Veggies for the Homeless

By Debra Redding



It all began in the 3rd grade when Katie Stagliano's 40 pound cabbage fed 275 homeless people. Now, Katie's 6 gardens have produced over 4,000 pounds of veggies to feed the needy. Neighbors and perfect strangers have donated land to allow Katie to expand from one to six gardens. She has a whole host of garden helpers including friends, family and local Master Gardeners. Katie is an amazing girl who is changing her corner of the world for the good. She encourages every community to start a veggie garden to help the needy.

Katie transformed her entire front yard with over 600 seedlings this year.

She lives and gardens in Summerville, South Carolina.

If your garden is producing more than you can use Helping Hands could use your extra produce.

Helping Hands is a food pantry that serves seniors and the needy in Little Rock.

If you would like to donate your extra home grown veggies and fruits, please contact Sister Doris Moore 501-372-4388

Change your Community by Sharing your
Garden

EARTH FRIENDLY:---VINEGAR

By Lorraine Hensley



The 5% citric acid each lemon contains gives that fruit the power to do a number of outdoor chores that are truly helpful to gardeners. Vinegar works in much the same way only the type of acid differs here: that hard working component in vinegar is acetic acid. In common use for thousands of years it remains in general use in the 21st century.

Uses for vinegar in the household are numerous and most of us are familiar with several for laundry, cooking, or general cleaning. However, as gardeners, our interest is learning how this liquid can make our attempts to maintain a landscape of beautiful and healthy plants a reality. There are times that many of us wish our garden chores were less plentiful and we were just a bit more successful with our gardening efforts. We want less pain—more gain—and to reach this goal in an earth friendly manner. And vinegar is another extremely useful component in our action plan

Sometimes we become so accustomed to using vinegar in our homes we forget to stop and creatively look at what it might do for us outdoors in our landscape. I have no idea how long it took Hannibal to think of using hot vinegar to help crumble heavy rocks on his trip through the Alps. What really matters is that it was certainly successful. It has also been used to good purpose to fight off germs by both grave robbers and doctors treating wounded soldiers on battlefields. So—let's look at what this liquid can do in our gardens for both us and our plants.

Vinegar can help our garden seeds germinate. A variety of molds do quite well in the same kind of growing conditions needed for optimum germination for garden seeds. And they can make your seedlings their target. Protect those seedlings with a mix of 1 teaspoon vinegar with 3 tablespoons of water poured into a small spray bottle. Spray seedlings to clean them and check them out on a regular basis. If you see mold spores gathering clean and them move

them to a new location. As a gardener this simply means giving a little ground to win the war.

If dandelions have decided they need more territory in your garden a selective application of pure vinegar should work. Those weeds are tough but not tough enough to withstand about 3 tablespoons of straight vinegar on its base. Be extremely cautious when using this method for the vinegar will also kill anything else in your yard it touches.



Animals don't like vinegar at all. Soak old rags in vinegar and hang around your garden to deter deer or other critters. If mosquitoes or other insects behave as if you are the tastiest morsel since the advent of chocolate-- vinegar can literally save your skin. Either dampen a paper towel with vinegar and rub your exposed skin with it or try it in a small spray bottle. The odor fades as it dries but it acts as a bug repellent and, at the same time, as a skin tonic. That kind of "two-fer" is hard to beat.

That's all the information I have on the use on vinegar in the great outdoors so our next earth friendly outdoor helper is that perennial household helper—baking soda. We can explore its use in our garden in the next issue of Master Minutes.



On a warm summer day, Jane Gulley opened her home and garden to members of the Wiff Stephens project committee (and a few others) ... what a delightful visit

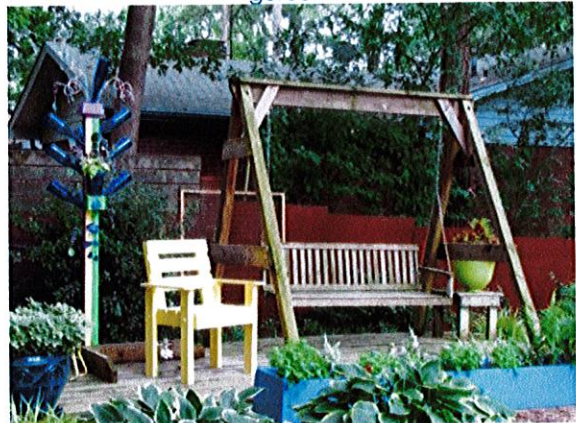
Photos by Bren Coop



Marcia, Jane Gulley, Martha Coop, Sandy Harrison



Inviting pathways encourage conversation in the garden



Bottle tree decorates another restful area ... notice the colorful planter box – Jane has built and uses several of these around the garden



Checklist by Carol Randle

I'm sure you are all suffering in the heat and humidity just as we are at Amy Sanders Library. We find it hard to choose between getting up earlier than we would like, hoping to be done before it gets so hot we can't stand it . . . or sleeping later and perspiring so much we look like waterfalls! We all share in this problem at this time of year. Herbs need to be harvested before the heat of the day has set in so if you are harvesting herbs you need to do it early. Herbs are best harvested after any dew has dried but before the heat of the day can be felt.



VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

Many of summer vegetables are at peak harvest. Knowing what to look for can ensure that you get the most from your garden... Sweet corn is ripe when the silks begin to turn brown and dry. Look at one or two of the ears by pulling back the shuck and pressing into a kernel or two. If it gives off a milky liquid, and the ear is fully formed, it is time to harvest. The quicker you can go from garden to table, the sweeter the corn will be.

Keep picking your cucumbers as they mature because letting old fruit stay on the vines will slow down future production.

Fresh okra is best if picked when they are small, no longer than two to three inches. The bigger they get, the tougher the pods are.

If you have already harvested and some of your vegetables have played out, this is the season to replant for a fall harvest. Water and mulch will make your job easier, but be sure to check for insects and diseases.



Cantaloupes and watermelon tend to be at their sweetest if it is a bit on the dry side during harvest. Too much rain could dilute the sugars.

When cantaloupes are ripe, the stems should easily separate from the vine. The fruits should develop a light tan webbing pattern and the blossom end should be slightly soft and smell like cantaloupe. Ripe watermelons will have a dry, curly, brown tendril at stem end, a dull sheen on the fruit and a white to yellow underbelly.

ANNUALS

There are so many outstanding summer annuals we often have trouble picking the ones we want to plant. When we see new annuals in the stores, we want to try some of them in our own flower beds. Look at your flower beds and make notes on which ones are taking the heat.

The many wave and supertunias are wonderful and should be in full bloom . . . if you have kept up the fertilizing. If you haven't given them enough fertilizer, you may not see as many blooms. If they have stopped blooming, give them a haircut, fertilize and water and they should rebound with flowers through frost.

Angelonia, sweet potato vine and some of the new Cupheas are outstanding. "Flamenco Cha Cha" has great big red flowers and just doesn't stop. Remember that annuals are only around for one season so keep up with watering and fertilizing and if they look bad, pinch them back or start over.

Nurseries today keep annuals in stock almost year round, so replanting is a possibility.



TROPICALS

Hand in hand with summer annuals are the summer tropicals. Hibiscus, Bananas, Mandevilla, and Plumerias all make our yards look terrific whether they are in containers on the patio or porch or set out in the garden. A great trait they share is their like for the heat and humidity. They do, however, like to be watered and fertilized. If you are growing them in containers, you are constantly watering to keep them alive. Water leaches out the nutrition so once every week or two we need to fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer. Keep a careful watch out for pests. Make sure there is ample water in the containers when using any pesticide or fertilizer when it is hot and dry. If the plants are stressed, they may get burned with any extra additions.



SHRUBS

We have now entered into the period of watering as maintenance for our shrubs. The exception is Gardenias and Bigleaf and Oakleaf Hydrangeas (*Hydrangea Macrophylla* and *Hydrangea Quercifolia*, respectfully). These three summer bloomers set flower buds in late August and September. If they have overgrown their location or need some general shaping early July is the LAST time to do it . . . as soon after flowering is best. Avoid any pruning on spring blooming shrubs as they too will soon be setting flower buds. Summer blooming shrubs should be in their prime. Deadhead spent flowers to ensure more blooms. Crape Myrtles, Althea, Butterfly Bush and Summer Spirea are all blooming along with Clethra, Hydrangeas and still some Gardenias.



LAWNS

At this time of year mowing the lawn is a chore that we don't enjoy. Keeping the lawn healthy with regular watering is important. You can often tell who is and isn't watering by the look of the lawn. Daily watering is never good, but do make sure that an inch to an inch and a half is put down weekly. In late August to early September one last application of fertilizer can be applied to Bermuda, St. Augustine, and Zoysia lawns. Don't fertilize tall fescue or Centipede at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

There is still time to enjoy some great Arkansas fruit. It can be purchased at Farmer's Markets or you can pick it yourself. If you are going to a u-pick-it farm, always call before driving out to make sure they are open. With this terrible heat you will want to get to the farm early so the fields will not be picked out before you arrive. Fresh figs are coming into ripeness now as are peaches. Knowing when a peach is ripe is important. Peaches will have a good solid color, a strong peach aroma and separate easily from the tree when ripe. If they are green and hard, don't pick them. Peach flavor will not improve with time once they are picked. Remember that birds and squirrels like fruit as much as you do, so if you are growing them in your own space you can try bird netting. You can also allow the trees to get taller to give them some of the fruit out of your reach and leave the bottom fruit for you.



Always remember to take precautions in this heat. Take some water with you and remember your sunscreen. Work early. We want to lose NO Master Gardeners due to the heat.

**"Give me the joys of summer,
Of Summer Queen so fair,
With wealth of lovely flowers
And fruits and sun-kissed air!**

**Talk not to me of winter
With ice and frost and snow,
Nor changing spring and autumn
When howling winds will blow.**

**No, I will take the joys
Of Summer every time,
So to this Queen of Seasons
I dedicate my rhyme."**

- Winifred Sackville Stoner, *Midsummer Joys*



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>

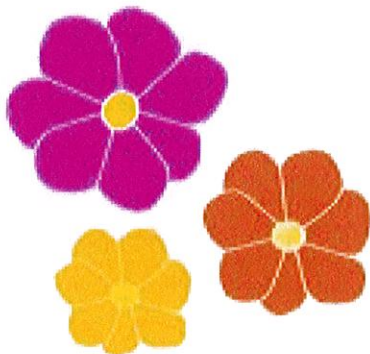
Pulaski County Cooperative Extension Service

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 2009, these volunteers gave **22,707** 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:

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bphelps@uaex.edu
 340-6650

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