

Pulaski County Master Minutes

September 2010

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

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Janet Carson will be our speaker for the September MG Meeting will be Janet Carson and her topic will be "Saying Goodbye to this Horrid Season".



What's New at the Library?

By Phyllis Barrier

In 1975, the Little Rock Public Library merged the libraries in Little Rock, Jacksonville, Sherwood, and Perryville into one library system. The new system adopted the name The Central Arkansas Library System (CALs), and serves a local population of 317,457 with its twelve libraries. The City of North Little Rock has its own library system. I lived in the Washington DC metropolitan area for almost 30 years, but I think our local libraries are much better than the libraries in that larger metro area! I usually browse their offerings online, because I can choose from all of their book selections at any of their libraries and then have the book sent to my local library for pickup. I receive an email when my book has arrived, and I have seven days to pick it up. Below are quick reviews of two gardening books you may find of interest:

The Complete Compost Gardening Guide by Barbara Pleasant and Deborah Martin, copyright 2008 (from the Perry County Branch).



In The Garden with Kim Cartwright

By Debra Redding

Year you became a Master Gardener: 2001

MG Projects and Activities you are involved in: Old Mill since 2001 and Hays Center for 1 year Mentor since 2003 and helps fold MG newsletters

I knew I was a Gardener when: I was young and helping my Grandfather in his Veggie Garden. My Grandmother had a flower garden and those are precious memories to me.

One thing Gardening has taught me: Patience

Every garden should have: a water feature.

My favorite plant is: Hosta and I have over 100 varieties

If I am not in my Garden: I am with my ducks.

My Gardening Specialty is: Hosta and Shade Gardening

I would like to learn more about: Wildlife Gardening

The last new plant I tried: Alocasia Culcullata

All my friends know: that I laugh easily.

One word to sum me up: Smiling



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Share Your Garden

By Bren Coop

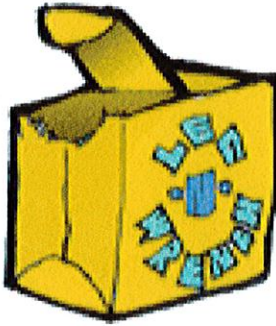
How's your garden growing this summer? We've heard lots of tales of damage from the awful heat, but how about your vegetables? Martha Basinger (President of Pulaski Co. Master Gardeners) has shared some photos of the development of her garden over this summer. She started with a pretty good size area at the side of her yard, and when her husband realized what a nice garden was developing, he built a fence to help protect the area and give the vegetable garden its own special prominence. You can see from the photos that Martha used some marigolds for color amongst the tomatoes and beans and peppers, and there are irises at one end of the garden. She also used mulch generously (she has ready access to pine needles!) and had pathways with ground cloth covered by the mulch. As the summer progressed, she reports that the beans didn't do quite as well as she had hoped, but the several varieties of peppers and tomatoes have done very well. Her plants dwarfed her in size, but you can see that the fence gives the vegetables an importance and tidiness which adds to the appeal of the yard.

Let us know how your garden has done this summer. If you have photos of before and after, we'd like to see them. Bring the photos to our first meeting on September 21st, or email them to brencoop@swbell.net. Tell us what worked for your garden and what didn't.

Poor Ice Cream Truck...



Photo Courtesy of Debra Redding



Earth Friendly---Baking Soda

By Lorraine Hensley

Last on my list of earth friendly substances for our gardens is another all round necessity: baking soda. We understand that both lemons and vinegar contain acids that are indispensable for the kinds of chores we ask them to do. The partner they work best with is the alkaline baking soda. When a pinch of baking soda is added to a substance containing either of these two ingredients it neutralizes their acids. In gardener language baking soda "sweetens" the mix. Our old friend pH is with us once more.

Laundry, cooking, and cleaning are some of the areas where baking soda shines in the house. There are numerous jobs for baking soda in each of these areas and baking soda rises and shines wherever the need is at the moment. Our interest, however, is what this substance can do to help us in our yards. It seems there is no job too large or small either in the home or out in the yard that can't be successfully completed with a pinch or two of baking soda.



Want sweeter tasting tomatoes from your garden—just sprinkle a little baking soda in the soil when you transplant your seedlings. The baking soda reduces the tomatoes' natural acidity. You will know how well this technique works with your first bite of a fresh tomato from your garden when picking time comes around. Want to get rid of crabgrass and not endanger any other living plant, including your turf, where

the crab grass is making itself at home?? First spray the area with a fine mist from your garden hose just until it's nicely damp. Then, fill a sock with ½ cup of baking soda and tap it with your hand just hard enough to release a fine spray of baking soda over that dastardly crabgrass. Wait 24 hours and then check it out—the crabgrass should be turning dark without affecting the areas you want to protect.

Baking soda not only kills crabgrass it also helps those plants that prefer a slightly alkaline soil to better achieve their potential. If your soil is slightly acidic give plants like geraniums, begonias, and hydrangeas a little boost. Add a tablespoon of baking soda to a gallon of water and water those plants with this mixture every other week. Doesn't take long to see the results and, as always, seeing is believing.

Don't think for one moment that all baking soda can do for the garden is kill unwanted weeds and give a power surge to other plants in order to help them grow. This stuff truly does a job on one of the gardeners' most desired and detested tool—compost. Most gardeners' love compost in their garden because it works magic on growing plants. Most gardeners' detest putting up with that horrible smell that permeates the area around the entire area where the compost heap is busy doing what it does to get ready for the garden. In order for compost to break down the plant materials it must be highly acidic—thus the smell. Every other week when the compost pile is turned just add a few spoonfuls of baking soda for smell relief.

This is the last article I've felt needed to be shared about earth friendly methods successfully used in our gardens. If you are interested in time saving methods of using these items in your home I strongly recommend the purchase of the book, Salt, Lemons, Vinegar, and Baking Soda by Shea Zukowski, found at most local book stores.

"I grow old, I grow old," the garden says. It is nearly October. The bean leaves grow paler, now lime, no yellow, no leprous, dissolving before my eyes. The pods curl and do not grow, turn limp and blacken. The potato vines wither and the tubers huddle underground in their rough weather-proof jackets, waiting to be dug. The last tomatoes ripen and split on the vine; it takes days for them to turn fully now, and a few of the green ones are beginning to fall off."

- Robert Finch



Checklist by Carol Randle

When it comes to weather, we have been on a "roller coaster"! We had a very cold winter, a spring that was cooler than usual, and a summer that seemed to come right on the heels of winter with no warning. Our plants have done better than we could expect considering these conditions, especially for those of us who have kept up the watering.

ANNUALS

Summer annuals that have seen better days can be replaced now but be sure you replace them with heat loving plants. Lantana and Zinnias can be planted now. You may want to plant Ornamental Peppers that have great fall colors now. If you are planning to use Chrysanthemums as annuals, you can plant them now. When planting them for seasonal color, look for plants that are showing color but are not open completely. Keep them watered and they may last for a month or more. Wait to plant Pansies until late in the month or the first of October because they become leggy in the heat. More forgiving are the Violas. You can also begin to plant Cabbage, Flowering Kale, and purple Mustard. You might also find to plant: Dusty Miller; Dianthus; and Snapdragons. They are great for fall and winter color. Continue with regular applications of fertilizer and water for your summer plants that are still blooming well. Deadhead if needed and pinch back plants that have gotten leggy. They still have some bloom time left as long as they are healthy and happy.

PERENNIALS

A great way to add some zest into the fall landscape is to plant fall blooming perennials. Plants that are blooming now or soon will be include: Goldenrod; Japanese Anemone; Toad Lilies; Joe Pye Weed; Autumn Sedum. Salvias are in full bloom now and Grasses are setting their plumage. There is a huge range of sizes and flower colors in the Salvias. They can range from 10 inch tall plants up to 6 foot tall or more. Colors can range from white to red, to sky blue to pink and purple. Sawtooth Sunflowers give you a huge display of yellow blooms. Still blooming are also Echinacea, Rudbeckia, and Gaillardia.

It is time to buy spring bulbs for the best selection, but don't plant until it gets cooler. Keep in a cool place for another few weeks before planting. Mid September through October is the ideal time to divide Peonies. Herbaceous crowns are set 1 to 2 inches below soil level; tree Peonies planted at 4 to 7 inches deep. Now is also the time that many perennials can be divided. Some bulbs when they become overcrowded should be carefully dug and the clumps lifted out and broken apart. Replant in a well prepared bed. Mulch is important the first winter after division to prevent the plants from heaving out of the ground. Take extra care to insure correct planting depth as it greatly affects bloom performance. Iris, after being dug can be divided into 2 to 4 inch divisions, making sure each division contains a part of the rhizome, some roots, and foliage. The foliage should be cut back to about six inches. Each division should be replanted not more than two inches deep.

CONTAINER AND INDOOR PLANTS

Remember your container plants. Water and fertilizer is still important. You can do some deadheading or cleanup and even replant if need be. Summer tropicals should continue to bloom provided they have ample sunlight and care. Dig up your Begonias now and bring them indoors as a house plant. They will bloom all winter so you can use the cuttings outdoors next spring. Feed your houseplants less frequently as the days get shorter. Bring houseplants back inside before it gets chilly . . . at least by the middle of October. Spray them with insecticidal soap before you bring them in, and once again after they are in, to control hitchhiking bugs.

VEGETABLES

For your fall garden, you can plant Leaf Lettuce, Swiss Chard, Beets, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Asian greens such as Bok Choy, Chinese Cabbage, Cauliflower, Collards, Kale, Kohlrabi, Mustard Greens, Onions, Turnips, Spinach, Parsley, and Radishes. Continue harvesting, watering, and weeding your summer garden. Consider edible landscaping and intersperse these plants in with your flowers. The leafy greens don't need as much sunlight as those that produce a fruit. Harvesting edible portions and enjoying their foliage serves dual roles in the landscape. Please use caution when using any pesticides in mixed beds. When you are through with your vegetable garden, be sure to practice good sanitation. Remove spent foliage and plants.

They can be used to add to a compost pile, if it did not suffer from insects and diseases. Till the soil and consider planting a cover crop or applying a nice layer of mulch. Leaving exposed, bare soil will lead to weed problems.

SHRUBS AND TREES

The next couple of months are the best times to plant trees and shrubs. Prepare holes now and start planting when you have an opportunity. Take advantage of any end of summer sales you happen upon. If you are planning to move any woody plants this fall or winter, now is the time to root prune. Determine how big of a root ball you want to move (bigger is better). Then, using a spade, cut straight down in a circle around the plant.

This is the end of the growing season for most shrubs. Spring blooming plants have set flower buds or are still doing so. Look closely at your Camellias and Azaleas and you will likely see the flower buds. The only care these plants need now is water. Fertilization and pruning should be long over. We don't want to cut or encourage new growth this late in the season. Summer flowering shrubs are still blooming. If you deadhead your Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia*), Summer Spireas, and Crape Myrtles you will see more flowers still. Trees need water just like any other plant. If yours have been severely stressed, they may be shutting down early, dropping leaves. This is a self-preservation process. As long as the leaves are falling, don't be overly concerned. If they are dying, drying and curling on the tree, that is not as encouraging.

LAWNS

Start mowing your tall Fescue regularly. Keep it tall (3 and 1/2 inches) so it can out compete weeds. Warm season grasses such as Bermuda do not need a feeding this month, because they are winding down for winter dormancy. Oversew a crop of Winter Rye toward the end of the month for winter green. But remember that means you will be mowing during the winter. This is the last month to fertilize warm season grasses. It is best to do this by mid month. Skip the application if your lawn is overly drought stressed. If you have a green, vigorous lawn, make sure you water well before fertilizing and then water it lightly after fertilizing. Keep up with mowing needs and try to never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at a time. Summer weeds are beginning to set seeds and play out.

It is too late to seed new warm season lawns, but you can still sod if you need to.

SEPTEMBER BLOOMS

Ageratum; Alcea Rosea; Althea; Coral Vine; Asters; Hardy Begonia; *Buddleia Davidii*; Beauty-berry; Campsis; Trumpet Creeper; Cannas; Bluebeard; Celosia; Cockscomb; Chrysanthemum; Clerodendron; Dahlias; Dianthus; Echeveria; Gaura; Gladioli; Ginger Lily; Hibiscus; Morning Glory; Japanese Rose; Crape Myrtle; Lantana; Liriope; *Lycoris Radiata*; Marigolds; Four-o'clocks; Miscanthus; *Nierembergia*; Mondo Grass.

Benson Sculpture Garden, Loveland, CO

By Deborah Streiffert Moore



While I was in Colorado on a business trip this summer, I had the chance to visit the Benson Sculpture Garden in Loveland, CO. This 10 acre park has been showcasing sculptures since 1985. The garden has a permanent display of over 100 pieces. Two of my favorite sculptures were "Green Pastures" which features sheep, and "The Potato Man."





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>

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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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