



## Pulaski County Master Minutes

May, 2011

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

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### May Meeting



The speaker for May's meeting is Christy Marvel with the City Beautiful Commission.

### What's New at the Library? Phyllis Barrier



Here are two interesting books for any gardener, and this is just the time of year to check them out from your local library.

#### *Green Flowers, Unexpected Beauty for the Garden, Container or Vase* by Alison Hoblyn, copyright 2009

Alison Hoblyn lives in Oxfordshire, England and is a designer, illustrator, painter and teacher. Her short introduction is a delightful discussion of the color wheel and the use of color in the garden: Green "occupies the middle land between the hot hues of red and the colder climes of blue. Within

the realm of green, there is such diversity; greens that tend toward blue can be jade or viridian, while those that are more than a dash of yellow can be parrot-green or lime or chartreuse."

In alphabetical order the book contains perennials, annuals, bulbs, and orchids. The photographs alone are worth checking out this book, and they are combined with descriptions, cultivation advice and interesting background information that will inspire all Master Gardeners to try new planting schemes.

#### *Weeds of the South* edited by Charles T. Bryson and Michael S. DeFelice, copyright 2009

The acknowledgments page states that this is an update to the old *Southern Weed Science Society's Weed Identification Guide* three-ring binder. This book is much more than a three-ring binder.

Within its 468 pages, there is a wealth of information. There are keys to the plant families at the beginning of the book. This is followed by more than 1,500 photographs and information on 400 of the most troublesome weedy and invasive plants found in the southern United States. Let's take, for instance, the dreaded mulberry weed that has invaded my neighborhood and garden. The page on mulberry weed has photographs of the flowering plant, the seed (1 mm), and a two- and a four- leaf seedling. The distribution map shows mulberry weed growing from Texas to Florida and north to Illinois and Virginia, as well as on the west coast. Each page contains information on: Habit, Habitat, and Origin; Seedling Characteristics; Mature Plant Characteristics; Special Identifying Features; and Toxic Properties. To continue with the mulberry weed, it likes shaded areas, vegetable gardens, lawns, flowerbeds, and is a native of eastern Asia, introduced into the New Orleans area in the 1950s. The book states that any plant can be a weed in one situation and unobtrusive or even desirable in another. In other words, one person's weed may be another person's wildflower. The editors say this book "was created to help identify the many weedy and invasive plants that interfere with agriculture, industry, and natural ecosystems in the southern United States."

### 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.



## Mount Holly Garden Series for 2011

Lectures are at 9:00 on the 3rd Saturday morning of each month. We meet in the shade of the historic bell house in the middle of the cemetery. Sponsored by the MORE Group, a downtown ladies group, a \$5.00 suggested donation benefits Mount Holly Cemetery.

Here is 2011's remaining schedule:

May 21, Mark Brown - Sprinkler Smart

June 18, Mark Gibson- Water Features

July 16, Phil Cato (About Vase) Flower Arranging

August 20, Carnivorous Plants

September 17, Beth Phelps, Getting Your Garden Ready For Winter

October 15, Susan Rose, Bulbs In Your Garden For A Burst Of Color

## Ten Great Gardening Websites



**Balcony Gardener** – The Balcony Gardener is a blog about non other than balcony gardening. Featuring different categories such as alpine, edibles, and flowers and water gardens and geographic areas on balcony gardening, there's a little bit of something for balcony gardeners all over the world.  
[www.balconygardener.ca](http://www.balconygardener.ca)

**The Gardening Mom** – The Gardening Mom is exactly as the title describes. Based out of New York, her name is Tara and she's a mom of three adorable kids and is a trained horticulturalist. Her photos are beautiful and each article is informative and easy to follow. I found her on [Twitter](#) and I've been a big fan ever since.  
[www.thegardeningmom.com](http://www.thegardeningmom.com)

**Fine Gardening** – This is the online website of the Fine Gardening magazine. The website hosts videos, a discussion board, and tips for design, plants, and how-to. I really love the informative and step by step videos. [www.finegardening.com](http://www.finegardening.com)

**Herb Gardening** – This simple and straightforward website is purely dedicated to growing herbs. Learn about herbs, how to care for and grow them.  
[herbgardening.com](http://herbgardening.com)

**Gardener's World** – This is the BBC's online website for the Gardener's World magazine. I love that this website has a "What To Do Now" section that gives checklists for each current season and week. There are also classifieds, contests, and offers. [www.gardenersworld.com](http://www.gardenersworld.com)

**Life On The Balcony** – Fern Richardson is an award winning blogger who grows her own container garden on her balcony in California. She's got plenty of great tips, informative videos, and a book coming out in the fall of 2011. The creativity really flows in life on the balcony. [lifeonthebalcony.com](http://lifeonthebalcony.com)

**National Gardening Association** The National Gardening Association is an educational resource for educators and gardeners full of expert advice and resources for gardening and teaching gardening to next generation of gardeners. NGA also awards grants for school and youth gardens. Inspiring stuff! [www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org)

**Organic Gardening** – The online website of the Organic Gardening Magazine, readers can find a beautiful website with blogs, tips, how-to articles and lovely photos of the best in organic gardening for food and for display.  
[www.organicgardening.com](http://www.organicgardening.com)

**Urban Organic Gardener** - Mike Lieberman is just a man who grows food on his tiny New York balcony. He claims no expertise other than by trial and error after starting his fire escape garden in 2009. He's young, hip, and some would say handsome and makes urban gardening cool for young people, especially men. He features news, tips, and recipes for home grown food.  
[www.urbanorganicgardener.com](http://www.urbanorganicgardener.com)

**Vegetable Gardener** – A Fine Gardening website, the Vegetable Gardener is a collection of articles on growing vegetables in the backyard. They've got different projects and instructions for growing different types of herbs and vegetables.  
[www.vegetableg](http://www.vegetableg)



## Plant Dynamics

By Lorraine Hensley

We speak of dynamic people; dynamic situations and we also speak of plant dynamics. As with any language, individual words generally need some kind of context in order to better understand their specific meaning. Dynamic people are usually seen as having strong personalities while dynamic situations generally refer to situations that are in flux: but not always. Plant dynamics speaks to the constant, complex, and perpetual dynamics that plant life defines. Constantly busy with their own means of survival their parts work together to help the whole survive. Each part knows what their particular contribution is and does its job.

This working arrangement allows plants to create and emit a cloud of complex and invisible substances around their leaves and root system uniquely for that for that plants welfare. This area or (rhizosphere) is influenced by the specific plant root substances. Soil next to the plant roots has more microorganisms than soil farther away. Not so much is known about substances plant leaves secrete other than an ability to control humidity levels and some protection from airborne microbe invaders and insects. Each plant, according to the author, "excretes a complex mixture of sugars, amino acids hormones, organic acids and other microbes it needs for survival, and inhibit microbes that would be harmful."

All of the many organic compounds vital for cell structure ultimately come from that same process of plant photosynthesis. Every living being uses sugar for energy but plants make their own. Stomata, (small holes on the plant leaves) absorb carbon dioxide, roots absorb moisture, leaves absorb energy from a light source, and the wonder of photosynthesis takes place. The by-product oxygen is released into the atmosphere which is vital to all oxygen using life. Excess energy plants have produced is also released into the atmosphere for other life forms to use.

All plants create their very own micro-ecosystem; size of the plant doesn't matter. From the smallest flower to huge trees each plant creates its own bio-environment. Light is used (photosynthesis) to create individualized and active systems. Created around the plant's leaves and roots each micro

system enables the plant to thrive in a personal biosphere.

Many of us become desensitized to the symbiotic imperative of plants and our own survival. Most of us are involved, to some extent, in meaningful activities to preserve our relationship with plant life. How quickly we can sometimes take for granted just how durable, yet undeniably fragile, that relationship is. In many ways they get along without us very well for they prosper without any attention from those [specie that use their work by-products. We can't do without plants and its past time to revisit just how hard plants work for their own survival. And that survival benefits us all.



### Checklist by Carol Randle

Many of our gardens were slow to get growing this year. Cool weather actually gave us an extended spring floral show. Our tulips lasted longer than normal and it has actually turned into a gorgeous spring. Did you see the magnificent pink Tulips planted all down Main Street in North Little Rock? They were a soul satisfying sight. I went that way to volunteer just because it was so beautiful.

### VEGETABLES

Vegetable gardens are showing the fruit of our labor with plenty of fresh produce to choose from. We can choose from Broccoli, Spinach, Lettuce, and Onions. As you harvest, replant with heat loving vegetables and herbs. Southern Peas, Okra, Melons and Eggplant are among them. If you did not plant Corn, Peppers, or Tomatoes, there is still time. Late season planted Corn will need to be monitored more closely for Corn Earworms. Use a few drops of mineral oil directly on the silks when it begins to form is one way of keeping the insects at bay. Mulch your vegetables with shredded leaves, newspaper, or a similar product. Not only does mulch maintain soil moisture and helps to keep weeds away, but it also keeps soil from splashing on the stems which can impact diseases.





## HERBS

Fresh herbs are a wonderful addition to your cooking talents, but they also make great ornamental plants. Herbs are easy to grow whether you are spacing them with flowers or in the vegetable garden or in a stand alone herb planting. Perennial Rosemary, Sage, and Oregano do well year-round, while the annual Basil and Dill thrive in our summers. Fennel, both green and bronze is showy and adds great interest to cut flower displays.

## PRUNING

Pay attention now to any pruning needs. Some Azaleas, Camellias, and Loropetalum may have had a little winter damage. After flowering, prune to correct this winter damage. Pruning after flowering allows the plants plenty of time to recover and start growing before the weather gets too hot. Do the once annual application of fertilizer now as well. Water as needed throughout the summer. Gardenias and Hydrangeas also took a hit in some gardens this winter. Since Gardenias and Hydrangeas bloom in the summer, you don't want to prune unless absolutely necessary. Remove any branches that have not shown any signs of new life.



## INSECTS

Two insects which normally start to attack our shrubs this month are Bagworms on Junipers, Arborvitaes, and Cedars . . . and Lacebugs on Azaleas. If your plants get attacked with these pests every year, be proactive this season. Systemic insecticides containing Imidacloprid work well for Lacebugs, and the organic BT sold as Dipel or Thuricide works well for small Bagworms. The key to both insect problems is catching them early. Once well established, the damage is done and there is little you can do to stop them for that season.

## BERRIES

Berry season is great. Strawberries start in May and the berry season ends in October with Muscadines. These small fruits are easy to grow in a home garden, provided you have at least six hours

of sunlight a day. Strawberries work well at the edge of the vegetable garden as a ground cover. They are perennials, but do need thinning annually after harvest. If you let them get too crowded, you will end up with a mass of foliage leading to smaller fruits and more fruit rots. Fertilize after thinning, water and mulch and they can give you great fruit for weeks each May.



## HOUSEPLANTS

Houseplants and heat-loving tropical flowering plants can all go outdoors safely now. Most tropical flowering plants need bright light to bloom well. If you are growing plants that you have kept for several years, repot them now and fertilize regularly or you won't see as many flowers this growing season. Tropicals such as Mandevilla, Hibiscus, and others bloom on new growth and if they are old and root-bound, you won't see much new growth, and you won't see as many flowers. As temperatures heat up, watering needs increase. The more you water, the more fertilizer you need. Color in a garden is important and can be achieved easily with Annuals and Perennials. Every year there are new plants to try and the options appear almost endless. Visiting a garden center is a stimulating experience . . . with new plants and old vying for your attention. When choosing Annuals mix in one to three colors and group plants in blocks to make the "wow" factor. For full sun, try Zahara Zinnias, Angelonia, or summer Snapdragon, Lantanas, or one of the many new sun Coleus plants. Shade loving Coleus, Impatiens, and Begonias brighten up even the darkest shade. Choose Perennials that bloom in a variety of seasons, or stay pretty all season long like Heuchera or Hostas. If your winter Annuals are still going strong, enjoy them and plant your summer color a bit later. As temperatures heat up, though, these plants will start to play out. Annuals need regular fertilization to get the most out of them. Start with a complete slow release fertilizer at planting, then use a water soluble form every two to three weeks throughout the season.

LAWNS

Lawns are fully green and growing now. Winter weeds are on their way out, so don't worry about them. Summer weeds are beginning to show. Fertilize your lawn now with a high nitrogen slow release fertilizer. Monitor for weeds, and mow often, trying not to remove more than one third of the leaf blade at a time.

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**Pulaski County Master Gardener Board and General Meeting Summary  
Tuesday, April 19, 2011  
St. James Methodist Church**

**Board Meeting**

Minutes of the March 15th Board Meeting and the April Treasurer's report were approved.

The board approved moving forward with Phase 2 of the Greenhouse Project - benches and glass repair in the old greenhouse.

The audit committee reported they found no discrepancies, and the treasurer's books are in good order.

A special thank you will be done for Don Webb's Community Punishment crew and Glenn Sago with the State Hospital for all their help over the years and with the new greenhouse construction.

According to state law, Pulaski County Master Gardeners must remit sales tax on plant sales because there are more than three sales per year. There was discussion on the easiest way to handle sales tax. The board decided to incorporate the cost of sales tax into plant prices rather than try and figure sales tax on each sale.

Leave of Absence was approved for Jane Paulus.

There was discussion about changing the order of business at the monthly meetings so that the program is first. It was decided to keep the agenda the same with announcements first, then the program, and ask that announcements be kept short.

A special funding request for the Pinnacle Mountain project of \$100 for plants was approved.

**General Meeting:**

Reminder that 2011 dues are due--71 people have not paid 2011 dues. See Treasurer Bren Coop after the meeting.

Greenhouse Committee reported \$7,440 was raised at plant sales. Project chairmen are asked to get fall plant requests in *a.s.a.p.*

Fundraising committee reported \$12,000 had been raised and the goal was \$15,000. The fund raising committee would love to see everyone's name on plaque acknowledging donations of any size.

**Program** - Porter Briggs shared information and photos describing the active volunteers working on the boxwoods at the Lincoln Memorial.

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**A Bit of  
Garden Trivia**



\*Wheat is the most widely grown plant in the world. It has been cultivated for more than 7,000 years in every continent except Antarctica.

\*The compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*) is so-called because its lower leaves tend to line up in a north-south direction.

\*Botanically, there is no such thing as a pumpkin. Pumpkins are certain varieties of squash, which through local traditions and use, have come to be called pumpkins. Squash and pumpkins belong to the family 'Cucurbitaceae', which also contains cucumbers, melons and gourds.

\*The onion is a lily, botanically. Asparagus is also a member of the lily family. The name "asparagus" comes from a Greek word meaning "sprout".

\*The eggplant is a member of the potato family, and is also known as a garden egg, melanzana or aubergine.



### 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 2010, these volunteers gave **22,987** 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

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