

Pulaski County Master Minutes

June, 2011

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

Volume 20, Issue 6

June Meeting



Mark Brown with the U of A extension office will be speaking at the June meeting. He will be speaking on Water conservation for lawns, landscapes, new technology & sprinkler systems.

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:

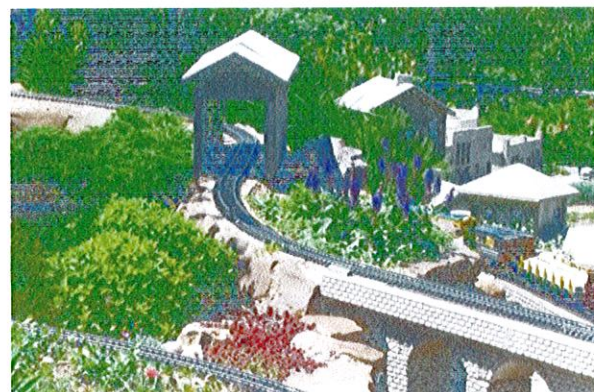
- June 18, Mark Gibson- Water Features
- July 16, Phil Cato (About Vase) Flower Arranging
- August 20, Carnivorous Plants
- September 17, Beth Pheips, Getting Your Garden Ready For Winter
- October 15, Susan Rose, Bulbs In Your Garden For A Burst Of Color



In May, the Travel Committee led a wonderful trip to Perryville – to Heifer Ranch for a great lunch and tour and to the Truskys' home to view their hill-top garden. The pictures show only a portion of a very elaborate train garden which the Truskys have built. Not only are there detailed pieces of concrete art, four moving trains, and fountains, but there is also beautiful landscaping around the yard and particularly, around the train tracks. Herbs, lilies, mums, sedums and other succulents, as well as many other plants work as forests and yards around the buildings and train routes.

The Truskys also have a beautiful hill-top view as they work their raised herb and vegetable garden. Their concrete art extends to a variety of bench and sculpture bases, edging for their several gardens, and imaginative, detailed decorative pieces.

Photos Courtesy of Bren Coop



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Checklist by Carol Randle

GENERAL INFORMATION

All the plants in our gardens should be actively growing now. If there is winter damage it should be readily apparent. If you have not pruned out the damage, do so now. Many plants are now doing well due to the cold winter, preceded by a terrible, hot, dry summer. Give your plants the most vital part of plant care . . . water. This will help them to rebound from any damage they have sustained. Mulch all plants and water as needed. Deep, infrequent water is best except for container plants which will need daily doses. Fertilization needs vary by plants, but most permanent shrubs, trees, and perennials benefit from one complete application a year. If you have not fertilized yet, do so now before it gets really hot and dry.

VEGETABLES

If you planted vegetables this spring they should be beginning to bear fruit. Harvest regularly and scout your garden for problems. Aphids build up quickly and Stink Bugs are harder to kill the bigger they get. To keep Corn Earworms away, watch for the sweet Corn to begin to show silks, then squirt a couple of drops of Mineral Oil on the silks weekly until the silks turn brown. Watch Tomatoes for Tomato Fruit Worms . . . they are the same as the insects that hurt Corn; they can move from crop to crop. Mulch the garden to keep the weeds at bay and to give you a hand with watering. Mulching soils helps crops retain moisture and stay a little cooler when the temperatures heat up. There is still time to plant vegetables. You can also add to the plantings of Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplants, and Herbs. Water, mulch, and fertilize and you will be harvesting in no time. Pick your vegetables frequently to pick them at their prime, and also encourage more fruit set. Watch your Squash plants for insects now, and pick Cucumbers daily. We should be about to start harvesting our first Tomatoes, which means Blossom End Rot is on the horizon. Blossom End Rot occurs when the bottom of the fruit turns black. This is typically caused by fluctuations in the moisture levels. This draws the Calcium away from the fruit causing the decay. Mulch your plants to keep the moisture levels even, water properly and pay attention. Some varieties are more prone to this problem than others. If you are growing peppers and corn, don't skimp on fertility . . . they both are heavy feeders and you will get much better production with good fertility. If you have room in your garden for more vegetables, plant the heat lovers like Southern Peas and Okra. This is also the season to plant Pumpkins to have them in time for Halloween. Water them well to get them established, then mulch and monitor their growth.

If you don't have your own garden, visit one of the many Farmers' Markets in the county. The locally grown produce is amazing. It is fun to see just how many different things the farmers are growing on their farms.



BERRY SEASON

By now Strawberry season is over, but now is the time to redo the beds. If you don't thin them annually you will end up with a mass of tangled plants. From Blackberries and Blueberries, fresh fruit is readily available this year. If you grow your own, you might want to consider bird netting around the Blueberries, because the birds love them as much as we do. There are many options today to buy fresh, locally grown produce. The small fruits are the easiest to grow in our home gardens, having less insect and disease issues than tree fruits. Peaches are often the most coveted fruit, but are definitely the most difficult to grow, having lots of insect and disease problems. Let the commercial growers grow peaches and either pick them at the farm or go to the Farmers' Market.

SHRUBS

Spring blooming shrubs have finished blooming and all pruning chores need to get finished by mid-month. Late season pruning tends to slow down plant recovery, which can impact the number of flowers that they set. They set their flower buds in August and September. Summer blooming shrubs are showing flowers now. We are seeing flowers on Crape Myrtles, Rose of Sharon, and Oakleaf Hydrangeas. If you want to try a new Hydrangea that won't be hurt by winter damage, try one of the improved smooth Hydrangeas. Hydrangea Arborescens Invincible Spirit is the first ever pink flowering form. Large showy pink flowers are born on the new growth, so even when plants get nipped back by a cold winter, they will still bloom. Buddleias are also blooming and attracting butterflies and bees, and Summer Spireas will keep blooming if you deadhead or shear them back after flowering.

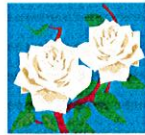


SUMMER BLOOMERS

By now we should begin to see flowers on Althea, Buddleia, and Crape Myrtles. These summer bloomers give a lot of color to the summer landscape. Other summer bloomers include Itea and Summer Spirea including "Little Princess", "Lime Mound", and "Anthony Waterer". Summer blooming Spirea can bloom off and on all summer. Deadhead the spent blooms and give them a light haircut if they get too leggy.

BULBS

Spring blooming bulbs should have had sufficient time to grow after flowering and the foliage can now be removed. Most bulbs do fine staying in the ground year-round, just use caution if you do a lot of seasonal planting. You don't want to damage the bulbs while planting. If you haven't had time to plant summer bulbs, there is still time. The soil has warmed up and they will kick in and grow rapidly. From Elephant Ears to Cannas and Catadiums, plant away.



ROSES

My Knock Out Rose is doing well although earlier my husband was sure it was dead. It did have damage from the winter, but it is blooming and looking very good now. Fertilize Knock Outs once or twice a year and give them a little water and they will reward you with almost non stop blooms. Other carefree roses: the Home Run Roses; David Austin Roses; the flower carpet roses for low growing plants and New Dawn and "Climbing Autumn Sunset" (a yellow climber with disease resistance).



INSECTS AND WEEDS

Walk your garden on a regular basis and inspect what's happening. Early detection of insect or disease problems can help you control them more easily. Weeds can seemingly take over overnight, but with regular hoeing and mulching you can keep them in check. Chambers Bitters is a summer weed that has really hit this part of the state in recent years. It looks like a small Mimosa plant, but bears its flowers and seeds under the leaves, so multiplies rapidly.

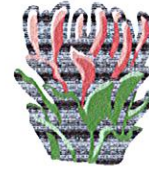


ANNUALS

For annuals, since we want to push the plants as much as possible, we need to remember to water and fertilize regularly. A slow release fertilizer is great to mix in when planting, and water soluble forms work well applied every ten days to two weeks. Deadhead plants that are setting seeds to keep energy directed to flower and formation and not seeds. There are a lot of color options for Petunias, Lantana, Angelonia, Sun Coleus, and Zinnias.

PERENNIALS

Blooming well now are: Daylilies, Purple Coneflowers, Shasta Daisy, Gaillardia, Rue'llia, and hardy Hibiscus. Watch the foliage on your hardy Hibiscus for the attack of the Mallow Sawfly. This insect can turn your leaves into lace, seemingly overnight. Spray at first signs of problems with Sevin, Pyrethrums or similar insecticide. Summer bulbs can still be planted in dry bulb form or many nurseries sell potted, actively growing plants, including Dahlias and Oxalis. Foliage can be as pretty as flowers on many of these plants.



TROPICALS

The temperatures are heating up and the humidity is on the rise. It is the perfect time for tropicals. From Bananas to Hibiscus, Tibouchina, and Mandevilla and Esperanza, there are plenty of plants to choose from. Many folks stop buying plants this time of year, but stop by your local nursery and see what new plants are arriving. There are always new tropicals coming in. They can be planted in the ground for a large annual or grown in containers.

CONTAINERS

Container plants need frequent watering, which means nutrition gets leached out. Use a water soluble fertilizer once every week or two. The more sunlight and the better the care, the more they will bloom. Other heat loving annuals include Sweet Potato Vine, Lantana, Angelonia, Zahara Zinnias, Penta, and Melapodium. If you are growing petunias don't skimp on fertilizer here either. If they aren't getting enough to eat, they will stop blooming. Keep them watered and fertilized and they should bloom all season.

In the article by Lorraine Hensley wrote for the May newsletter, a notation was inadvertently left out. Specific information for this article came from How To Grow Fresh Air by Dr. B.C. Wolverton. Check your local bookseller for a copy.

Pulaski County Master Gardener Board and General Meeting Summary by Bren Coop

Tuesday, May 17, 2011
St. James Methodist Church

Board Meeting

Minutes of the April 19th Board meeting and the April Treasurer's report were approved.

Master Gardener Leadership Conference will be held August 2-3 in Russellville. Each county has been allotted two participants. The \$35.00 registration fee for treasurer Bren Coop and second vice president Marcella Grimmert will be paid. If space is available, Dewayne Hancock, member at-large will also attend and his registration fee will also be paid.

Silent auction items are needed for the State Master Gardener Meeting to be held in Harrison June 2 – 4, 2011. Martha Basinger and Arline Jackson will ask nurseries to donate the two plants from Pulaski County for the You Pick It fund raiser.

Fund Raising - \$2,380.00 was made on book sales and \$13,000 raised from donations from over 200 Master Gardeners, active and alumni, all in support of the greenhouse project.

David Werling and the photographers are working to get pictures for every Pulaski County Master Gardener for a new pictorial directory.

Sustainer status was approved for Jennie Coie.

Reinstatement was approved for Tracey Rhodes.

Welcome Harry Weinstein a Master Gardener transfer from Camden.

Plans are being made for the July 19th Tour and Ice Cream Social at Russ Harding's garden including a tour of Lolly Honea's garden. Marcella Grimmert is coordinating with the Social committee.

Beth Phelps was the program with season horticulture tips and a question and answer period.

It's Summer!
 By Phyllis Barrier

Here's more on the Giuseppe Arcimboldo Nature and Fantasy exhibit that was at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC from September 2010 to January 2011. You may recall from my article in the April 2011 issue of *Master Minutes* that Arcimboldo lived from 1526 – 1593 and

was court painter to Maximilian II of the Austrian House of Habsburg.

Maximilian II became Holy Roman Emperor in 1564. From Vienna, he ruled over Austria, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, and other parts of Eastern Europe. He was interested in the natural sciences and attracted eminent botanists and other scientists to his court. The botanical gardens and zoos that he created would have given Arcimboldo the opportunity to study the species and plants that appear in his paintings. Arcimboldo created a series of allegorical paintings of the Four Seasons, all depicted as profile busts.



Even though summer isn't officially here, it feels like summer today, so it seems appropriate to revisit Arcimboldo's profile of Summer. There is a fabulous display of fruit, vegetables, nuts, and grains. The painting can be seen as a guide to what would have then been locally available. The artists also included rare varieties imported from the New World, such as corn and eggplant. Note that the artist's signature and date are "woven" into the figure's straw coat.

Arcimboldo's composite heads of the four seasons were thought of as *scherzi* (jokes) by his contemporaries, but they reflect the serious scientific study of nature that was characteristic of the sixteenth century. I hope you enjoy exploring and identifying many of the components in this 16th century painting.



Root Microbes

By: Lorraine Hensley

Spending time thinking about microbes—even root microbes—has never been my forte. And I imagine there are plenty of people, including my fellow master gardeners, who feel the same way. There is so much garden activity above ground it's hard to remember your plants are working just as diligently below ground as the gardener is on the surface. It's great to follow a specific plant's progression from that first green shoot out of the soil to the formation of foliage. Some plants add a bonus to the gardener with lovely blooms that can be enjoyed during their blooming season. It's difficult to imagine a dedicated gardener, with or without a cup of coffee, strolling outside in the early morning coolness to check on his plants.



Reading about specifics of root microbes and the benefits they bring to plant life taught me they are one of the hardest workers in a plant's life cycle. Every living thing needs nourishment of some kind and root microbes are no exception; they mostly hang around where their food is—in the plant roots. There are more microbes in the soil close to the plant roots. There seems to be an inverse relationship between root microbes and their proximity to the host plant roots. Substances secreted by plant roots exert a distinct selective process on these microbes. It stimulates some groups while suppressing others. Each plant is equipped by nature with its own genetic codes. These codes determine the exact types and numbers of microbes their host plant needs to survive, according to the author.

They live in the soil and are not only responsible for making soil nutrients available to plants but also break down organic waste materials and detoxify many environment poisons that reach the soil. Though absolutely vital for the plant's general health and growth, they don't all wear "white hats." Some root microbes can compete with plants for the same nutrients the plants need and some may transmit various plant diseases.

Microbes need their host plant and they assist their host plant to maintain its well being in a number of ways. They repel other microbes that could harm their host and provide nutrients for the plant by digesting fallen leaves and other debris found near plant roots. Plants reciprocate by secreting substances from their roots that nourish the microbes. These secreted substances from the host plant roots also stimulate rapid proliferation of these microbes; these rapidly decaying microbial cells then serve as food for their host. Highly adaptive root microbes mutate over a short period of time to cope with environmental changes and that ability to adapt to these changes aids in their mutual push for survival.

The 'name of the game' appears to be species survival for both the host plant and their microbes achieved through the cooperative relationship between them. Each, plants and microbes, takes care of their own species and both survive as a result of this arrangement. They need one another to survive as a species and each works hard to achieve a mutual goal. This relationship between plants and microbes also serves another function; that of creating a healthier environment for all oxygen using life forms

Specific information for this article came from How To Grow Fresh Air by Dr. B.C. Wolverton. Check your local bookseller for a copy. It is a wonderful read.

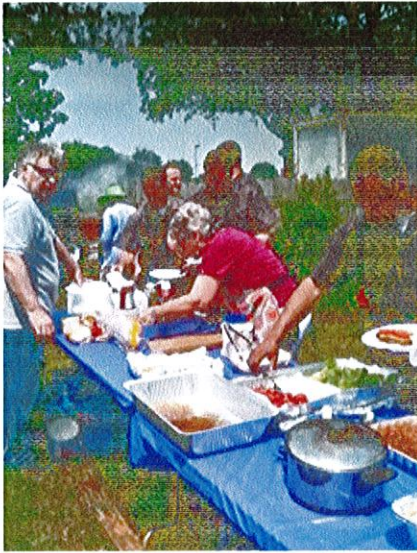


**"On this June day the buds in my garden are almost as enchanting as the open flowers. Things in bud bring, in the heat of a June noontide, the recollection of the loveliest days of the year - those days of May when all is suggested, nothing yet fulfilled."
- Francis King**

The PCMG Board, on behalf of PCMG, hosted a "Thank you Lunchtime Cookout" at the greenhouse in

May. Guests were staff employees of the State Hospital Ground and of the Community Punishments Department. The luncheon was in appreciation for all their help with the greenhouse construction and also through the years. Members of the Little Rock and Pathfinders Greenhouse Committees were also invited.

Photos Courtesy of Bren Coop





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 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:

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