



Pulaski County Master Minutes

March 2012

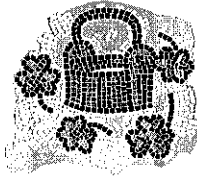
<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org>, <http://www.uaex.edu/pulaski/>

Volume 21 Issue 2



Sabrina Childs will be our guest speaker for the March meeting. Her topic will be "Hot New Plants".

Did you know....



"The word 'March' comes from the Roman 'Martius'. This was originally the first month of the Roman calendar and was named after Mars, the god of war. March was the beginning of our calendar year. We changed to the 'New Style' or 'Gregorian calendar in 1752, and it is only since then when we the year began on 1st January. The Anglo-Saxons called the month *Hlyd monath* which means Stormy month, or *Hraed monath* which means Rugged month. All through Lent the traditional games played are marbles and skipping. The games were stopped on the stroke of twelve noon on Good Friday, which in some places was called Marble Day or Long Rope Day. The game of marbles has been played for hundreds of years and some historians say that it might have been started by rolling eggs. In the past, round stones, hazelnuts, round balls of baked clay and even cherry stones have been used."

- Facts About March



MG Partners in Gardening

By Jeffrey McKinley

Businesses and nurseries which offer a discount to Master Gardeners will be featured. Unless otherwise indicated, they offer a 10% discount to Master Gardeners

For the rose gardener, Cantrell Gardens Nursery and Landscape currently has 1000 plus roses-potted and ready to plant, along with an early selection of herbs and sedums. Cantrell Gardens recently launched a new website, so learn more about them at www.cantrellgardens.com.

For the eager to get started gardener, Hocott's Garden Center is stocked with plants for early spring such as herbs, hardy ferns, perennials and cool weather vegetables. They have a large variety of seed packets in stock. Their website is in the process of being updated, so check it out at www.hocotts.com.

Other partners that are currently offering a discount to Master Gardeners are:

Botanica Gardens,
Green Tree Nursery
River Valley Horticulture
Arkansas Garden Center
The Good Earth

Do you know of someone we didn't mention? Please email them to Jennice at gardenrat@comcast.net and we will put them in the next newsletter!

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.



Checklist by Carol Randle

This has been a mild winter. After remembering last winter with all its snows, I'm sure there are some of us who are very thankful that it has not been repeated this year. Now, if we can just have a mild summer, perhaps we can recover from the summer of 2011! I hope we have a fantastic growing season this year, especially for Tomatoes! I love Tomatoes, but last year was not a good one for growing them.

VEGETABLES

For the last two years, there has been a big increase in the number of vegetable gardens started all across the country. Last year was the WORST year on record for growing vegetables. Maybe the new vegetable gardeners will not be discouraged, but will try it again this summer. I love fresh vegetables; going to BJ's and getting good, fresh vegetables is such a joy. I can hardly wait.

It is too early to plant Tomatoes and other warm season vegetables but it is the ideal time to plant cool season vegetables, such as Lettuce, Radishes, Turnips, Kale, Cabbage, Broccoli, Spinach, Potatoes, Onions, and more. Cabbage, Broccoli, and Cauliflower are planted as transplants . . . small plants, not seeds. Onions are planted using sets or transplants, rarely as seed. Most feed stores sell them in bundles of small plants, which are then set out in the garden. Janet usually plants them two inches apart, and, as they grow she uses every other plant for green Onions, giving the remaining Onions plenty of room to grow. Remember to fertilize at planting and then side-dress six weeks later. Cool season gardens are the easiest to grow. We tend to have more energy now and we often have ample moisture. Diseases and insects have not become firmly entrenched yet, so grab your shovel and start planting. If you don't have space for a large garden, plant some vegetables in pots or in among your flowers. A minimum of six hours of sunlight is all you need.

If you didn't prepare your beds in January, do it as soon as possible. Cool season crops, from Carrots to Turnips, can be planted until mid- April. Sweet Corn can be planted about the middle of the month. Seeds for warm weather crops, such as Tomatoes and Peppers can be started in the greenhouse or your windowsills. It takes six to eight weeks to get good size transplants. Our last frost date is March 20 to April 1, depending on what part of the county you live in. Get the Year Round Home Garden Planting Chart from the county extension office. It tells you when to plant and gives the first and last frost dates.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Plant bare root trees while dormant. Soak bare root plants in water to hydrate the roots. Lace bugs on Azaleas don't become active until April or May . . . depending on the spring we have. You can begin to monitor for them then, and spray as needed. Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub insecticide, also known as Merit, claims that one application in February or early March, can give you a 12 month period of control. Hybrid Roses need severe pruning every year. If you haven't pruned, do so immediately. The same applies to Buddleia and summer blooming Spirea. These plants bloom on the new growth, and heavy pruning encourages plenty of new growth, and therefore more blooms. All of these plants will get woody and gangly if they are not pruned hard each season. Other summer bloomers that can still be pruned include Althea, Vitex, and Crape Myrtles. (CAUTION: PLEASE DON'T COMMIT CRAPE MYRTLE MURDER!) They don't have to have severe pruning every year . . . it is dependent on the shape and size you want in your landscape. Ornamental Grasses should be cut back to 4-6 inches before they start growing again. Divide established Perennials and replant at their depth in an enlarged area with organic matter and fertilizer. Prune Wisteria roots about two feet from the main trunk. Pull or cut away sprouts of Lilac and Forsythia and transplant. Root cuttings from Azaleas, Camellias, Chrysanthemums, Shasta Daisies, Roses, and other flowering shrubs (8" with two buds underground) in a cold frame.

Color is appearing back into our landscapes. The first harbingers of spring are the bright yellow Winter Jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*). Many people mistake it for early Forsythia, but that usually follows by a couple of weeks. Flowering Quince (*Chaenomeles speciosa*), Bridal Wreath Spirea (*Spiraea Prunifolia*) and Camellia Japonica are all blooming now. Some early Azaleas are kicking in and more will follow, along with Dogwoods (*Cornus Florida*), Redbuds (*Cercis Species*) and Service Berry (*Amelanchier Arborea*). Spring is a great time to enjoy your garden, but also to plant. Visit your local nursery and see what is new. There are new cultivars every year, so your garden should be evolving and changing. After our horrid growing season, many gardeners have some replanting to do. Spring is a fine time to do so. Give your damaged plants a chance to start growing, but you may be seeing some dead plants.

LAWNS

If your lawn is showing signs of green, it is from winter weeds. Spray with a broad leaf weed killer if you have an abundance of them, or spot spray or pull them. A few clumps of wild Onions (or Garlic) can easily be dug. Pre-emergent herbicides should be applied from now through mid-March to keep the summer annual weed seeds from germinating. It is too early to fertilize. Many pre-emergent herbicides come as a weed and feed combo. Applying fertilizer now before the grass is fully awake will be a waste. You will actually end up fertilizing all those winter weeds that are in your lawn now. There is still time to use a pre-emergent herbicide, but do so very soon, and try to find a stand-alone product without fertilizer. Your first fertilizer application should be no sooner than mid-April, when the lawn is totally green. Waiting until May is not a bad idea, either. Winter weeds got an early start and seem to be prolific this year. The larger they are, and the more they are flowering, the harder they are to kill. Try to keep them mowed to prevent seed set.

PERENNIALS

Many Perennials are up and growing. Hellebores are in full bloom, along with Bleeding Heart, Columbine, and Foxglove.

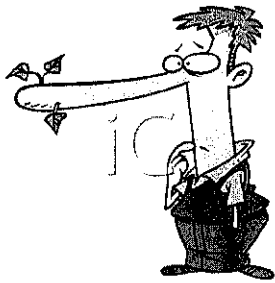
Peonies are up and growing and you may even see the beginning of flower buds. Now is a great time to put some Perennial stakes around your Peonies. These wire rings need to be in place before the plant gets much size. That way, the foliage grows up into the rings and is supported when heavy rains try to topple the blooms. Spring ephemerals, like Bloodroot, Trilliums, and Trout Lilies are a great addition to the early spring garden. They are called ephemerals because they are here today and gone tomorrow. They often complete their life cycle before the trees have fully leafed out. If you have many early season Perennials in your garden that do go dormant quickly, consider some method of marking where they are planted so that you don't disturb them during the growing season when planting other plants. You might try using old golf tees, just put a tee next to the crown of the plant, and move on. As you are gardening throughout the spring and summer and you come across a golf tee, just move over a foot or so.

ANNUALS

Winter annuals are still going strong; in fact, some may just be recovering and kicking into full gear. Fertilize and dead-head and they should give you another month or two of great color. If you lost your winter color, or you never got around to planting any, buy some Geraniums, English Primroses, and Ranunculus now. They make great transitional color for the garden and can tolerate light freezes with ease. Start planning your summer color, but don't actually plant any until mid-April. Also, even though we have had some really warm days, don't "sun" your houseplants. Leave them where they are until they make the big move outside in April.

MARCH BLOOMS

Anise Florida, Azaleas, Camellias, Glory of the Snow, Crabapples, Daffodils, Forsythia, Hyacinths, Early Iris, Carolina Jasmine, Kerria, Star Magnolia, Maple, Virginia Bluebells, Grape Hyacinth, Oxalis, Pansies, Flowering Peach, Phlox, Photinia, English Primrose, Flowering Quince, Redbud, Spirea, Tulips, Burkwood Viburnum, Violets, Chinese Wisteria, and Woodbine.



Aroma

By Lorraine Hensley

Nothing is simple in the process of plant fragrance traveling from specific plants to our noses; the journey begins when plant essential oils evaporate. These oils are nothing like those we use for cooking and mixing our own salad dressings--no kitchen time for them. Ordinary temperatures can start the evaporation process but due to the differences in molecule weights of various plants some can evaporate at a lower temperature than others. According to the author, Suzy Bales, "These essences of scent are not confined to the blossom" but may also be found in all plant tissues. As these oils evaporate their molecules become airborne and we then experience them as generally delightful aromas. Plant oils are termed "volatile" because of their rapid evaporation and essential because it is thought they are essential to the plants well-being.

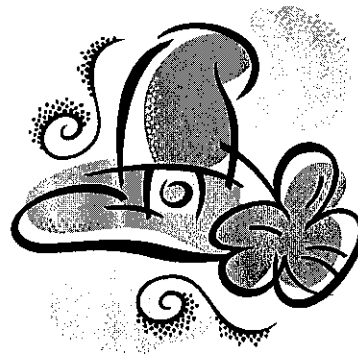
One theory states that scent molecules released by plants are used by them in various ways for their own survival—to attract a pollinator. Another theory suggests that release of these scent molecules is a method plants use to get rid of their waste products. The more generally accepted theory is that flowers use scent to attract the insects necessary for pollination. Scented leaves may also be used to repel insects that could damage the plant. However, the suggestion that plants release these essential oil molecules as a means of ridding themselves of plant waste products also has value. These theories seem compatible with one another. Plant survival seems to be the focus of each and that is generally the goal of most living organisms. Could be that a "little of this and a little of that" is necessary to reach that goal.

The total environment of the plant, time of day, weather, and, wind velocity are all factors that affect when and to what degree these scent oils release their fragrance. There are likely many other variables that can impact their airborne journey. Most gardeners understand that nature has no strict rules for plant life. Exceptions are always possible and those exceptions can both frustrate and excite us as we enjoy our gardens.

Defining those scents we experience can also present problems. Our efforts to describe various aromas as they waft past our noses can become frustrating and sometimes humorous. It's hard to describe something as ephemeral as an aroma so we are all talking about the same thing. Particularly if we have no agreed upon meaning of the descriptive words we use. Perfumers describe fragrances as having three "notes." The top note is the first to reach our nose when a bottle is opened—the second note reveals itself and the bottom note holds the whole thing together. It takes time for a specific fragrance to "sound" all three notes with both perfumes and flowers.

Add individual perceptions to the mix and it's a true wonder we were ever capable of identifying scents by odor alone. And we can also say that some object or other reminds us of other scents or one plant's fragrance can bring another plant to mind because of a fragrance similarity. The sensory pleasure derived from the whole process makes us want to try it again—one inhalation after another.

Specific information for this article came from a "garden of fragrance" by Suzy Bales. Check with your local bookseller for a copy. It's full of good information.





OFFICER PROFILE PRESIDENT DON FORD

By Betty Deere

Don declares he has been interested in gardening and growing things most of his life. He became aware of the Master Gardener program when attending the AR Flower & Garden show in 2002 and (encouraged by wife Lynda) promptly signed up for the training that fall!

Because of his interest in native Arkansas plants and Carl Hunter's work, he chose the Pinnacle Mountain Project. He also joined the Witt Stephens Jr project in 2010, co-chairing with Jane Gulley. He continues working both projects, as well as becoming 1st Vice President for 2010-11.

Now, of course, he is President of our Master Gardner Program.

Coming from an Air Force family that moved around a lot, Don landed in northwest Arkansas when his dad retired, and finished high school in Fayetteville. He attended the U of A there until joining the Air Force, where he piloted some major airplanes (C-141, C-7, and Boeing 707's). He became a staff officer, running command and control facilities.

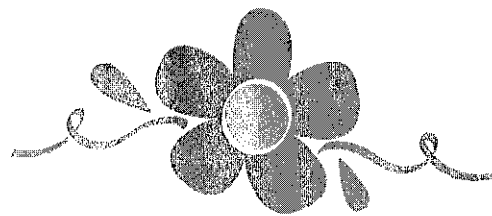
He married Lynda, his college sweetheart in 1967. After retiring in 2002, they moved to their current home, located on 5 acres in west Little Rock near Lawson Road. His main interests these days

include gardening at both his MG work projects around his house and his vegetable garden. He and Lynda also enjoy both ballroom and country western dancing, and competed in the country western dance arena until he hurt his knee. That ended the competition, but they still dance weekly on a more informal level. Don enjoys it so much he is a country western teacher at their Sunday night dance club.

Back to the gardening subject, he especially enjoys propagating plants and grows many of the new native plants they grow at Pinnacle and W. Stephens. He grows both natives and non-natives, "whatever works"; and concentrates on plants that tolerate dry conditions, since he has a mostly shaded lot.

As for his favorite flower, he "doesn't have a "favorite" but likes camellias, Knockout roses, Asiatic lilies, clematis, crepe myrtles and most any plant that is in flower". He tends to rescue and try to "save" many plants, hating to throw away any plant still alive.

Don says: "I think the MG program is really great, and I am proud to be called a Master Gardener!"



"The afternoon is bright,
with spring in the air,
a mild March afternoon,
with the breath of April stirring,
I am alone in the quiet patio
looking for some old untried illusion -
some shadow on the whiteness of the wall
some memory asleep
on the stone rim of the fountain,
perhaps in the air
the light swish of some trailing gown."

- Antonio Machado, 1875-1939

Selected Poems, #3, Translated by Alan S.
Trueblood

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DIG IN HERE...

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

- Master Gardener Website:

<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/mastergardener/mastergardensonly>

Username: mastergardener
Password: compost

- PC Cooperative Extensions Website:

<http://www.uaex.edu/pulaski/mastergardeners/default.asp>

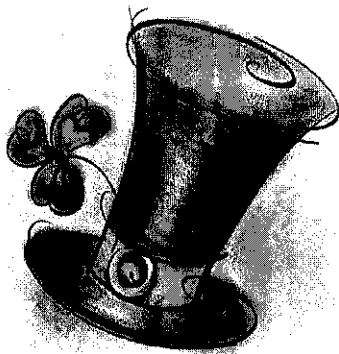
- U of A Cooperative Extension Website:

<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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