

Pulaski County Master Minutes

November 2012

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

Volume 21 Issue 10



Photo Courtesy of Bren Coop

PCMG Board and Judy Woodard at the Leadership training in Eureka Springs

Arkansas Extended Learning Center Mary Evans

Holiday Decorating Workshop
December 3rd & 10th (2 sessions)
6:00-8:00 Cammack Community Hall
For More Information, call 666-0759

The Arkansas Master Naturalists will have a training soon. The class begins on January 12th at the Witt Stephens Nature Center in downtown Little Rock. More information about the Master Naturalist program and an application can be found on the website:

<http://home.arkansasmasternaturalists.org>. Select

"How do I Join?" on the left hand side and the application and schedule will be there.

For more information contact

Nancy Deckard yayaqumbo2002@yahoo.com



OFFICER PROFILE OF BREN COOP, TREASURER

By Betty Deere

"My folks always gardened, and I think it's just part of my heritage!" says Bren Coop, our treasurer. Becoming a Master Gardener in 2006, she is another remarkable MG, who has done and is doing many varied and interesting life activities. Is it just me, or is this go-go lifestyle a characteristic of MGs in general? Read on - you'll see what I'm talking about.

Bren says it's hard to pinpoint her favorite style of gardening design but "I suppose the 'cottage style' gardening design seems to fit my personality best", she says, "if that means casual and informal and colorful and inclusive for whatever strikes your fancy at the time you see it!!" (She includes a LOL after that statement.)

From what I've gathered in interviewing her, it would seem that's a good overall description of her personality: casual, informal, colorful and inclusive.

Bren is a good keeper-of-the-earth gardener, preferring organic gardening, using native plants as much as possible and avoiding pesticides (Yay! Me too!). She likes herbs and butterfly gardening, which do particularly well in a chemical-free garden. (Who wants to eat herbs that have been sprayed with chemicals?) (ASIDE: Organic gardening is harder on the back and knees because you have to pull those weeds instead of poisoning them, but it saves work in another way because you don't have to do as much watering and feeding for native plants

Arkansas Is Our Campus

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in compost soil.) Bren's favorite plants? "They have to include rosemary, roses, and Japanese maples."

Bren's work and education history is extensive and varied. College included AR State; U of A Fayetteville and MS State, graduating with a BSE in English and Speech with a minor in Journalism. Her early career included teaching, and then did some graduate work in English when they lived in Starkville, MS.

She has done some sort of bookkeeping forever, keeping books for a variety of jobs, including being the regional finance officer and advisor for her sorority (which also included teaching collegiate how to balance a check book). Her first real bookkeeping job was assistant bookkeeper for a farm implement and supply store for three years during college.

Work career has varied over the years - in addition to the farm store, she was secretary for the Seed Stocks program at MS State; a church secretary in KY, Promotions director and newsbreak commentator for KAIT-TV in Jonesboro; and after moving to Little Rock area, she worked for the U.S. Trustee program for 8 years. For the past 17 years, she has worked part-time for three chapter 7 bankruptcy trustees. She retired in April, 2012.

WHEW! Sounds to me Bren is clearly qualified to be our MG Treasurer; actually way-y over-qualified! She's also a well-balanced right and left brain person, with both math and word skills that combine to make her an interesting and versatile people-person.

As for family associations, Bren was born in Nebraska but lived in Jonesboro from age 5-21. She met her husband, David, when they were second graders and they both graduated from Jonesboro High. They started dating in college and have been married 46 years. At their 50th class reunion in October, there were five couples attending who all graduated together and have stayed married all these years. Bren and David have a son and daughter who both live in Little Rock.

A creative person, Bren loves projects: she's trying to learn how to play the bodhran! And enjoys knitting, stained glass, shirt-painting and cooking. Wow, one wonders how she finds time to garden at home and do her MG project, the Amy Sanders Library!

As for her favorite genre of books, she likes mysteries, writers like Martha Grimes and Sue Grafton. AND she and David really enjoy watching many of the British sitcoms like "As Time Goes By" and "Poirot" and "Ms. Marple". One of her favorite movies is "Miss Potter". Bren's favorite food? "Potatoes and ice cream". (I presume not in combination!)

What makes her laugh? "I love to laugh and smile - and my husband David especially makes me laugh; he has helped me see the humor in many situations over the years!"

Best thing about being a Master Gardener? "The friends we make! I love the sense of purpose and feeling of accomplishment and the camaraderie".



November 2012 Calendar

By Phyllis Barrier

Master Gardener Training

November 7 - Sprinkler Smart, and Wrap up
Experienced Master Gardeners are welcome to attend any of the training sessions as a refresher. If you want to eat lunch, let Beth Phelps know the Monday before the training. The cost of lunch will be \$9.

Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey

Drawings and photos by Hot Springs arts Linda Williams Palmer

Arkansas Arts Center Terry House Community Gallery through November 4, and the THEA Foundation in North Little Rock November 11 - December 1.

PCMG Trip to Crystal Bridges

The Master Gardener travel committee is willing to planning a bus trip to Garvan Gardens the week of December 10-14th to see the Christmas light display if there is enough interest. The cost would be about \$20. If you would be interested in participating please contact Marcella Grimmett mgrimmett17@gmail.com. If there is enough interest you'll receive an email with the details.

2013 International Master Gardener Conference

"Alaska Flowers, Fjords and Friends"
September 7 - 14, 2013



Checklist by Carol Randle

I am sure we are all glad to see cooler weather and some rain. Both have been hard to find during this summer season. If you have not brought in your houseplants by now, you may be in trouble. I spent about five hours one Friday getting mine ready to bring inside. My dear husband helped me, although he is not a plant person. I had to divide a BIG Sansevieria plant. I could have gotten three plants out of it, but I stopped at two. I divided a Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*) and got three plants out of it. It was a plant I got when my mother died, I don't know how long she had it before I received it. I tried dividing a Pothos, it was wound around the pole so much that it took half the yard when I tried unwinding it. I think I have lost it, thanks to my inept dividing. My husband announced, after we got everything inside, that "the menagerie" was inside once again. The space in front of our fireplace is full every year, but it is worse this year, thanks to my dividing plants and receiving plants from dear Master Gardener friends. I would love to hear your comments about bringing your houseplants inside . . . where do you keep them during the winter?, etc.

Janet says the plant hardiness zones have been pushed lately; we have been planting things that normally don't overwinter for us. In recent years, things like Amaryllis bulbs, Lantana, Brugmansia, Bananas, etc. have been overwintering fine with a little extra mulch, but don't apply this extra protection until after the plants have gone dormant. If you add extra protection while they are actively growing, it will actually prevent those plants from growing dormant, which can result in a dead plant the following spring. Allow the plant to go dormant following a frost, then cut off the plant debris and add the extra mulch. Pay attention to the drainage of your soil. Winter soils often retain more moisture with less evaporation and less water usage of plants while they are dormant. Wet feet can lead to rotting of many perennials.

HOUSEPLANTS

In central Arkansas, the average first frost is early to mid-November, so pay attention to the weather forecasts and take whatever precautions are needed. If you have not moved your houseplants indoors, please move them in now. Don't be alarmed if they start dropping leaves, because there will be a huge shift in their growing conditions. If you are storing houseplants or tropicals in the garage or under the house, make sure the move is made prior to a frost so you don't lose your plants. Janet says that by now all houseplants and overwintering flowering tropical plants should have been indoors for at least a month.

They may still be showing the signs of transplant shock. Houses are particularly dry indoors with heat, and lower lights coupled with a more static temperature can take its toll. Cut off any yellow or damaged leaves, and greatly reduce the amount of water you are giving them. Try to give them as much light as possible, but avoid fertilization. Our goal is to keep them alive and as healthy as possible. Overwintering is typically the number one killer of houseplants.

BULBS AND PERENNIALS

One of the easiest ways to add color in the home landscape is by planting spring flowering bulbs. It is bulb planting time. Janet says, "What could be simpler than to dig a hole, drop a bulb and wait for floral enjoyment next spring. Even better, dig up a large circle or square, then layer in different bulbs. Remember we plant bulbs based on their size. The larger the bulb, the deeper in the ground it goes. A good rule of thumb is to plant 2-2 1/2 times the size of the bulb, deep in the ground. Once you are done planting, place winter annuals on top for twice the color."

Choose large, blemish-free bulbs. You can immediately plant, or store them in a cool place until you get around to planting them. Planting in masses looks better than planting in rows. Tulips, Crocus, and Hyacinths are the most common, but there are some unusual bulbs available as well. The nice thing is that all you have to do is dig a hole and drop the bulb in, then sit back and wait for spring color. They do well in the ground or containers. If you don't have time to plant them now, buy the bulbs and chill them for planting in January. You can do this naturally in your garage or even protected outside, or do so artificially in the refrigerator. Spring flowering bulbs need a minimum of eight weeks of temperatures below 50 degrees to stretch and elongate. Bulbs satisfy this requirement outside on their own once they are planted, but you can give them a little help. Wait no longer than mid-January to plant them.

Are you cleaning and dividing your perennials? Don't throw the extra plants away, pass them along. After a killing frost, mulch your beds three inches deep.

ANNUALS

When it comes to winter annuals, the later you plant, the larger the plants should be. Hopefully, if they are flowering winter annuals (Pansies, Violas, and Panolas) they are blooming. If they are small, non-blooming plants, chances are good that you won't see a flower until spring. Flowering Kale, Cabbage and Swiss chard are also available, but get them planted and mulched soon. If you planted earlier this fall, don't forget to fertilize periodically. Also, pay attention to moisture levels, especially if you have these plants in containers. Water as needed, especially prior to a hard freeze. If you didn't get all of your winter annuals planted, NOW is the time. They must have their root system established before it gets too cold. Be sure to fertilize when you plant and side dress during the winter on warm days. In addition to Pansies, Violas, and Panolas, consider Dianthus, Dusty Miller, and Snapdragons. For vertical interest, try Mustard, Kale, Collards, or Swiss chard. (Swiss Chard works great for us at Amy Sanders Library . . . it lived all year around

for us this year.) Look for healthy, large, flowering annuals now. Not only will you have instant gratification with flowers, but they should bloom well for you all winter.

VEGETABLES AND HERBS

Fall and winter are quieter times in our vegetable gardens, but there are still things to do. After you have planted the winter vegetables, cleaned up, and composted, try to prepare some of the beds for spring planting. Then, in February, instead of waiting for the soil to dry out, you can plant Sugar and Snow Peas. Plant a cover crop in the other beds.

CLEAN UP

Janet says that when a hard freeze occurs in your yard, it is the time for major clean up "Cut back spent perennials, pull out frost damaged annuals, and do general clean up. There are still leaves to be raked, mulch to be spread, composting to be done and new planting chores. Fall is a great time to garden, and we are more inclined to want to be outdoors now, than we were last July and August. Take inventory of your garden now. For deciduous plants, you won't know the full extent of summer damage until next spring, but if you know you have dead plants, start to remove and replant. Fall is an ideal time to plant hardy trees and shrubs, but hold off on the more tender plants like Hydrangeas, Gardenias, and Azaleas. We can't predict what the winter has in store for us, and these plants can suffer in a colder than normal winter."

TREES AND SHRUBS

November is the ideal time to plant a tree. There are many damaged trees and shrubs in our landscapes as a result of three bad weather years, two of them back-to-back. If you need to plant some new trees, consider planting now. The soil temperature still has some heat left, so the root system can spend its time growing roots while the tree is dormant. You will end up with a stronger plant for next growing season. Some large shade tree choices are: Willow Oak (*Quercus Phellos*); Tulip Poplar (*Linodendron Tulipifera*) and Lacebark Elm (*Ulmus Parvifloria*). Some good mid-sized trees are: Little Leaf Linden (*Tilla Cordata*); Red Maple (*Acer Rubrum*) and Chinese Pistasche (*Pistacia Chinensis*). Prepare the site well and amend in an area three times the size of the planting hole to encourage root spread. Dig a hole three times the width of the root ball, but only as deep as the depth of the root ball. You want the crown of the plant to be planted at the soil line or slightly more shallow. Don't dig out the planting soil and throw it away and plant in a bag of potting soil . . . that won't encourage root movement. Instead, mix the existing soil with compost and spread it out over a wide area. Once planted, mulch and water. Avoid the volcano mulches, no more than two to three inches of mulch, and be sure to leave an air pocket next to the trunk. Even the oldest and most drought tolerant plants benefit from regular water for at least the first year of establishment, but would prefer the first three years of growth. To people who are concerned about leaving a tree that is close to the house and they feel sure it is dead: Janet says that even a tree that just died will not decay so rapidly as to fall over.

Due to the drought conditions, for the third year, some of our plants have not fared well. If you have damage on trees or shrubs, don't be too quick to prune or remove them. Unless you are sure a plant is dead, leave it alone until spring when you can assess the damage. Clean up leaves as they fall and compost them or shred them for mulch. Although our active growing season is done for most plants, we still need to water. Water levels are especially important prior to a hard freeze. Making sure there is ample water in the soil (and then in the plants) gives the plant added protection. Dry, stressed plants suffer more winter damage because there isn't enough moisture in the foliage to protect it. An answer to the question about when to prune and when to plant is: "Fall is for planting and spring is for pruning."

While artificial Christmas trees are definitely popular- especially the pre-lit ones, fresh trees add fragrance and choosing one together can make a good family memory. If you are using a fresh tree, make sure you give it a fresh cut on the base before adding it to the stand. This opens the cut end up and allows for better water uptake. Better yet, soak the tree in a bucket of water, and even hose it down the day before you bring it in. The fresher the tree, the longer it stays fresh indoors, but they all dry out over time. Tree preservatives that you get at a commercial stand or nursery can help, but avoid home remedies like lemon-lime soda or sugar, as it can gum up the works and may attract ants.

HOLIDAY PLANTS

Holiday plants seem to enter stores earlier and earlier. New varieties of Poinsettias appear each year. Luckily for the consumer, plant breeding has allowed these plants a long blooming period. If they are properly cared for, Poinsettias can keep their colorful bracts for months . . . long after the holiday season has passed. Bright light and even moisture are the main keys to success. Avoid putting any plants in the direct line of the heating vent, as it can dry them out too quickly. Don't overwater . . . a common problem . . . but if you keep your house toasty in the winter, the plants need more water. Pull back the decorative foil wrapper to keep air flowing and light getting into the base. Don't let them stand in water. Other holiday plants are Christmas Cactus, and Amaryllis bulbs. Amaryllis bulbs should be potted at least six weeks in advance for holiday use. Larger bulbs usually have bigger flowers and multiple bloom spikes. If you buy bulbs, select a pot slightly bigger than the bulb. Amaryllis prefers to be crowded. Make sure the bulb is potted with at least the top one-third of the bulb exposed. Give it a little bit of water and light and wait for new growth to begin. Amaryllis bulbs start growing when they are ready . . . whether that is in your container or the box it comes in. When you see new growth beginning, gradually increase your watering and sunlight exposure. The warmer the location of the plant, the taller it will grow. Turn the plant periodically to keep it as stable as possible. If it grows extremely tall, you may need to give it extra support to prevent it from toppling over. Other holiday plants for winter

enjoyment include Paper White Narcissus, Kalanchoe, Chrysanthemums, Cyclamen and even Orchids. Bromeliads also come in a wide array of colors, but the bright red ones easily blend into holiday decor and are easy to take care of.

MONTHLY BLOOMS

Asters, Ornamental Cabbage, Camellias, Chrysanthemums, Clerodendron, Dahlias, English Daisies, Dianthus, Euonymus, Eupatorium, Gaura, Gingko, Ornamental Grasses, Gums, Oakleaf Hydrangea, Kale, Larkspur, Maples, Poppies, Rosehips, Snapdragon, Solidago, Sourwood, Stock, Torenia, Tricyrtis, Verbena, Viburnum, Viola, Virginia Creeper, Wallflowers and Witch Hazel.



"Floral Arranging"

Award Winning
Floral Artist
Tanarah Haynie

Tuesday, Nov. 13th
7 PM

Hillcrest Hall
1501 Kavanaugh Blvd.

Night Bloomers Garden Club invites you to
join us for an evening of fun.

Pulaski County Master Gardeners General Meeting

Tuesday, September 18, 2012

St. James United Methodist Church

Don Ford opened the meeting to order at 11:30 and welcomed transfers into PCMG Karen Workman and Elizabeth Hopkins.

2013 Arkansas Master Gardener calendars are now for sale for \$1 each. Please use them to spread the word about the MG program. Three Pulaski County members' photos made the calendar - Georgia Harris, Martha Bowden and Lee Gershner. Congratulations!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Judy Chapman called on all to participate in a workday at St. James scheduled for October 9th at 8:30 a.m. Please bring your power hedge trimmers. This is our opportunity to thank St. James for hosting our meetings.

Marianne Ligon reported the last of the Mount Holly Garden Series is scheduled for Saturday, October 20, at 9 a.m. at Mount Holly Cemetery. Chris Olsen will be speaking. Suggested donation is \$5.

Marcella Grimmett, Travel Committee, reported the annual PCMG Wine and Cheese Event at Hocott's Nursery will be September 28th at 5:30 p.m. PCMGs will receive a 20% discount on all purchases that evening.

Bren Coop, Treasurer, thanked the approximately 400 members who have paid dues this year. There are still about 25 who have not paid. Those wishing to may send the \$20 to the County Extension Office or to Bren.

Jackie Walker, Travel Committee, said there are a few seats left for the trip to Crystal Bridges on October 5 and 6. See her if interested.

Rochelle Greenwood, Mentoring, reported there are more volunteer mentors than those to be mentored this year. Many thanks to those volunteers!

Krista Quinn, Executive Director of the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, announced the Tour of the Gardens at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion on October 18 from 5:30 - 7 p.m., with proceeds to benefit the Greening of Arkansas grant program which helps to beautify public

spaces around the state. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased in advance.

Beth Phelps reported PCMG Training starts next Wednesday with a bus tour of garden projects. The training will be held each Wednesday at the State Extension Building through November 7th. Beth asked for volunteers to help set up before the trainings - getting coffee started, taking care of handouts, greeting people, etc.

Beth also reminded the membership of the weekly Thursday Tour of Projects, with an open house format, from 9-12. These start October 4th. This is a great way to showcase all PCMG garden projects to those in training and others interested.

Don called for election of PCMG officers, introducing Jet Cuffman to report for the Nominating Committee the following candidates:

President - Marcella Grimmett
First Vice President - Walter Jennings
Second Vice President - Marylea Gazette
Secretary - Coralie Maxwell
Treasurer - Bren Coop
Assistant Treasurer - Susan Crawford
Member-at-Large - Georgia Harris (2 year term)

Jet thanked the committee for their work, including Jane Gulley and Laura Hathaway.

Don called for nominations from the floor. There being none, he called for a vote. Judy Chapman moved and Nancy Kirsch seconded that the candidates presented by the Nominating Committee be accepted. The motion passed. Don reported that Earline Zahn will continue to serve on the Board, her second year as Member-at-Large.

Don reported that the Board met this summer and reviewed all projects and new project requests. He announced that the Board decided to continue all current projects and that no new projects will be added this year.

Beth reminded all to turn work and education hours in. Those who went to MG Day at Garvan Gardens yesterday are to turn in the hours they were there. Beth has a list of all hours reported thus far.

Walter Jennings reported that next month's meeting program will be a Case Study on a Landscaping Project by Mary Evans.

Walter introduced the program speaker, someone that needs no introduction to Arkansas gardeners - Janet Carson.



MG Partners in Gardening

All partners listed offer a 10% discount to Master Gardeners

Arline's Individuality in Skin Care
Arkansas Garden Center in Sherwood
BJs in NLR
Botanica Gardens
Cantrell Gardens
Four Seasons Nursery in Sherwood
Green Tree Nursery
(Trees & Shrubs Only)
Hocott's Garden Center
River Valley Horticulture
The Good Earth
White Wagon Farms



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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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 2011, these volunteers gave **23,145** 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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