



Pulaski County Master Minutes

October 2013

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

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Want to order a Master Gardener tee shirt,
jacket, etc.?

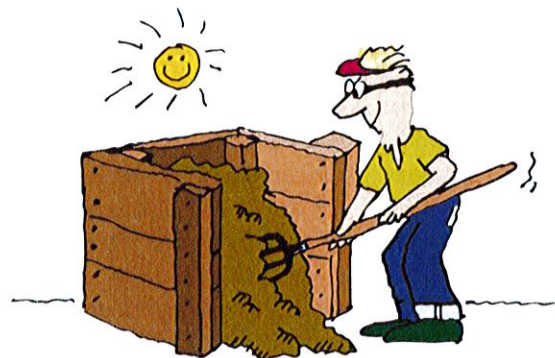
The stuff committee will place an order in soon. I have attached an order form. Fill it out, double check the total and bring it along with your check to the October 15th Master Gardener Meeting. The order deadline is November 10th. If you order after that you will have to wait until a spring order is place. So get you orders in. If you are not coming to the October meeting you can mail your order to the Pulaski County Extension Office, 2901 W. Roosevelt Road, Little Rock, AR 72204. We must have them by November 10th.



Pulaski County Master Gardener Christmas Party 2013

Thursday, December 5th
6:00 pm
Wyndham Riverfront
#2 Riverfront Place
North Little Rock, AR
Tickets: \$28.50 per person

If you have questions contact Richelle Daniel
rdaniel28@comcast.net



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT COMPOSTING?

By Betty Deere

For many years I fretted about how to compost. Sorta like learning to meditate, I made it such a big deal, trying to micro-manage the carbon-nitrogen ratio and temperatures, the watering just to a "sponge-like" feel, the turning the whole mess of grass, clippings, food, etc. -- every week. I really worked at it. I even made a talk to the Iris Society on how to make compost, but even then I was feeling it was an intricate, complex process. I practically hated my compost by the time I got a few shovel-fuls, because I'd worked so hard to do it and to do it just "right". Halfway through the season, and halfway giving up, I would just go buy some commercial compost product to add to my own home-grown meager product. Feeling totally like a failure as a natural gardener (who tries to totally garden organically, no chemicals at all, just molasses and worms and fish juice). But at last! At last! Thank God Almighty! I've now become free at last from all that worry, work, and wondering if I'm doing it right! I've learned to do it Mother Nature's way. I finally figured out I was actually interfering with a simple, natural process. It just takes a little time and patience. Why didn't I know this from the very beginning? Probably because I struggle with patience as much as I do with trying to create compost. So! I've quit buying all sorts of expensive green or black containers (they don't seem to come in any other colors), that one can either turn or twist or maybe not, it just

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sets; and those that do or don't have an opening at the bottom to get the freshly made compost out without slogging through the top layer of gunk on top; or buy an expensive aerator -thingy that stirs up the pile without me having to break my back turning it.

No, I don't do any of that anymore, especially in the fall when it's Leaf Time! Here's the way Mother Nature does it. It's as simple as piling leaves into a bin and then walking away while nature takes its course. And the bin can be as simple as little corral made from 3-foot-high welded wire fencing. It can be round, square, or star-shaped, whatever suits your fancy and fits your yard space. It's easy, and it's cheap.

Crumbly, humusy leaf mold is single-ingredient compost, requiring only leaves and a place to let them rot for 4-12 months. Different types of leaves break down at different rates. The leaves of oak, maple and linden usually become leaf mold in 7-8 months. I have mostly oak and maple leaves. The "cooking" process can be speeded by mowing over the pile or running them through a leaf shredder before they go into the bin. And/or by turning them occasionally, but neither is necessary. Additional help for the process involves lightly sprinkling nitrogen-rich alfalfa meal or corn-gluten meal over the pile and mixing in. But again, not necessary but speeds the process along.

When individual leaves are no longer recognizable, and it all looks like a big leafy glob, then it's ready to use. You may find a few clumps that you simply return to the pile to continue "cooking".

So there you have it. Leaf mold isn't exactly full of nutrients but it's a superb soil amendment, loosening heavy clay and improving the moisture retention of sandy soils. And it's an excellent mulch for azaleas, shrubs, perennials, and vegetables. And as I mentioned above, it's cheap!

HOW TO DO: Corral leaves in a simple enclosure made out of welded-wire about 3 ft. tall (think Home Depot or Lowes). Curve it into a round shape (or whatever) and fix it to the ground with strong wire garden staples that we secure sheets of groundcover material to prevent weeds.

OR if you have more bamboo than you need (hahaha, that's a joke!) then secure it down with bamboo stakes. I have lots of bamboo, so I make stakes to hold up heavy-laden mums, peonies, black-eyed susans, etc. And to hold down my compost bin. About 13 feet will make a bin about 4 feet across, which is a nice, energy-saving size.

Your energy, MY energy -- meaning you don't have to bend over to far or dig too deep to turn it.

And that's it. The same leaf scraps and bits will transform into leaf mold in about 8 months. If you do it in October/November, you'll have leaf mold in June/July. Mother Nature always knows best, we just have to work with her, instead of complicating what she does beautifully--if we'll just get ourselves out of her way. Happy leaf-raking and compost-making!

**Pulaski County Master Gardener Board Meeting
Tuesday, September 17, 2013
St. James United Methodist Church**

Members Present: Marcella Grimmert, Don Ford, Walter Jennings, Earline Zahn, Susan Crawford, Georgia Harris, Marylea Gazette, Bren Coop, Beth Phelps and Coralie Maxwell. Guests: Incoming Board members Judy Chapman, Linda Fulbright and Patti Womble. Other guests: Mary Roark and Suzanne Potts.

President Marcella Grimmert called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

The president asked for corrections to the August, 2013, minutes. There being none, the minutes were approved as written.

Bren gave the Treasurer's report and the statement of financial condition was distributed and reviewed. Only six people did not pay dues this year. The report was approved as presented. Walter commended Bren on her excellent work as Treasurer. The Board concurred.

Project Report -Walter reported that both Wildwood and the State Extension Office Projects need some help in determining chairs and that work is being done in that regard.

Committee Report - Mary Roark and Suzanne Potts, for the Social Committee, presented a proposal for the Board to consider helping keep the ticket price below \$30.00 for those attending the PCMG Spring Picnic (Reception & Dinner) which is scheduled to be held at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion on May 15, 2014. The proposal asked the Board to contribute \$500.00 toward the event. The Board thanked the Social committee for their hard work on the many events they plan.

After lengthy discussion, the consensus was that since only a limited number of PCMGs and guests can attend

this event, subsidizing it was not in the best interest of the whole organization. Don moved and Earline seconded that the request for \$500.00 toward the Spring Picnic be declined. The motion passed.

Don then moved and Walter seconded that the Board cover the ticket cost of special guests of PCMG to the Spring Picnic including Judge Buddy Villines and his wife and Janet & Clay Carson. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board discussed the feasibility of limiting the number of hours worked at the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show that count toward the Project Hour requirement of PCMG membership. This discussion came about because it has been voiced that such hours take away from garden project hours given by some.

NEW BUSINESS:

Marcella reported that there is interest in selling our MG License Plates to County 76 representatives. Don moved and Walter seconded that we authorize the sale of MG License Plates to any MG for \$5.00 with any shipping cost paid by the purchaser. The motion passed.

Don, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of candidates for officers for the 2013-2014 PCMG calendar year:

Walter Jennings	President
Marylea Gazette	First Vice President
Patti Womble	Second Vice President
Linda Fulbright	Secretary
Judy Chapman	Member at Large

The Board accepted the report of the Nominating Committee and thanked Don, Jane Gulley and Jet Cuffman for their work on the committee.

**Pulaski County Master Gardeners General Meeting
Tuesday, September 17, 2013
St. James United Methodist Church**

Marcella Grimmitt called the meeting to order at 11:30 and presented her "Good Egg" award to Laura and Ron Robinette, she of Pathfinder Greenhouse and he of Maumelle Community Center, both of the Continuing Education Committee. Congratulations, Laura and Ron!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chris Feild, Greenhouse, reminded project chairs that their orders for greenhouse plants need to be placed by September 21. Pick-up times are 8-10 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, September 25th and 26th.

Laura Sholes and Richelle Daniel, for the Social Committee, told us to "Save the Date" for the PCMG Christmas Party. It will be Thursday, December 5th at the Riverfront Wyndham in North Little Rock at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$28.50 and Fran Ables will be selling them at the October meeting. Door prizes! Fun!

Arline Jackson, for Travel Committee, announced the trip tomorrow to Augusta and Bald Knob will include stops at Pebbles Farm, two greenhouses and the Bulldog Restaurant.

Rochelle Greenwood, Mentoring Chair, recognized the mentors for the new MG class. Thank you, mentors!

David Werling, Facebook Committee, encouraged all to visit the PCMG Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/PCMasterGardeners>

The Travel Committee invited us to The Good Earth on Tuesday, October 1st for a Wine and Cheese Party. A 20% discount will be available to PCMGs at the party.

Beth Phelps thanked all for the prayers, cards, meals, visits and love given her during her recovery from surgery.

Beth thanked the mentors for signing up and getting the new folks acclimated.

Beth introduced and welcomed new transfers from Saline County MG, Carl and Tiffany Benz.

Beth will send an email of the training schedule for the new MG class starting October 2nd. That also will include the schedule of Thursday garden open houses at our garden projects. All are welcome to visit.

Beth reported on the successful International MG Conference which included 109 education sessions. Almost 800 registered for the conference and there were over 935 people, including MGs guests, on the ship. The 2015 conference will be hosted by Nebraska and Iowa. The 2017 conference will be hosted in Portland, Oregon.

Marcella introduced past president Don Ford who, as chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of candidates for the 2013-14 PCMG Board:

Walter Jennings President	
Marylea Gazette First Vice President	
Patti Womble	Second Vice President
Linda Fulbright	Secretary
Judy Chapman	Member at Large

No nominations were made from the floor. A motion was made and seconded that the slate be accepted. The motion passed.

Don also acknowledged the following previously elected officers who will continue serving on the Board:

Susan Crawford	Treasurer
Bren Coop	Assistant Treasurer
Georgia Harris	Member at Large (second year)
Marcella Grimmett	Past President



Checklist by Carol Randle

We mostly had a mild summer although we did have some hot and dry spells. Now that it is time for the weather to get cool, don't be lulled into thinking you don't have to water. Keep in mind that how happy and healthy your plants are, as they go dormant, can determine how well they start the next growing season.

Now is time to clean up. If you had more than your fair share of insects and diseases, as some of us did, good sanitation can go a long way to having clean, healthy plants. Compost bins sometimes overflow this time of year with all the availability of leaves, plant debris and lawn clippings, but don't add any materials into the pile that were damaged by diseases. Most home compost piles don't generate enough heat uniformly throughout the pile to sufficiently kill all the disease organisms or insect eggs. If you mix these into your compost, you can actually spread the same problems next season.

All gardens benefit from mulching year-round. Make sure you apply a layer that is two to three inches deep, but avoid piling it against the main stems of the plants.

Mulch piled up on the stems can lead to too much heat on the stem, and can be a haven for rodents. A good thing to add is a layer of newspapers or cardboard under the mulch. This helps it stay in place and does a good job of preventing weeds.

BULBS

October is the start of spring bulb planting and it is also time to add fall and winter annuals. Plant your Daffodils, Hyacinths, Tulips and Crocus beneath ground, and then top the planting with fall annuals, including Pansies, Violas, Swiss Chard, Flowering Kale, and Cabbage or Snapdragons. We had great success at Amy Sanders with Panolas last year. If you have tender bulbs such as Caladiums, fancy Elephant Ears, or Dahlias and you plan to save the bulbs for replanting next year, you should be getting them ready for storage. Dig the bulbs either prior to a killing frost or immediately after one. Cut off the foliage, and shake off as much soil as possible. Then spread them out on some newspapers in the garage and let them air dry for a few days. Place them in a sack or cardboard box layered with shipping peanuts, shredded paper or something similar. Then store in a cool, dry place until next spring.

WILDFLOWERS

October is the prime month to plant wildflower seeds. Make sure the site is free of weeds and debris, lightly rake, sow the seeds and then water. If birds are a problem you can lightly mulch. Many perennial plants will not bloom the first season when grown from seed, but some will when planted in the fall. Annuals such as Larkspur, Bachelor's Buttons, and the showy red Shirley Poppies can give you color the first season, and often reseed themselves. Perennial choices include Coreopsis, purple Coneflower (Echinacea), Gallardia, Ox-eye Daisies, Butterfly Weed and other Milkweeds. Wildflower mixes are available from many nurseries across the country, but for best results, buy seed that has been produced as close to home as possible.

October is also the prime time to plant Garlic. If you use a lot of Garlic, why not grow your own? Check with your local nursery or garden center to see if they have Garlic bulbs for sale, or you can order online. Many gardeners have planted what they buy at the grocery store, but it could have been grown in a milder climate so it may not be as adapted for our winter weather. It might do okay. You could also buy Garlic bulbs from a local grower at a Farmer's Market and those should do

well. When you are ready to plant, separate the Garlic head into individual cloves and plant them in the soil pointy end up. Then cover with soil, water and you should be fine.

FALL COLOR

Chrysanthemums are still available and although they are perennials, many grow them as annuals. Although many summer annuals will continue to bloom and grow up until a frost, if you wait until the first frost before planting winter color, you may get a slow start. At the least, start interspersing some fall color in with the summer plants. October and Pumpkins go hand in hand. Instead of the round orange fruit, today we have green, white, bumpy and smooth and all shapes and sizes from which to choose. As long as you don't start carving the Pumpkins, they will last until you are tired of them. Some people even paint them green or red and use them as Christmas decorations! Gourds and other Winter Squashes also make for easy color decorations. When choosing any of these fruits, make sure that fruit is blemish free and has at least an inch or more of a stem attached. Devoid of a stem, the fruit can rot more readily. Group them together and add in some Corn stalks and a few bales of straw and you have instant fall color.

HERBS

If you grow annual herbs like Basil and Dill, make sure you get all the benefit from the harvest before it gets too cold. Be careful about harvesting perennial herbs late in the season, light shearing is better than hard pruning. You don't want to encourage too much new growth this late in the year, nor do you want to head into winter with shorn plants. Tarragon should be divided annually. Chives and Sweet Woodruff should be divided every three or four years. Cool weather annual herbs such as Cilantro and Parsleys can be planted now.

VEGETABLES

By now, for the most part, things should be in the ground. You can still find Cabbage, Broccoli and other cool season transplants, so plant them. Fall vegetables can still be planted if you use season extenders. You can easily make a wire frame and cover it with plastic that you can place over your beds when it gets cold. These unheated greenhouses or high tunnels have become quite popular and folks are harvesting fresh vegetables all winter long. Even without covering, Swiss Chard, Kale and Turnip Greens have been overwintering just fine. So, instead of using ornamental Kale and Cabbage for

winter color, consider planting edible varieties and get double duty, beauty and fresh vegetables. Greens and Kale can take it fairly cold and can serve as a cover crop and an edible. If you haven't planted a fall garden, don't leave the garden spot bare all winter or you will end up with a great crop of weeds. Either plant a green manure crop or cover crop or put down a thick layer of mulch-shredded leaves, compost, etc. This can keep the weeds at bay and you can work this organic matter in when you till the garden next spring.

By mid October, or if frost is predicted, pick all Tomatoes, whether they are ripe or not. Store ripe Tomatoes on the counter and wrap green Tomatoes in newspaper and store in a cool, dark pantry or closet. (A garage will work, also. I have done that myself.) They will ripen slowly. If you have more ripe Tomatoes than you can eat, freeze them to use in sauces. Or hang the entire plants (with unpicked fruit) upside down in the garage. In late October, cut back Asparagus stalks to the ground. Mark the location. Mulch three or four inches. Prepare vegetable beds for spring and remove all debris.

ANNUALS

Summer annuals that survived the summer are still going, but if yours died, there are great options now at all nurseries from Pansies, Violas and Panolas to Snapdragons, Dianthus, Diascia, Dusty Miller, Parsley, edible and ornamental forms of Kale, Cabbage, Swiss Chard and Beets. We can even find Petunias, Callibrachoa, and Verbena now, which have been overwintering well and blooming through several light freezes. If your garden doesn't have color in every season, you can quickly remedy the fall color now. Try to choose one to three complimentary colors and plant in strong blocks. If you plant Flowering Kale and Cabbage, do it soon so it will have a chance to root before winter.

You can intersperse them and Spinach, Mustard, Beets, and Lettuce in among the flowers and harvest as needed. There are more decorative forms of these edibles, but any variety will work.

PERENNIALS

Starting in October, you can plant and transplant perennials. Enrich your beds with organic soil amendment. Lift and divide plants that have finished blooming. Most perennials bloom better if they are divided and replanted every three years or so. Now is a great time to dig and divide spring and summer blooming perennials. There are also great perennial plants to

choose from, that can be planted now. By doing the work in the fall, we allow the roots to get established while the tops are dormant, so they will be in a stronger position by next growing season. Winterize, protect, or lift tender perennials for winter storage.

What is at bloom in your garden? If you took care of your yard, you should have colorful perennials now.

Toadlilly (*Tricyrtis*), Turtlehead (*Chelone*) and Japanese Anemones are all blooming. The Hellebores are starting to put on new foliage growth for a winter bloom, and Chrysanthemums and Asters are readily available at nurseries for instant color. Red Surprise Lilies, *Lycoris Radiata*, have long finished blooming, but their foliage is everywhere. The leaves of these Lilies should stay green all winter long and die down in mid-Spring. Then their naked flower stems appear with bright red flowers in the fall. Some other great autumn bloomers are still going strong, while the Ornamental Grasses are in their prime. Fall is a great time to plant any hardy plant . . . leave those semi-hardy or marginal plants until spring.

TREES, FRUIT AND SHRUBS

Spray your trees for Peach Leaf Curl if they were victims this year. Apply a dormant spray to reduce overwintering pests and fungus diseases when the leaves fall from the trees. Mulch fruit and berries well to preserve moisture in the soil. They need a lot of water. They are the only food that contains approximately 80% water.

Set out Strawberries during fall rains for fruit next May. If planted in spring, plants won't bear well until the following year. Spring blooming shrubs have set their flower buds, as have fruit trees and Blueberries. Pruning now may take off some flower buds.

HOUSEPLANTS

Houseplants and any other outside plants that won't survive the winter need to be moved back inside this month, if you plan to keep them for next season. It is best to move them inside by the middle of the month. Don't put it off too late or the plants will have more of a shock once they move back inside. Clean up any damaged leaves and check for insect problems. Clean them up before the move indoors. This is a good time to divide any plants that have become too big for their containers.

Remember, water needs will be much less inside than out. Some gardeners may choose to buy new flowering Tropicals next season instead of moving them in and out each season.

GENERAL YARD AND LAWN

Clean up the planting areas as you harvest fruit, flowers, and vegetables. Rake up fallen leaves (and there are a lot of them already this fall). Compost all disease free organic refuse. Don't put diseased plants on the street for pick-up. You don't want to give someone else your problem. Bag up with your regular garbage. Or you can burn the diseased plants. Protect container plants for the winter. Mulch tender plants that can't be moved.

Continue watering lawns, trees, and shrubs, vines and all new plantings until the rains come. Don't forget to water plants in sheltered areas. Well-watered plants survive freezing temperatures better than dry ones. Cut back ground covers that have spread out of bounds.

Prune vines. Plant flat and slightly sloped areas with ground cover so roots will get a head start before winter. Do not plant steep slopes or the rains will wash plants away. Sow seeds for new lawns. If there is an early frost, be sure to keep the ground moist so the seedlings will continue to develop roots until the ground freezes. Grass grows best this time of year in the cooler, wetter conditions. Aerate lawns now.

OCTOBER BLOOMS

Abelia, Ageratum, Sweet Alyssum, Asters, Barberry, Beautyberry, Bittersweet Vine, Buddleia, Ornamental Grasses, Gums, Hibiscus, Kale, Kerria, Lantana, Larkspur, Lobelia, Maples, Marigolds, Mexican Sage, Nierembergia, Sweet Peas, Petunias, Poppies, Roses, Rosehips, Salvia, Scabiosa, Snapdragons, Solidago, Stock, Torenia, *Tricyrtis*, Verbena, Viburnum, Viola, Virginia Creeper, Wisteria and Zinnias.



"In the garden, Autumn is, indeed the crowning glory of the year, bringing us the fruition of months of thought and care and toil. And at no season, save perhaps in Daffodil time, do we get such superb colour effects as from August to November."

- Rose G. Kingsley, *The Autumn Garden*,
1905



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>



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 2012, these volunteers gave **12,478** 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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