

J U N E 2 0 1 5

the
Magnolia Chronicle

Newsletter for the Pulaski County Master Gardeners



Getting to know Katie
By Claudie Utley

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**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System



Katie Reddick has been working for the Pulaski County Extension Office for 15 years. “I just got my sapphire pin,” she acknowledges, and one can hear the delight in her voice. But many Master Gardeners have been getting to know her only since Randy Forst became the County Agent a year ago and made her his right hand with all tasks related to Master Gardening. Now, “it seems everybody knows me; they call me all the time and think I know the answers to their questions,” she says with a laugh. She makes sure to forward all questions to the appropriate agents.

Katie does know a lot of answers. At the office, she is known as the IT specialist even though she was completely new to computers when she started her job. (She was a realtor before.) To get up to speed, Katie went to computer school and has attended many additional PC classes ever since. As the Administrative Assistant 3, she not only supports the MG program and solves IT issues, but also manages the 4H program, collects for processing soil and plant disease samples from county residents and takes turns staffing the front desk. “No day is typical,” she says.

She reports that the office receives quite a few “strange phone calls.” One was from a man who was in a panic because his dog had ingested poison, what should he do? *Call the vet.* Another caller was concerned that his chicken were laying yolkless eggs. *It does happen sometimes.* Katie wishes she had kept a journal of the most unusual inquiries; it would make for an entertaining read. Away from the office, Katie is an enthusiastic gardener herself. She enjoys doing all her own yard work and even knows how to replace the spark plugs on her lawn mower. Her parents were big gardeners, she says, who instilled in her a love for old-fashioned roses and other heirloom ornamentals. One of her most cherished plants is a rose she grew from a cutting in her grandmother’s garden.

She sounds and lives just like a native Arkansan, although she was born in Michigan and moved 17 times around the country while growing up. After her father retired from his job buying and selling businesses, her parents ultimately settled in Arkansas—where they had briefly lived when Katie was a youngster—and Katie followed them. She earned a bachelor degree from the University of Arkansas in the early 1970s and hasn’t left the state since. It has become home.

As has the office. “We laugh a lot here,” Katie says. She has no plans for retirement. “It’s a great group of people.” Katie, it is a pleasure getting to know you. Thank you for all you do!

June Checklist by Carol Randle

Janet says that the winter that never wanted to end finally did, but we had a late spring. From a cold spring we went to a wet May and some gardens are waterlogged.

VEGETABLES

There is still plenty of time to plant vegetables, including Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant and Squash. It is the best time to plant Pumpkins and Winter Squash, along with Okra and Southern Peas. Make sure you use all the space you have to grow in. When you harvest one thing, plant another. Make sure all plants in the garden are mulched, this reduces weeds and prevents soil from splashing onto the stems and fruit; it moderates moisture levels and soil temperatures. We may need to add more fertilizer to the crops because all this rain can leach out all the nutrition. A light application is needed, don't go too heavy. Be sure you keep a watchful eye out for insects and diseases. There is some caterpillar activity, but aphids and spider mite populations have actually been reduced by the rains. As it dries up, watch out for their return. The sooner you catch a problem, the sooner you can control it.

ANNUALS

Panolas, Pansies and Violas are still doing pretty well in some gardens, but it is time for them to go. Pull them and plant heat lovers, like yellow Lantana, purple Angelonia, Periwinkles, Pentas and Zinnias. For shade, try Impatiens, Coleus and Torenia. Now is a great time to plant Caladium bulbs. These summer bulbs will be up and growing in no time and will last until a killing frost. Summer annuals are in abundance in nurseries and garden centers statewide. Regular applications of fertilizer and water will keep annuals and tropical flowering plants blooming their best.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

If you haven't cut back the foliage on spring flowering bulbs, do it now. From Daffodils to Tulips, bulbs have had enough time to replenish their resources for next year and their season is over. The foliage has lasted longer with the mild weather conditions. Many perennials will benefit from deadheading of spent blooms so they will put all their energy toward flower production rather than seed production. Perennials don't need as much nutrition as annuals, but different plants have different needs. Perennials that are blooming now include purple Coneflower, Coreopsis, Daylilies and Shasta Daisies.

The National Garden Bureau has designated 2015 the year of the Gaillardia or Blanket Flower. It is another long blooming perennial that thrives in hot, dry areas. The original Gaillardia is a combination of yellow, red and orange, but you can now find solid yellow, burgundy and orange varieties. Compact and standard sizes are also available, but each flower sets a seed head, so deadheading is needed for better flowering.

CONTAINERS

Container plants need frequent watering, because 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. If you are growing Petunias, don't skimp on fertilizer here. If they aren't getting enough to eat, they will stop blooming. Some heat loving plants for the container include: Sweet Potato Vine, Angelonia, Penta, Melapodium and Zahara Zinnias. Remember the "recipe" several nursery people have given us: Thriller, Filler, Spiller.

SHRUBS

There is still time, until the middle of June, to prune any of your spring blooming shrubs that need it. All spring blooming plants set their flower buds at the end of summer. If you wait too late to prune, the hot humid days of July and August will slow down the plants' recovery time and it won't give you as many blooms next year as it otherwise might. Remember, Janet tells us to ask yourself these questions before pruning: why, when and how? If you have not fertilized your spring blooming shrubs, do so now. One application of fertilizer a year should be sufficient.

LAWNS

Lawns have fully greened up, but it is hard to keep up with mowing given all this rain. If you fertilize, you will increase that rate of growth. However, we need to fertilize at least once a year to keep the lawn at its best. A slow-release high nitrogen fertilizer is best. Normally, after spring green-up is the best time to fertilize, but you can do so anytime during the summer prior to mid-September for the warm season grasses. There may be some winter damage on Centipede grass and St. Augustine grass lawns. If you need to thicken up your lawn, plug or re-sod soon to give the lawn time to re-establish itself. When mowing, don't remove more than one-third of the leaf blade at a time or you will stress the lawn. There is no need to keep your lawn wet, letting it dry out between waterings is best.

PESTS AND INSECTS

Gardeners in central Arkansas have seen some damage to Oak trees from a small beetle often referred to as a "May beetle" or June beetle". These are the adults of the white grubs you often find in the soil. The oaks most affected have been red, cherry bark and Southern Red Oaks and they've lost leaves. Luckily, the insects don't last long and rarely do they cause enough damage to kill a tree.

The Crapeyrtle Felt Scale was a new insect problem for us last season and we have already seen more across Central and Southern Arkansas. This small white scale can build up to large numbers quite quickly. Sometimes your first indication is a black sooty mold growing on the stems. Look closely. If you see tiny white specks along the bark, the scale is probably the issue. Systemic insecticides are your best method of control.

Message from President Marylea Gazette

It seems the spring rainy season went on forever but has now finally settled into our normal weather pattern of heat and humidity. There is a plus side to this however, as the perennials come back to life with their gorgeous colors and remind us why we love gardening. Our projects have also started their new growing season and we are again working to help make our City and County beautiful.

The State MG convention was this past week end hosted by Saline County in Benton. Lots of bus tours, seminars and vendors. It was a great convention and the Saline County group did a fabulous job. Next year the convention will be in Eureka Springs and in 2017 Little Rock will host the State Convention. If you have never attended a State Convention, make plans now to go to Eureka Springs next June. You will enjoy!

We are now working on the fall new Master Gardener Class which begins Aug 25th in Little Rock. We are still taking applications so if you know anyone who might be interested they can contact the Extension Office to get an application.

We do not meet in July or August but don't forget the July Ice Cream Social July 21st. You will be receiving more information on this very soon. Marylea

Please join us at the June meeting

St James United Methodist Church
June 16, 2015 at 11:30 am

Janet Carson
presents

"Fragrance Gardens"



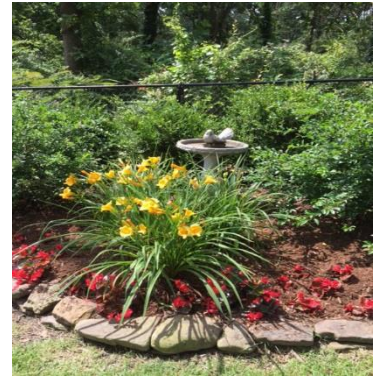
No meetings in July and August



**Witt Stephens Jr.
Wildflower Garden
Project**

These gardeners breathed a sigh of relief when the Arkansas river crested without flooding the gardens.

Pictures taken on
June 2, 2015



Spring Garden Tour

There is a profound irony to garden tours with Master Gardeners. Inevitably, one can hear this whispered exchange: “What’s that plant?”—“I have no idea.”

Our Spring Garden Tour on June 2 was no exception. But fortunately, there was always somebody who knew the answer. And we had plenty of plants to look at, ask about and admire at the three private homes in and near the Lakewood neighborhood of North Little Rock.

The Vernan and Jeannie Eagan property on Dawson Drive allowed for an interesting study of how plants adapt (or not) to an increasingly shady environment of maturing tree saplings. In their midst, a 20-year-old tree house, lovingly designed and built by the homeowner himself for his grandchildren, beckoned the young and the young at heart.

Another gorgeous garden with shade and sun-loving perennials—and a beautiful outdoor pool—elicited many oohs and aahs a few blocks over on Cove Creek Court. But the undisputed attraction of this garden was a solar-powered gazing ball! Please, Bo and Marilyn Eagan, do tell where this can be purchased?

Our final stop, the Dentons’ home near the Old Mill, told an inspiring before-and-after story. The homeowners had to truck in numerous load of dirt to level the back yard, dig French drains to solve drainage problems and cope with a functional, but not-so-pretty chain link fence. (Tip from Debbie, a long-time interior designer: Paint the top rail and the poles with black metal paint and the whole thing blends into the background. Genius!) The result is a sunny, cheerful oasis where the Denton’s spend many hours relaxing.

The morning concluded with lunch at the Irish Pub in Argenta to compare notes and ideas.

Many thanks to Arline Jackson and the Travel Committee for arranging the tour, the homeowners for welcoming us into their gardens and all Master Gardeners who joined us for this experience.

We’ll see you all on July 21 for the ice cream social.



Tools for the Garden Shred

2015

Mount Holly Garden Series

Sponsored by Margaret Wyatt and the Downtown Dames.

Meets' the 3rd Saturday morning on the month through
October at 9:00 am

Mount Holly Cemetery

June 20 – Native Plants for Gardening by Brent Baker

July 18 – Green Thumb by Mark Gibson

August 15 – How to Make a Bottle Tree by Susan Rose

September 19 – Arkansas Rose Society by President John
Baker

October 17 – Halloween, Thanksgiving & Christmas
Decorations by Ted Lewis



From the Travel Committee

Ice Cream Social is July 21, 2015. Watch your email for more information.

Mentors needed for the fall Class. Dates of the fall session are August 26th – September 30th in Little Rock. Please contact Ann Griffin: 802-249-7530 or agriffinvt@aol.com.



The Universal Knowledge of Gardeners

On a recent trip, we were climbing the steps toward the entry of the Benedictine abbey of Melk (Austria). Much to my delight and midway up the path was this "hotel" for solitary pollinators with many occupied "rooms".

Suddenly, I felt at home in these lovely gardens. Attending the Master Gardener seminars provides you with wonderful information that can be carried worldwide and, at no cost!

The Crump Community Garden Tour "Organic in the City"

Date: Saturday, June 27, 2015

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location: Crump Community Garden
33rd & Chester Street
Little Rock, AR

Activities/Features

Garden Tour

Food Taste (raw cooking)

Hypertufa Demonstration (garden art)

For more information call:

Laverne Davis 501-837-5083 or

501-663-3737

Niki Evansingston 501-960-6451

More From the Shed

Janet Carson Workshop "Gardening with Heirlooms"

Monday, July 13

9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Magnolia Room

Garvan Woodland Gardens

Hot Springs, AR

Relive memories of grandmother's garden or just come find out how to create your own great garden with tough, dependable, old-fashioned plants. Popular for generations because they're locally adapted and require little extra care, historic varieties of everything from vegetables to favorite flowers are here to stay. Let Arkansas gardening expert Janet Carson help you create your best garden ever with Southern heirlooms.

\$45 members | \$60 non-member | Reservations required | Reserve Online for this workshop or call 800-366-4664

- See more at: <http://www.garvangardens.org/eventcalendar/default.aspx#sthash.fcWf9jtc.dpuf>

Community work opportunity

The Central Arkansas Iris Society has a large bed to maintain at Hillcrest Hall (corner of Kavanaugh and Lee Streets in LR). We would like to encourage any PCMG that would like to help weed and mulch the area either this weekend to let Eric Hunt (eric@erichunt.com) know. He will be working there this weekend. We would like to extend a discount at our next Iris/Plant Sale held in September in exchange for help in our CAIS Iris bed. This is also an opportunity to learn more about irises and other plants. Eric is very knowledgeable in horticulture.

Thanks,
Susan Rose
CAIS
PCMG

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