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The
Magnolia Chronicle

Newsletter for the Pulaski County Master Gardeners



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**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System



Happy Fall, Y'all

Pumpkins are everywhere--at the grocery store, nurseries, farmers markets, churches, and along the side of the road. So it's time to think about decorating our front porches and steps for fall. Dale Webb, Master Gardener and former owner of The City Farmer, decorates with mums, and pumpkins of all kinds, then weaves ivy through her pumpkin display. Her porch and steps are a fall delight every year. Here's a photo that I took of Dale's porch last year.

Here's another lovely photo that might spark your decorative ideas for fall.

When decorating my small porch I like to use a variety of pumpkins, large acorn squash with their green color touched with a splash of orange, butternut squash, and spaghetti squash, along with mums or a colorful container of Joseph's Coat (Alternanthera).

I feel guilty if I throw away my fall decorations. After Thanksgiving I might bake the acorn squash to go with roast pork loin or a rotisserie chicken. I turn the butternut squash into soup or a butternut squash risotto. I microwave the spaghetti squash, and use it in place of pasta with a favorite sauce. I turn the small pumpkin pie pumpkins into a southwest pumpkin super stew that I serve over quinoa or rice. There are many recipe variations for pumpkin stew on the internet. The stew freezes nicely. I also like to make Julia Child's pumpkin soup in a pumpkin: cut a top off a pie pumpkin, scrape out the seeds, then fill it with broth, bread crumbs, cheese, and other ingredients to make pumpkin soup by replacing the lid and baking the pumpkin in the oven. You'll find Julia's recipe on the internet. A large pumpkin can be turned into pumpkin butter. Cut the pumpkin in half, remove the seeds, and bake it cut side down in the oven until soft. When cool, scrape the pumpkin from the skin, and then cook it with sugar and spices. Check recipes on the internet. Pumpkin Butter with a small loaf of pumpkin bread makes a great holiday gift for neighbors, family and friends.

By Phyllis Barrier

President's Letter

PRESIDENT POST:

As I leave my position as your president, I want to thank all of you who have helped me throughout the year. You have offered advice and encouragement and, sometimes, correction. You've included me in your projects and invited me to your socials. I very much appreciate you standing with me to make our organization stronger. Our strength is our people.

You are an awesome group! You share your time (15,000 hours as of 11-1-16) and your talents (really amazing talents!) for the success of this organization. Moving forward, I hope you will each search for a chance to offer your gift of leadership. It takes each individual working toward the good of the group to make the group successful.

Thank you to my board. I can't say enough about their hard work and support. I leave you in the very, very good hands of Kathy Ratcliffe, our incoming president. I look forward to the future of Pulaski County Master Gardeners!

Patti Womble

Welcome 2017 President Kathy Ratcliffe and her board!!!!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!!!

Thanks to PNG Leadership Conference Volunteers

The Master Gardener PNG Leadership was a big success. We appreciate and give big "thank you" to those that helped out. We had greater participation from more counties and record attendance. In addition, the conference attendees' evaluations were most favorable.

We had a good number that attended from Pulaski County and hope for more next year. While the conference primary target is Master Gardener members who are assuming leadership position in their county, the PNG Leadership Conference is open to all MG members. We try to have programs and speakers that will be interesting and valuable to any member.

As feedback on this year's location was so positive, the 2017 PNG Leadership Conference will again be in late September at the Ferndale 4-H Center. We hope you will continue to volunteer and consider attending next year's conference.

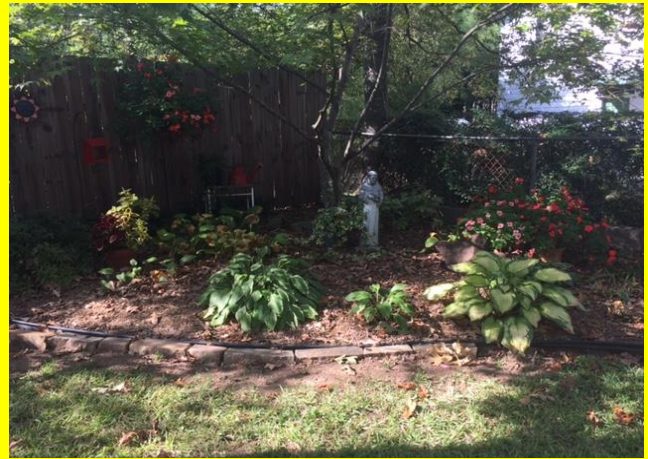
Again, our appreciation to those who volunteered for this year's conference.

Walter Jennings
2016 PNG Chair

Arkansas Master Gardener year-round gardening calendars for 2017 are now available! You will find them at the Little Rock State Extension Office for \$1.00



A PEACEFUL GARDEN



PCMG SOCIAL COMMITTEE 2016 EVENT SCHEDULE

- Tuesday, Dec 6 11:00 – 1:00pm Christmas Luncheon
Event Chairs: Laura Sholes and Richelle Daniel
Pleasant Valley Country Club



Mary Evans – 25 years of service, talent and great spirit.

More From the Shed



A Trip for All Seasons to the Schults Nursery By Jackie Walker

A half dozen Master Gardeners had a fine time at the Shults Nursery and Greenhouse, Hot Springs. Jim Shults, the owner and operator, took us on an interesting and informative tour of his business, which includes 15 or so greenhouses, as well as a fully stocked gift shop. We spent a happy hour learning how he propagates and cares for over 12,000 poinsettias, african violets, tulips, and many other plants of interest to us.

Jim joined the family business after he went to Hendrix College where he majored in biology (also taking some courses in botany). He is justly proud of the operation that uses modern and efficient methods of growing and caring for plants. He showed us the watering tables where he keeps most of the poinsettias. The tables are plumbed so that water floods them every other day up to an inch or so for about 15 minutes, then the water is drained into a holding area until the next watering time. Other plants have drip lines into each pot. The african violets reside on a wet blanket. All of the plants have beautiful, lush foliage because they are untouched. They are spaced so that the leaves have room to grow and are not bumped or bruised.

We are set to visit this nursery again in the spring to learn about Easter lilies, begonias, and other spring plants. The date is tentatively set for Monday, March 13, 2017. Put it on your calendar it will be here before you know it.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

CHECKLIST FOR DECEMBER

BULBS

One of the easiest ways to add color in the home landscape is by planting Spring flowering bulbs. Now is bulb planting time. What could be easier than to dig a hole, drop in a bulb and wait for excitement next Spring? Even better, dig up a large square or circle, then layer in different bulbs. Mass planting gives a stronger statement next Spring. 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 two and one half 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.

Spring bulbs need to go through a minimum of 12-14 weeks of cool weather before the stems can stretch and grow properly. If you can't plant quickly, then store the bulbs in a cool spot in the garage or in your refrigerator-away from other produce (NOT THE FREEZER). Plant all remaining bulbs by early January if you can. Tulips, Daffadils, Jonquils, Crocus and Hyacinths are the most common, but there are some unusual bulbs available as well. Our Tulips from Colorblend have been spectacular at Amy Sanders the last two years. They do well in the ground or in containers.

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. 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. Pay attention to moisture levels, especially if you have these plants in containers. Water as needed, especially before a hard freeze. If you didn't get all of your Winter annuals planted, NOW is the time. They must have their root systems 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 has worked well for us at Amy Sanders.) 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. Fertilize at planting and every three to four weeks during the Winter to keep them growing. If we do have dry spells, don't forget to water, especially newly planted plants.

Winter annuals can also be planted if you have gotten behind. The later you wait to plant, the larger the transplants should be. Janet looks for plants that are blooming, especially if she is planting Pansies, Violas, Panolas, and Dianthus. Swiss Chard, Kale and Cabbage need time to get roots established before a hard frost, but the past few years they have done extremely well. Fertilize at planting and every three to four weeks during the Winter to keep them growing. If we have dry spells, remember to water, especially newly planted plants.

VEGETABLES AND HERBS

Fall and Winter are quieter times in the vegetable garden, 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. More gardeners are planting a Fall and Winter vegetable garden. Season extenders in the form of covers or high tunnels can make Winter production even easier. In the past, Janet has grown Cabbage, Kale and Bok Choy all Winter outdoors with no added protection and still had a good harvest. Insects and diseases are not a challenge in the cool months.

TREES

November is the ideal time to plant a tree. 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 tree choices are: Little Leaf Linden (*Tilia Cordata*); Red Maple (*Acer Rubrum*) and Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia Chinensis*). Prepare the site well and amend in an area 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**, use 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.

GENERAL

Fall and early Winter is also an important season for clean-up. As your plants drop their leaves or as you are pulling up spent annuals and cutting back perennials, get any damaged plants out of the yard. Letting the spent debris remain in the garden can give disease spores and overwintering insects a place to live. This can lead to more problems next growing season.

HOUSEPLANTS

In central Arkansas, the average 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. The consensus is 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, taking 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. Overwatering is typically the number one killer of houseplants.

November blooms: Asters, Ornamental Cabbage, Camellias, Chrysanthemums, Clerodendron, Dahlias, English Daisies, Euonymous, 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.

HOLIDAY HINTS

Holiday plants are arriving in all outlets now. Poinsettias still reign as the top seller, but you do have more options on sizes and colors. From desktop miniatures to topiary or hanging basket Poinsettias, they all need the same type of care, bright sunlight and even moisture. With proper conditions, the colorful bracts can stay showy for months. Color choices are the traditional reds to pink, white, plum and even a new orange variety. Also, speckled and bi-colored choices abound. If you want to try something different, Bromeliads can come in great shades of red and green and last inside, easily, with minimal care for months. There are also Ornamental Peppers, Paper White Narcissus and Amaryllis from which to choose. Holiday decorations often add an amazing amount of color inside without plants, but having something that can last after the season is nice, too, and they make great hostess gifts.

If you use fresh greenery or Christmas Trees indoors, remember how quickly they dry out. Try to keep the plants fresh with ample moisture. If possible, redirect or close the heating vent closest to the tree to keep it from drying out. Once you are done with your tree, consider recycling it in a lake for the fish or as a haven for wildlife in a state park. Many parks collect them after the season. You can also decorate one for the birds outdoors.

December blooms are: Camellias, Hollies, Nandina, Osmanthus, Possum Haw, Rosehips, Tea Plant, Viburnums and Violets.



LRUF – A Gem Hidden on Coleman Creek

Nestled on Coleman Creek near Fletcher Library and (next door to Master Gardener Al Schneider) is Little Rock Urban Farming. Owner Chris Hiryak, a native of Little Rock, describes himself as “organic farmer, pragmatic, food activist, minimalist, artist and yoga practitioner.” After graduating as a Donaghey Scholar at UALR, Chris was accepted into LeadAR, a leadership program through the Division of Agriculture at the U of A.

During a tour for Master Gardeners from the Scholars’ Garden, we saw intricate and efficient use of space in which beautiful (and delicious) greens, carrots, tomatoes, micro greens and so much more are organically grown. Bee boxes offer a safe haven for pollinators. Besides growing USDA certified organic products, Chris does garden design and conducts classes. LRUF is a proud founding member of the Hillcrest Farmers Market.

This is truly a Little Rock gem.



*You are invited to attend the
Pulaski County Master Gardener
Christmas Luncheon*

Tuesday, December 6th, 2017 at 11:00 a. m.

Pleasant Valley Country Club

1 Pleasant Valley Dr.

Little Rock, AR

\$27.00 per person

Program: Jana Hunter Interiors

******Wear your Master Gardener name tag******

Guest nametags will be available at the door

RSVP by November 21st

Make checks payable to:

Pulaski County Master Gardeners

Mail check and names to:

Glenda Arledge

5612 C Street

Little Rock, AR 72205



Member

Guest

Name _____ *Name* _____

Name _____ *Name* _____