

MARCH

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The  
**Magnolia Chronicle**

Newsletter for the Pulaski County Master Gardeners



**U of A**

**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

*University of Arkansas System*



## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

The Pulaski County 2017 New Master Gardener Training begins on August 23rd and continues for every Wednesday until October 4th. Master Gardeners are the best recruiters, so please help us get out the word to your friends and neighbors. If you know of someone who is interested in joining this wonderful organization, please send their contact information to Greta Wright, Recruitment Chair at [gbwright@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gbwright@sbcglobal.net) or call anyone on our Board.

**Reminder: The PCMG Monthly meeting will be on Tuesday, March 21st at 11:30 at St. James United Methodist Church. Dan Chapman, Director of the University of Arkansas Fruit Research Station, will speak on "Grafting Excitement into your Garden".**

Thank you for all you do for Master Gardeners.

Kathy  
501-912-0989

## Springtime at the Old Mill by Valerie Boyce



The Old Mill, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located in the T.R. Pugh Memorial Park, at the corner of Fairway Avenue and Lakeshore Drive in the Lakewood subdivision of North Little Rock. The structure is most famous for its part in the opening scenes of *Gone With the Wind* and is believed to be the last remaining structure from the film. Pictured above on the left.

The Mill, completed in 1933, is intended to appear abandoned – without doors and windows, perhaps due to thieves or decay – just as old mills that were in service in the early 1800s had become by the 1930s. Senòr Dionico Rodriguez of Mexico was responsible for all the details of each piece of concrete work made to represent wood, iron, or stone, as well as the designing of the foot bridges and rustic seats. Rodriguez’s secret techniques were so detailed and exacting that you can identify the species of trees in most of his work. For example, the large footbridge to the Mill is so detailed that you can tell that the fallen “tree” was a black locust because the bark looks exactly like the bark of the live black locust growing near it.

The Old Mill was given to the City of North Little Rock in 1976 by real estate developer Justin Matthews. It has been a Master Gardener Project since 1991. Master Gardeners work with NLR Parks & Recreation Department as well as Friends of the Old Mill, a volunteer organization, to maintain the three acres of the grounds of the Old Mill. It isn’t easy keeping an 80-plus-year-old “abandoned” mill and its grounds looking abandoned but amazingly beautiful! Master Gardeners tend trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals in sun and in shade, from dry hillsides to boggy lakesides. Plantings include many native species as well as old-fashioned varieties to enhance the natural historic setting. Just as the camellias are fading, spring brings a profusion of azaleas, tulip trees, redbuds, dogwoods, and Indian hawthorn, as well as daffodils, Japanese iris, bearded iris, lilies, creeping phlox, dianthus, and other beautiful blooms. As the summer progresses, the Old Mill is awash with hostas, ferns, roses, coneflowers, black-eyed susans, butterfly bush, beautyberries, oakleaf hydrangeas, abelia, althea, gardenia, elaeagnus, and numerous other species.

The Old Mill is a photographer’s dream and a beautiful background for bridal, prom, and graduation pictures. It hosts over 200 weddings and 100,000 visitors each year and is open from sunrise to sunset; admission is free! The Old Mill is Trip Advisor’s #1 thing to do in North Little Rock and will be part of the Historic Gardens Tour on May 22 at the State Convention.

For more information, go to [http://www.northlittlerock.org/attractions\\_detail/285](http://www.northlittlerock.org/attractions_detail/285)

## Baptist Rehab Project (BRI) by Susie Green

BRI is the only Horticulture Therapy Master Gardener Project in Pulaski County, which makes it a unique Master Gardener Project. However, Horticulture Therapy is a familiar experience for all gardeners who reap the physical, psychological and spiritual benefit of digging in the dirt, planting, tending and enjoying the beauty of the botanical world. The American Horticulture Therapy Association states: Horticultural therapy is a time-proven practice. The therapeutic benefits of garden environments have been documented since ancient times. In the 19th century, Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and recognized as the "Father of American Psychiatry," was first to document the positive effect working in the garden had on individuals with mental illness.

In the 1940s and 1950s, rehabilitative care of hospitalized war veterans significantly expanded acceptance of the practice. No longer limited to treating mental illness, horticultural therapy practice gained in credibility and was embraced for a much wider range of diagnoses and therapeutic options. Today, horticultural therapy is accepted as a beneficial and effective therapeutic modality. It is widely used within a broad range of rehabilitative, vocational, and community settings.<sup>1</sup>



Our BRI project began in 1991. Jaine Waldron, who was a master gardener, provided plant activities to nursing home patients. She approached Janet Carson and asked

about beginning a plant therapy program as a MG project. At about the same time, Baptist Rehabilitation Institute personnel approached the MG program about starting a plant therapy program in their recreational therapy department. BRI Horticulture Therapy Master Gardeners express their gardening love to the inpatients at Baptist Rehabilitation Institute on the second and third Saturday of each month. BRI MG team members research, select materials, prepare and demonstrate a hands-on horticulture activity designed to enhance the recovery of patients in the BRI. The MG demonstrations usually result in a beautiful living botanical-take-home item for the patient, which continues to contribute to the patient's recovery process. We want to welcome our newest member – Becky Gibson, transferred from Lonoke County MG. We look forward to having her join our group and share her gardening skills with us.



The patient's family members are encouraged to participate with the patient. Recently one patient's family member, a retired County Extension Agent, emailed the PCEX Staff Chair expressing glowing appreciation for the



"Horticulture Therapy" session in which his wife was a patient participant. The session referenced in the email was called "Rose and Her Anatomy: *creating a miniature rose garden.*" Under the direction of a BRI Team MG Member, the patients mixed soil, employed aromatherapy, repotted miniature roses and applied Valentine decoration to the burlap covered pots because Valentine's Day was approaching. Let's say they explored a rose anatomy from the soil to the rose hip, and a few MG and patients could not stomach dissecting a beautiful rose to see its full anatomy, which brought plenty of laughter.

Laughter and encouragement are two characteristic of the BRI Project and this day was especially joyful because all the patients' miniature rose gardens look better than the MG model miniature rose garden.

1. <http://www.ahta.org/horticultural-therapy/home>

## PULASKI COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS SOCIAL COMMITTEE

**Friday, March 31**, car pool to Shultz Nursery in Hot Springs. Their lilies will be starting to show their Easter blooms and there will be other spring things to choose from. We will car pool from the Shackelford Road public parking lot at 9 a.m., arriving at the nursery at 10 a.m. with plenty of time to shop, then have lunch at a place to be decided. Note this is a change of date from March 13 because the plants are not far enough along for them to sell them. Cherith Beck will lead the Schultz Nursery runout. Her number is 837-7741.

**Tuesday, June 6** we will car pool to Mt. Magazine to visit the garden of author Lori Spencer and enjoy a Butterfly power point. Lori is a Master Gardener and wrote the acclaimed book, "Arkansas Butterflies and Moths." She invited us to visit her very own garden so this will be a very special excursion. The power point presentation will be at the Mt. Magazine Visitors' Center. A park interpreter will lead a nature walk. We will enjoy an "on your own" lunch at the Mr. Magazine Lodge. Watch this space for time and meeting place. Susan Reasoner is leading Mt. Magazine excursion. If you have questions please call her at 837-3989.

**Save the date:** On Wednesday, **November 29** the Travel Committee will sponsor a Bus to Garvan Gardens to see the holiday lights. We will leave sometime after 5 p.m. Plans for supper are not finalized. We will keep you posted as we develop plans for food and what our costs will be. Jackie & Walter Walker are leading this excursion. If you have questions or suggestions please call 501-225-9478.

## PCMG Plant Sales this Spring



**SPRING PLANT SALE – Saturday, April 8th from 8 am until 11 am (rain or shine)**

**Little Rock Greenhouse – N. Palm and 7th Street (behind the Arkansas State Hospital)**

**PATHFINDER GREENHOUSE SALE – Friday, April 21 for Pathfinder employees and MG's**

**Saturday, April 22 for the public. Located in Jacksonville. Sales are from 8 am until 11 am.**



## 2017 MT. HOLLY CEMETERY LECTURES

April 15, 2017, “Hummingbirds-Jewels in Flight” presented by Tana Beasley

May 20, 2017, “Arkansas’ Majestic Trees” presented by Allison Litchy

June 17, 2017, “Water Gardens” presented by Mark Gibson

July 15, 2017, “Tinctures and Balms from Your Own Gardens” presented by Elenore Vena and Kayla Baker

August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, “Lilies A to Z” presented by Susan Rose

September 16, 2017, “Raising Chickens in an Urban Environment” presented by Kayla Baker and Elenore Vena

October 21, 2017, Horticulturist and Lead Gardener at the Arkansas Governor’s Mansion, Holly Wyman

Lectures are held the 3rd Saturday of each month at 9 am at the Bell House located in the center of the cemetery (pictured above). A \$5.00 donation is suggested. All proceeds benefit Mt. Holly. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy a lecture, refreshments and door prizes.

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**The Central Arkansas Iris Society will have their 51st ANNUAL IRIS SHOW on**

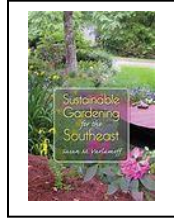
**Saturday, April 29th**

**1:00 – 4:00 pm**

Grace Lutheran Church Family Life Center (Hillcrest at Kavanaugh)

**Free Admission**

## New Book Review



### **Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast – Book review by Martha Coop**

Sometimes you come across a library book that is a must purchase for yourself! And for me, Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast by Susan M. Varlamoff is such a book. The foreword by Alan Armitage pulled me in with two sentences.

“Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast is a pragmatic and practical manual that provides step-by-step instructions leading us on a path to protect and enhance the surrounding environment. The practical steps in this book are backed up with scientific research data. “

I flipped to the back of the book and found eleven pages of references. Susan further included four and three-fourths pages of illustrations credits. These sources could provide the sustainable gardening enthusiast reading recommendations for the foreseeable future!

Although Susan is the director of the Office of Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia, she presented the material in an enjoyable and down to earth craft. She is, after all, a Master Gardener! You will find ten chapters which cover pertinent concerns. The first chapter, entitled “Design with Nature”, offers a readable rationale for sustainable gardening. It includes step-by-step (as Alan stated) advice on how to get started on this journey. You will find a practical landscape plan for a suburban lot. That’s what I need! I live on a 75’x100’ lot, not a five-acre mini farm. In this chapter, you will find a water-wise landscape plan for a suburban landscape. When you read Chapter 7, “Water Wisely”, you will already have the background to slide right into the chapter.

Other chapter topics include: The Inside Scoop on Soil; Plant Trees: Fight Climate Change; Restore Biodiversity with Native Plants; Plant a Resilient Landscape (This one is a doozie!); Sustainable Lawn Care; Manage Pests Naturally; Grow Food Organically; Bring Wildlife Home

As a retired elementary teacher, I confess that I love beautiful illustrations and this book also meets that criteria for me. The illustrations and captions serve not only as a visual feast, but as enlightenment of the text. Two features that I love about this book are the quotation from famous people at the beginning of each chapter, and the golden highlighted “Did You Know” boxes. I would be remiss not to include one of each in this review. These features gave me food for thought and for my soul. I can’t say which are my favorites...

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”

Nelson Henderson (1865-1943), pioneer farmer, Manitoba

**DID YOU KNOW?** It is estimated that 1 inch of soil takes anywhere from hundreds to thousands of years to form under natural conditions. (Soil Science Society of America, “Soils Matter”

### APRIL CHECKLIST by Carol Randle

We have had early warm weather so our trees and shrubs have budded early. Hopefully, the brief cold snap we had in March will not cause damage to our plants. I'm sure you checked them as soon as the weather warmed up again to make sure there was no damage.

This is the time to sow the following seeds: early Asters, Basil, Canterbury Bells, Celosia, Columbine, Cosmos, Foxglove, Gomphrena, grasses, Hollyhocks, Marigolds, Melampodium, Morning Glories, Petunias, Sunflowers, Sweet Peas, Sweet William, and Zinninas.

No matter how well you cleaned up last Fall, there will still be some dead leaves and debris that will have blown in, particularly around shrubs and in chain-link fences. Now is a good time to clear all that out. We had a ton of leaves at Amy Sanders, a blower made short work of them!

#### ROSES

Do not plant dormant Roses after April 15th, or potted Roses after May 15th. Lightly feed Roses with Cottonseed Meal or commercial Rose food. Use a complete Rose food. Begin chemical control of Black Spot as foliage starts to expand and continue every 7 to 10 days through the growing season. The best fungicides for Black Spot control are Funginex, Daconil or Bayer Advanced.

#### ANNUALS

Fertilize your Pansies, Violas, Panolas, Kale and Cabbage one last time and enjoy them until you have to pull them for Summer annuals. Violas will last well into Summer, but start interspersing Summer color with them. Some annuals you can plant now include Petunias, Callibrachoa, Geraniums and Begonias. Hold off on the heat loving Impatiens, Lantanas, and Zinnias until mid to late April. Plant water plants now. Plant Snapdragons and Dianthus now. Harden off Summer bedding plants. Slowly activate to outside conditions.

#### EASTER LILY

If you received an Easter Lily, enjoy it while it is in flower, then plant it outside in the garden. They thrive in a sunny, well-drained location and will multiply more each year. Oriental Lilies will add additional color and can give you loads of blooms. New perennials are arriving daily at garden centers now. This is a fun time to shop, the problem is deciding what to buy. Look for new varieties of annuals, as well.

## HOUSEPLANTS

Keep your houseplants indoors until the middle or end of the month. Then slowly acclimate them to the sun. Otherwise, they can sunburn. If any overwintered tropical blooming plants, like Mandevilla, Hibiscus, and Bougainvillea, have weak and spindly stems, they should be pruned. As you move these plants outside, repot them and prune them back by one third, if not more. These Summer tropical plants bloom on new growth and you need to encourage that by alleviating root bound conditions and encouraging rapid new growth. If you don't repot or prune, you will see limited new growth. Start fertilizing every three to four weeks and your plants should be blooming again in no time.

## VEGETABLES

Plant warm season vegetables inside (Tomatoes and Peppers) until the chance of frost is passed. You can still plant cool season vegetables (Lettuce Cabbage, Broccoli, Radishes and Spinach). Continue to harvest your cool season plants. There is still time to replant a little, but by mid-month we can start planting Squash, Tomatoes, Green Beans, Corn, Peppers, Eggplants and Cucumbers. Combining flower plants with vegetables helps deter pests. Examples are: Henbit, Geraniums, Asters, Calendulas, Chrysanthemums, and Marigolds. Vegetable gardening is "cool" again and more and more gardeners are planting edibles. You don't have to have a stand alone vegetable garden. Intersperse vegetables and herbs with your ornamentals, which is another way to get double duty. Vegetables and Herbs can also be grown in containers. April is the best month for vegetable gardening. Rotate your crops to help control pests. If you are a beginning vegetable gardener, start small and build on success.

## SHRUBS

Most of our landscape plants should be growing. We can begin to assess our plants' health. If you have plants that are half-dead or totally dead, remove and replant. When you choose new plants, be creative. Try some new plants. Think about the season, your garden always needs some color. If your Winter landscape was barren, look at Camellias. Winter Honeysuckle does great along with Mahonias and Winter Jasmine to spice up the Winter color. Spring blooms are usually covered pretty well in most gardens, but to carry that color into Summer,



look at Wiegela, Mock Orange, early Summer Spirea, Itea and then Clethra for later blooms. Gardenias are always welcome with their fragrant flowers and Viburnums can add color and fragrance. Summer plants include Hydrangeas, Althea, Buddleia (Butterfly Bush) and Roses. Plants for Fall interest include the Itea with bright red color and Burning Bush gives us great Fall color. Crape Myrtles are great for Summer through Fall and Winter interest, and the purple berries of Callicarpa (French Mulberry or Beautybush) are always show stoppers. Expand your plant palette. New varieties of old favorites can add color and interest. Make sure you prepare the soil well, if you can, and mulch after planting. Water, of course, is CRITICAL for the first few years of a plant's life. Don't be overly concerned about fertilizer for trees and shrubs. The key is to give them a strong foundation of soil and keep them watered so they can build a strong root system.

LAWNS AND GENERAL YARD CARE

**DO NOT** apply fertilizer to your lawn until it is **COMPLETELY GREEN**. Lawn grasses are also almost actively growing as well. It is during the transition period between dormancy and growth that you need to use caution when applying herbicides. Mow any remaining Winter weeds to prevent seed set and start monitoring for Summer weeds. Clip back established ground cover. Repair dead patches in ground cover by tearing them out. Add Compost and peat moss into the soil, then replant bare areas with divisions taken from outer edges.

Check trellis and support wires on climbers before the plants are fully developed. During the Winter these supports often become dislodged. Check the brackets used for hanging baskets to ensure they will support the basket full of moist soil.

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