

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners

Christy Bolling preparing for our State MG Convention



UofA

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



May 2017

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

April showers bring May flowers and what do May flowers bring? Master Gardeners!

This has been a busy and exciting Spring for everyone as we prepare to host the 2017 State Master Gardener Conference. Our project gardens are looking great and are ready to greet Master Gardeners from all over Arkansas. Our wonderful conference chairs and committees have volunteered countless hours preparing for the event. Thank you! Thank you for all you have done and will do to make this the best conference ever!

Kathy Ratoliffe

PCMG President

May 2017

"From Beethoven to Beaux Arts and Bauhaus: What Classic Principles of Art and Style Teach us about Gardening"

The upcoming monthly meeting of the PCMGs on May 16th will enjoy a presentation from Bob Byers, who from his close association with the Master Gardener program over the years, we consider one of our own. Bob is an Arkansas native, born in Heber Springs and raised on a farm in Faulkner County. He acquired his love of growing things in the large vegetable gardens grown by his parents.

Following a Master of Landscape Architecture from LSU he worked for the National Park Service in Wisconsin and for design firms in Florida, Alabama, and Arkansas. Bob later enjoyed teaching young people in Landscape Architecture at the University of Arkansas. He also worked on numerous private and commercial design projects including the historical restoration of the Peel House Mansion Museum Gardens.

Bob came to Hot Springs in 1994 as curator of Garvan Woodland Gardens, the University of Arkansas' botanical garden, and was very involved in building over \$18 million in improvements. Since April, 2015, Bob has served as director of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, where he looks forward to many new challenges in another great public garden.

All This and Collards Too By Martha Coop

I recently bought three bunches of lovely collards at Kroger. They weren't on my shopping list, but as I rolled my cart by, I added them to my trove of produce, feeling that I needed the good that was in them. Little did I know that purchase would cause a train of thoughts to tumble from my brain something like this: After putting away the groceries, I decided to look up the nutrition in collards. Really nutrient dense! I should to eat collards more often....

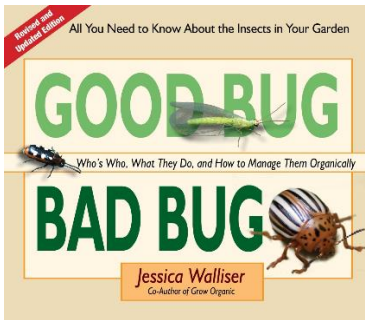
I stopped up the sink and began to run water. As I untwisted the ties I wondered about the origin of these lovely greens. On the tag was printed "WPRawl Farms, USA". I looked it up. The greens came from a family farm located in Peplion, South Carolina, just East of Columbia. A 10 hour 40 minute drive to Sherwood, Arkansas.... That's a pretty big footprint but it beats oranges from South Africa, and more nutritious than an orange too.... Hmm, even if I don't have 6 hours of sun in the yard, I might try growing some cool season veggies before the leaves get big on the trees....

I used 1 ½ sinkfuls of water to wash my collards... Grandmother had to draw her water from a well and was frugal with her steps. Granddaddy hooked a hose to her dry sink.... That water I had just let go into the sewer would have gone in her bucket and out to her flowers or maybe collards. I wonder how much gray water I could save for reuse? I STILL don't have a rain barrel!... Gotta get at least two.... What was that quote in the chapter about water-wise in the book, Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast? "Water promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th century: The precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations." Shawn Tully, *Fortune Magazine*, May 15, 2000.... Compelling....

What a memory... scouting the cabbage loopers on the collards to dispose of them! My grandmother dipped snuff and I had to take her coffee can spittoon to the garden and drop in the cabbage loopers I really wasn't a sadistic six year old; just doing my job.... No wonder the chemical companies came up with the abominable idea of neonicotinoid insecticides!

I need to get out Jessica Walliser's book, GOOD BUG BAD BUG. I'll need some help to do this organically.... Better than our 50s go to method of Sevin.... Oh, this book would be a good recommend for the Magnolia Chronicle.... As I headed to the compost heap with the nutritious collard trimmings, I remembered folks in the Carolinas are fond of their collards. When we went to the Outer Banks in October we saw fields and fields of collards growing by the roadside. Restaurants proudly served up fresh collards. They chopped them up very fine about like slaw. Never seen that done. They were so good cooked up fresh! And served with breaded, fried fatback. Not brave enough to try THAT.... Drat! I don't have any bacon to season my collards

BOOK REVIEW BY MARTHA COOP



Good Bug Bad Bug by Jessica Walliser is a big tome in a small cover! Keep this book handy for easy reference. Twenty-four common “PESTS” comprise the first section. Two facing pages about each pest provide easy to access information. Jessica shows the reader two ID pictures of the life cycle stages, describes the insect and tells how to spot the damage to plants inflicted by pests. The format lists live BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS (i. e. beneficial insects that help control the pest). She lists PREVENTIVE and ORGANIC CONTROLS plus a little MORE ABOUT each insect.

What I like best about the book though, is her treatment of “BENEFICIALS” and how they work. There’s some pretty gruesome stuff out there in the insect world, taking place right under our noses! They do their work! Jessica has convinced me that I NEED these beneficial insects to carry on a natural predator-prey cycle. She stated that just the 14 beneficials included in her book help control several hundred different kinds of pests. And that they do an even better job with a little encouragement from the resident gardener. Yes, she tells the gardener how to do this. She stated that her objective is ‘to help you attain that all-too-elusive balance between the “good” and the “bad” of gardening.’

I’m such a rookie that I needed to learn to recognize which bugs NOT to kill. One hero of the beneficial type is assassin bugs. Duh! I had been killing every one that I saw, plus the larvae of the ladybug. Well, they looked so MENACING.... Anyway, the assassin bug is so important, you’ll find it mentioned on 13 separate pages. For one, they control the hated tomato hornworm. Also, aphids, cabbage worms, cucumber beetles, cutworms, earwigs, Japanese beetle, lace bugs, and many caterpillars. (Yes, butterfly caterpillars. Nature seems cruel.)

How to attract these superstars? They hunt on all types of vegetation, including weeds, shrubs, trees and flowering plants. The more variety in their habitat, the better. It’s that diversity word again. Insects need more than grass and meatball hollies!

I now find the assassin bug hero all over my yard, but there are other hero species. Last summer I planted a clethra summersweet and the blooms were covered with beautiful iridescent thread-waisted wasps (non-stinging, but have an enlarged ovipositor that looks like a stinger). Most of the adult wasp species are tiny, 1/32” to 1/2”. But the offspring are the real gardener’s hero! There are several species of parasitic wasps that lay eggs on or inside host insects. And here’s the gruesome part. The various species of eggs hatch and consume up to 200 different species of pests, eating first the non-essential tissue, then proceeding to vital organs---eventually killing the host. Some species pupate within the prey and emerge as adults.

Jessica recommends planting plenty of blossoming flowers and herbs for these wasps, like allium, alyssum, cosmos, dill, fennel, lemon balm, thyme, yarrow and zinnia. Some of these parasitic wasps can be ordered, but I say why not order some of these flower and herb seeds and home grow your own insectary? Adults feed on pollen and nectar, and the young eat aphids, beetle larvae, bagworms, cabbage worms, Colorado potato beetle, corn ear worms, cucumber beetles, cutworms, gypsy moth caterpillars, Japanese beetles, leafminers, mealybugs, Mexican bean beetles, moth caterpillars, sawfly larvae, scale, squash vine borers, tent caterpillars, tobacco budworm, tomato hornworm and whiteflies. I’d say that beats spray ANY day! I don’t want to kill my heroes with friendly fire.

May 2017

*Gardens Tell Stories –
If gardens could talk; oh-but they do!*
By: Susie Green

*Oh, the things they'd say
and the stories they'd tell
If you'd just sit and listen for a spell...*

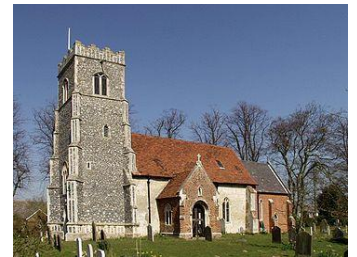
One of the many joys of gardening is sharing the stories of our garden with others. As BRI Project members, we hear the patients' garden stories twice each month. Those patients who are active gardeners have a longing in their eyes, (that say, "I am going to get better so I can get back to my garden") while they tell their garden's stories.

A recent BRI Master Garden presentation was the "Easter Garden", which gave the patients a hands-on horticulture therapy experience using, moss, succulent plant, non-succulent plant, pea gravel, Papier-mâché tomb, red rock, and a 10" spring green flowerpot saucer. The patients heard the "Easter Garden" tell its story as they arrange each item into a 10" spring green flowerpot saucer. The presenting MG lived in Bromsewell, England across the lane from the 11th century St Edmond Church and each year the children would



make Easter Gardens, which were beautifully displayed in St Edmond's Church on Easter Sunday to tell the Easter Story. Your garden tells a story too so listen carefully because it's talking about you. *Let your Garden tell its story at the 2017 Master Gardeners State Convention.*

(St. Edmonds Church)



MG MAY EDUCATIONAL HOURS – OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

**SATURDAY, MAY 20TH at 9:00 AM - Allison Litchy, presenting
Arkansas' Majestic Trees as part of the Mount Holly Garden Series.**

In their 8th year, the Downtown Dames sponsor the gardening lectures at 9:00 A.M. the third Saturday morning, April through October. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the beauty of Little Rock's oldest cemetery, dating to 1843. A suggested donation of \$5.00 per person, benefits projects at Mount Holly Cemetery. Refreshments and door prizes!

JACKSONVILLE CITY HALL

By Karen Zap and Jane Fletcher

The Jacksonville Master Gardener project began several years ago. It is composed of 7 designated areas full of flowering plants. Three of the beds line Main Street, one on the freeway ramp and two at the entrance to the city hall property. The rose garden is under the City of Jacksonville Sign. These provide a colorful welcome to travelers visiting Jacksonville.

We meet on the 4th Saturday of the month. We have about 10 MG on our project and each workday we put in 3 to 4 hours. Some of our project members will spend some time during the week in our gardens. Jane & I work during the week, so Saturday's are our only available days to volunteer.

The entry beds to the property contain crape myrtles, daisies, knock-out roses and Mexican petunias. Burgundy and lime green Sun Coleus along with lantana have been planted there in previous years. The lime and burgundy colors “pop” providing an instant display for everyone in the area.



The easy to maintain main street beds contain grasses and seasonal plantings while the others have perennials for overall color during the year.

Several pine trees forming a line act as a backdrop to the Main Street beds. This project enhances Jacksonville's strategic plan to make the city more pedestrian friendly.

Our MG project is fully supported by the Mayor and the City of Jacksonville. They provide water and mulch for the beds as well as keeping the grass mowed and we provide the maintenance. It has proved to be a nice project for the city and PCMG group.

We have great fun while weeding and discussing our project. We are always looking for new volunteers.

The freeway beds have tall cannas in yellow and red. These beds were lovingly attended by Master Gardener Joanna Wilson, who passed away last year.

Mentors Needed for Fall 2017 New Master Gardener Training Class

The Fall training class is getting closer and we need volunteer mentors for the new trainees. The class enrollment goal is 50 students and we need at least 55 volunteers available to help so we won't have to double up the assignments unless absolutely necessary.

The mentoring program links enthusiastic and knowledgeable Master Gardeners with new trainees in order to facilitate the integration of new MGs into the organization and to promote long term retention. A mentor's role is a time limited one, providing crucial support and guidance for the trainee from the initial enrollment in the course until the new MG is successfully integrated into a sanctioned project. Once the new MG has been assigned to a project it is the responsibility of the project chair and/or project sponsor to provide the ongoing support and education.

The upcoming class begins on Wednesday, August 23, 2017 and concludes on Wednesday, October 4. Mentors are expected to welcome the new trainee with an initial phone call or introductory email before the class begins to establish a communication link and answer early questions. Additional guidance for mentors will be provided on the mentor fact sheet you will receive with your trainee's contact information.

Who can serve as a mentor? Any Master Gardener in good standing can be a mentor. This role is particularly good for those MGs who are less able to meet physical challenges but still have a wealth of background experience to contribute. MGs from recent courses are also very welcome as they have recent experience to draw on. The only other essential qualification is enthusiasm for the program!

If you are willing to be a mentor you may sign up at the May or June monthly meetings or online through the contacts below. Please remember that our organization depends on new members to sustain our projects and that the support of mentors in the initial phases of training and transition is crucial to our long term success. We appreciate your consideration and assistance.

Mentoring Sub-committee Co-chairs:

Ann Griffin agriffinvt@a1.com 802-249-7530

Anje Nevala anjemn@gmail.com 501-454-2392

PCMG trip to Mt. Magazine

On 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.

We will meet at the east side of the Second Presbyterian Church parking lot. That is the side closest to Pleasant Valley Drive. 2d Pres. is located at the intersection of Pleasant Valley Drive and Cantrell Road.

Time to meet is 8 a.m. Carpooling is fun because you have time to visit on the way to Mt. Magazine. Also, be sure to help out with the cost of gasoline. Susan Reasoner is leading Mt. Magazine excursion. If you have questions please call her at 837-3989.

May 2017



We would like to create a spot for “plants to trade” or even “plants to give away” in this spot of the newsletter each month. We all have plants we might be looking for to add to our gardens. Others might want to locate where to purchase plants for their gardens. So this is pretty much a “spot” to post these. Please email me at: daffodilsrose555@gmail.com if you have items for this Trading Post.

Needing Posts from all PCMG - please let me know what you have, need or just information you have to help our PCMG.

JUNE CHECKLIST by Carol Randle

What a spectacular Spring we have had. I overwintered one of my 'Velvet Elvis' Plectranthus plants in our portable flower house and it looked as good when I got it out as it did when I put it in. I have re-planted it in a different flower bed that has more room. I received a bonus because I discovered that two of the other four 'Velvet Elvis' Plectranthus I planted last year are coming back. That means three of the five I planted are available for this year. I am so excited! These Arkansas Diamond Plants are really great. We planted Redhead Coleus last year at Amy Sanders and they did very well, so we planted some this year in our Sign Bed.

The new Arkansas Diamonds Plants for this year are: 'Vista Bubblegum' Petunias; 'Big Whopper' Begonias; and 'White Christmas' Caladiums.

If you have plants that are not growing to their potential, assess their location and consider replacing them. A gradual decline of large shrubs and trees is often an indication of serious problems that may not be correctible. With trees, it is usually a slow death, trees do not die overnight. This means that we need to take inventory of our plants. If you have to replace a plant, try a different plant instead of replacing it with the same plant you had. Think about what time of year you would like to have more color and choose something that blooms in that season. One application of fertilizer each year is all that is needed on trees and shrubs so fertilize and water as needed.

VEGETABLES AND HERBS

Harvest your Lettuce, Peas, Carrots, Radishes and Onions now. The time of day vegetables are harvested can make a difference in the taste and texture. For sweetness, pick Peas and Corn late in the day. That's when they contain the most sugar. Other vegetables, such as Lettuce and Cucumbers, are crisper and tastier if you harvest them early in the morning before the day's heat has a chance to wilt and shrivel them. Tomatoes are the number one vegetable grown by home gardeners, typically we start harvesting this month. This is also the month for Blossom End Rot to rear its ugly head. This black, rotted area on the base of the tomato is not a disease, but a calcium deficiency, often caused by major fluctuations in the moisture-we often see it when we have a dry period followed by heavy rain. This deficiency can be treated with "Stop Rot".

Try to keep the garden mulched and evenly watered to avoid the problem. Tomato fruit worms and hornworms are also out and can quickly devour tomatoes. Larger worms should be picked and destroyed, smaller ones can be controlled organically with BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). Also, remember that Tomatoes do not set fruit well when the temperatures stay above 75 degrees F.

If you have not planted any vegetables or herbs yet, there is still time. The time is ideal to plant Winter Squash and Pumpkins. These long season plants take up room in the garden, but give great results in the Fall. Southern peas and Okra love the heat as well and do nicely all Summer.

I must tell you about my Lemon Thyme. I noticed one afternoon that there was fluff or fuzz or hair around my plant. I couldn't figure out why until my husband lifted the Thyme and there were four tiny baby rabbits underneath! We put the Thyme and the fluff back and left them alone. Later, we discovered they were gone. I don't know when they left or how big they were when they left.

BULBS

In early June, divide Narcissus bulb clumps. If you decide to store bulbs rather than leaving them in the ground, remember to replant in late Summer or early Fall. Wait until the foliage of Spring-flowering bulbs turns yellow before removing. Lift and replant *Lycoris* as foliage yellows. This prevents it from getting too deep as it multiplies. Iris should be left alone for 6 weeks after blooming. Then lift and divide and cut back foliage to 3 inches.

ROSES

Feed Roses with a complete fertilizer in June. Weed well. Remove faded blooms and clean up around plant. Watch for Aphids, Mildew and Blackspot and spray when necessary. Cut Roses above a five-leaf cluster to encourage growth. Plant Chives or Garlic in between Roses to discourage Aphids.

ANNUALS

Keep your annuals deadheaded. Especially in the heat of Summer your annuals (and all plants) need to be watched for signs of wilting. Be sure your plants get enough water. Plants in containers will need watering daily to maintain their good looks. Mulching flower beds will help to conserve moisture and keep your plants looking pretty. Water early in the morning so your plants will be fresh in the hot afternoon sun. Fertilize Annuals, Peonies and Camellias early in June.

PERENNIALS

Perennials plants are those that come back for at least two seasons. Many are in full bloom now, including purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Daylilies (*Hemerocallis*), Gaillardia, hardy Hibiscus (*H. mascheutos*) and Lilies (*Lilium* spp.). Deadheading long season bloomers encourages more flowers and less seed production. Deadheading is simply pinching or cutting off flowers as they fade so that they don't set seeds. When a plant sets seeds, it puts energy into seed production rather than producing more blooms. Fertilize Hosta plants at least two or three times during the growing season and keep them watered. They are not drought tolerant. Watch for slugs. If slugs are a problem, consider mulching your plants with Sweet Gum balls. This spiny mulch works well at deterring slugs and cats, keeping them away from the garden.

COMPOST

Pick up all leaves and faded flowers and add them to the compost pile. They are a favorite spot for slugs and snails to hide. Turn and dampen your compost often. Flies will breed in the grass clippings if you do not turn it regularly.

LAWNS

Water lawns regularly. Deep water lawns, trees and shrubs to encourage deep rooting and avoid heat stress. Watch for yellow patches, leaf curl, or poor growth. Increase watering if you notice any of these signs.

Set your lawnmower at a higher level. Taller grass will shade the roots from heat. Don't forget to save clippings for the compost pile. Never add your clippings after a weed treatment. Install new edging around borders and beds and check existing edging after storms. Don't install edging after long periods of rain because the ground will swell and once it dries the edging will move.

JUNE BLOOMS

Alstromeria, Artemisia, Asters, Astilbe, Balloon Flowers, Beautyberry, Blackberries, Buddleia, Cannas, Columbine, Coreopsis, Daisies, Daylilies, Delphinium, Dianthus, Hydrangeas, Japanese Iris, Lantana, Magnolia, Mint, Nandina, Oxalis, Petunia, Phlox, English Primrose, Roses, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Spirea, Strawberries, Sweet Peas, Sweet William, Thyme, Verbena, Yarrow and Yucca.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to 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.