

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners

Jane Gulley – our monthly MG program presenter for June



JUNE 2017 Edition

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Presidents Corner

Do you remember when you first learned the genus and species of a plant? Perhaps it was fun to say and rolled off your tongue in such an important way that you never forgot it – no matter how complicated. Try saying *Lagerstroemia indica* or *Toxicodendron radicans*. How about *Callicarpa americana*, *Elaeagnus pungens*, *Baptisia sphaerocarpa*?

The genus and species can give us clues to the country of origin, color, the leaf or flower arrangement, habitat, etc. Using Latin plant names helps to resolve any confusion concerning multiple common names. This summer consider taking the time to study a plant growing in your garden project. Share this information while you are cooling off after working with your Master Gardener friends. Maybe it will be *Lycoris radiata*, *Asclepias tuberosa*, or even *Cyperus rotundus*.

Have a great summer,

Kathy

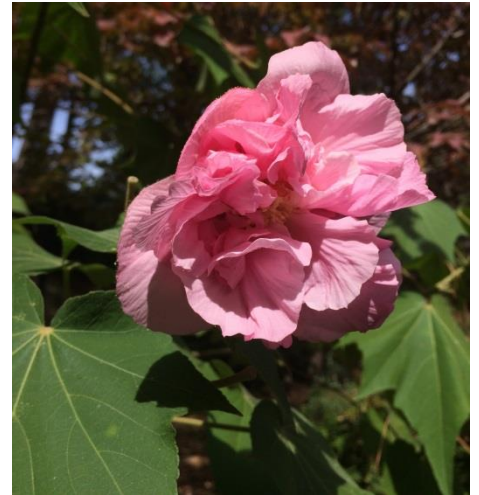
President, PCMG

The Case of the Mysterious Pink Fall Flower By Valerie Boyce



It was a dark and stormy night. No, that's not quite right. It was a bright and beautiful fall day in late October at the Old Mill in North Little Rock. The Master Gardeners were working when we were approached by a visitor with a question: What's that plant over there with all the pink flowers? The visitor noted that it kind of looked like a hibiscus. We agreed, but we weren't sure exactly what it was. The plant had come up on its own in an out-of-the-way place (the park is a little over 3 acres total) and we hadn't paid much attention to it until then.

So out came the phones and the search was on for possible pink flowers that bloomed in late fall. Someone eventually suggested that maybe it was a "Confederate" something. Thanks to Google, we found some pictures, and there it was! A hardy hibiscus: the Confederate Rose or *hibiscus mutabilis*. The mystery had been solved!



The Confederate Rose is a native of China and was brought to English gardens in the 1600s; it allegedly gained favor in the South due to its ease of cultivation during the hard financial times after the Civil War. It is hardy from central Arkansas south. Some call the plant "cotton rose" because the leaves resemble cotton foliage and both the round flower buds and seed pods look like cotton bolls. In fact, cotton and the Confederate Rose are both members of the mallow family (*Malvaceae*). The Confederate Rose dies completely to the ground each winter with a frost, and in the spring, as the ground warms, it sprouts again, reaching 6-8 feet or more. Blooms can be single or double; are up to 4-6 inches wide, and don't appear until fall. The blooms usually open white or light pink and fade to darker pink and then red as they age over the course of a day or two (they change or mutate, thus the species name *mutabilis*). Often, you will see all three colors on the same plant.

The legend behind the Confederate Rose explains its changing blooms. Once, the Confederate Rose was pure white. During the Civil War, a soldier was fatally wounded in battle. He fell upon the rose as he lay dying. During the course of the two days he took to die, he bled more and more on the flower, until the bloom was covered with his blood. When he died, the flower died with him. Thereafter, the Confederate Rose opens white and over the course of the two days the bloom lasts, it turns gradually from white to pink to almost red, when the flower finally falls from the bush.

Confederate Rose is a classic pass-along plant and easy to propagate – I can attest to this because I tried it last fall. Before a killing frost, cut the stalks (which would die back anyway) and cut them into 4- to 6-inch lengths. Put them in a bucket of water (about 1/2 to 2/3 submersed) in a protected area where they will not freeze (mine were in the basement near a window). They will develop roots in about a month and then later start to put on shoots and leaves. They can then be potted or kept in water (change it occasionally) until spring, when they can be planted outside. They prefer full to part sun and moist, fertile soil, although the one at the Old Mill grew up among a bunch of rocks on the hillside. We planted about a half dozen at the Old Mill and shared the rest among ourselves to plant in our yards. We hope to see a profusion of pink flowers this fall and start the process all over again.

Epilogue – In their haste to get the Old Mill ready for the state conference tours, someone from the Parks Dept. who was

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mowing and weed-eating mistakenly cut off the original plant (which was already about 3 feet high) to an 8-inch stub (that's the problem with having things come up in out-of-the-way places – sometimes folks don't realize that they are not weeds!). We have staked the plant and hope it re-sprouts, but that will be another chapter in The Case of the Mysterious Pink Fall Flower....

Sources:

<https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/in-the-garden/reference-desk/shrubs/confederate-rose.aspx>

<http://www.gardenstew.com/blog/e8170-2-the-legend-of-the-confederate-rose.html>

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/2614/>

<http://thedailysouth.southernliving.com/2009/11/18/confederate-rose-will-rise-again/>

The Snowball Bush



We may have an aptly named snowball bush (or shrub) in our landscaping... and if not in our landscaping we may recall seeing the mid-spring- blooming snowball bush in our mother's and/or grandmothers' gardens. But how many of us know that the "snowball bush" is a viburnum? Or it could actually be a hydrangea being called a snowball bush because they are so similar. Despite having similar blooms

the viburnums and hydrangeas have some differences that make the actual snowball bush family easy to identify.

A common feature of the "snowball bushes", whether viburnum or hydrangea, is the ball-shaped blooms that open pale green in color then change to white. The viburnum snowballs prefer a sunny location while the hydrangeas prefer shade or part shade. The viburnum may also reach heights of 15 or 20 feet if not heavily pruned. The hydrangea can be expected to reach full height at around 5 feet. The burkwood viburnums have snowball blooms that are fragrant. The hydrangea snowball blooms may turn pink in the fall.

A significant difference between the two families is when to prune them. The snowball viburnum blooms on the previous season's wood meaning they should be pruned soon after flowering. If pruned later in the season developing flower buds will be removed and the bush will not bloom the following season. The viburnum shrubs can stand heavy pruning to shape or restrict size.

Hydrangeas, however, bloom on the current season's new wood. This means you prune them anytime from late winter into early spring and still have blooms in the current season. The viburnums commonly referred to as the snowball bush include arrowwood and burkwood species. Hydrangeas with snowball blooms are in the *H. arborescens* species.

Plant nurseries in Central Arkansas stock a variety of both viburnum and hydrangea shrubs but for a specific type it is advisable to call to confirm what is available. There are both viburnums and hydrangeas that are native to the United States and some are native to Arkansas. For the Arkansas native species nurseries that specialize in Arkansas native plants may be the best source.

SUMMER PARTY FOR PCMG

Friday, July 14, we will gather at the Historic Arkansas Museum (HAM) for “Ye Olde Country Breakfast” a delicious meal and tour of one of our MG projects there on the premises. You can also enjoy the museum and gift shop. The time is 9:30-11:00.

The Social Committee is providing breakfast and we so look forward to that after the exquisite job they did at our Spring Tea. Although there is no cost for the meal, the committee needs to know how many to prepare for, so we ask that you register by sending your email to Katie Reddick at kreddick@uaex.edu by Friday, July 7. We will be hearing more about this at the June 20th MG meeting. Please refer all questions to me, rather than Katie.

I hope you will put this on your July calendar and plan to spend an enjoyable summer morning together!
Suzanne Potts 2nd VP-Standing Committee Coordinator jlpsbp@gmail.com

PCMG PROFILE – Jane Gulley

Having come by her love of gardening from her mother, who Jane swears could grow flowers in asphalt, Jane is a graduate of the second-ever class of Pulaski County Master Gardeners in 1989 and was recognized for 25 years as a Pulaski County Master Gardener in 2014 (obviously having completed training when she was no more than a baby). She has served the group as its President, has chaired numerous projects, and is currently a co-chair of the Pulaski County Alexander/Butler Rose Garden Project.

Jane is an accomplished gardener, having had almost 100 heritage roses and over 100 native plants in her own garden, which has been featured on local television affiliates of ABC, NBC, and CBS, and was covered in an article in the Arkansas Times, as well as served as the setting for one of Janet Carson’s television programs. She is also a sought-after speaker who brings any gardening topic to life. She has spoken at the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, the Jefferson County Lawn and Garden Seminar and Show, Three Rivers Lawn and Garden Show in Fort Smith, the State Master Gardener Meeting on several occasions, and at numerous Master Gardener training classes around Arkansas.

In addition to her interest in gardening, Jane has served on the boards of the Arkansas Nature Conservancy, the Greater Little Rock Wildlife Federation, and the Little Rock Zoo. She is a past president and a current board member of the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas and a member of the National Audubon Society and Audubon Arkansas. She started a program on the conservation of bald eagles that became a national model and led to appearances on Good Morning America and the David Letterman Show, and she was inducted into the Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame.

Jane is our June PCMG monthly meeting speaker and she will be sharing with us about garden plants that were nominated as favorites of some of our fellow Pulaski County Master Gardeners in their own gardens but are under-utilized over all. These will include many tried and proven plants that are not your local garden center offerings. Please don’t miss this informative and fun presentation on Tuesday, June 20th.

**- Photograph Your Problem Area –
By Kathleen Reynolds**

Do you have a problem area in your yard or garden that has defied your attempts to make it attractive, or an area where you don't even know where to begin to try? Here's your answer!

Randy Forst will be our guest speaker at the September PCMG meeting. Although you know Randy as the Agriculture Extension Agent Staff Chair for Pulaski County, you may not be aware that he has a Bachelor's Degree in Landscape Design & Urban Horticulture and a Master's Degree in General Agriculture, and before Extension, worked for a landscape architecture firm in Collierville, TN, specializing in urban and residential landscapes.

Randy's presentation to the September PCMG meeting will offer specific solutions for landscaping challenges confronted by a fortunate few of our members. This is an opportunity for the owners of the selected "problem" garden areas to receive a free landscape design solution from an expert – and at no cost. What a gift!

If you have this kind of problem area in your yard or garden and would like to offer it for possible selection for a design solution, simply **take several photographs of your problem area from different angles and distances, and email those photographs to Kathleen Reynolds** at kathleenreynolds@att.net. Include a written description of the problem as you see it. The deadline to submit your photographs is July 31st.

Keep in mind that no landscaping problem is so unique that the solution can't benefit other MGs with a similar problem to the one in your yard or garden. Each of them will benefit from having a degreed landscape designer offer a solution. Your submission will be appreciated by everyone.



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.

Kathleen Reynolds has a free *Calycanthus floridus* – 30 inches tall and healthy. Contact Kathleen at Kathleenreynolds@att.net for more information. Hanna Phillips has free 'Ann Chowning' Louisiana iris and is looking for red shogun Japanese iris. Please email her at hannahmode@att.net if you have some. 'Ann Chowning' is from an Arkansas hybridizer – Frank Chowning. It is red with a yellow center.

Mentors Needed for Fall Class!

We are less than halfway to meeting the required number of mentors needed for members of the 2017 Fall MG class and time is getting very short! Now that the state conference is behind us, please consider signing up to help with this important role. The mentor's role is a time limited one and any MG in good standing may serve in this role. The primary qualification is enthusiasm about what we do and a willingness to share it with others.

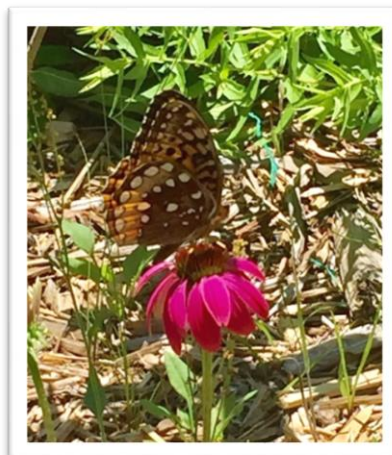
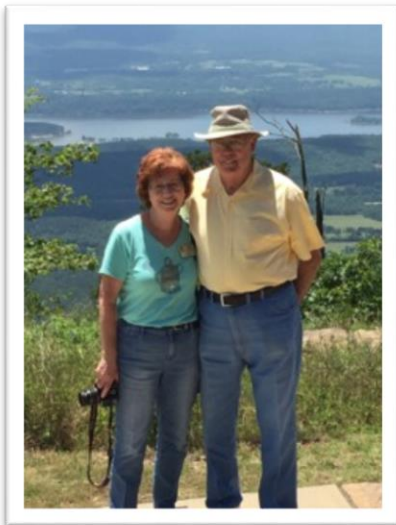
The goal of the mentoring program is to smooth the transition from applicant to student to new MG by answering questions and providing guidance when needed. Once the new MG has started in their project it is the responsibility of the project chair and members to continue the integration of the new member into our organization.

One of the comments we have heard is the frustration of previous mentors who made repeated attempts to contact and communicate with their trainee only to receive little or no response. The training committee and MG leadership team will address this with students at the beginning of and during the course to emphasize their responsibility to work with their mentor. While this hasn't been a frequent problem, we need to be aware of any problems you may have so we can address them quickly.

Please consider stepping up to volunteer for this important role as soon as possible. Our combined effort to support our newest MGs is critical to our projects and our organization.

You may sign up in person at the June monthly meeting at the table in the lobby OR online OR by phone if necessary. Don't delay - we need you now! Ann Griffin, email: agriffinvt@aol.com, phone 802-249-7530 or contact Anje Nevala, email: anjemn@gmail.com, phone 501-454-2392

Pictures from Mt. Magazine – PCMG trip in June (story follows on next page)



THE HIGHEST GARDEN IN ARKANSAS LAURA SHOLES



Traveling the scenic byway, overlooking sweeping views of the valleys, and being surrounded by natural beauty, your journey ends at the top of Mt. Magazine State Park – the setting for the highest garden in Arkansas.

Twenty master gardeners, including Susan Reasoner, who arranged this great outing, recently attended a Butterfly Seminar at Mt. Magazine State Park. The program was presented by Lori Spencer, the lady authority of butterflies, moths and so much more. Lori is also a master gardener and a resident of the park. She presented a power point with the most amazing photos taken by her husband of some of the beautiful species of butterflies and moths.

From the three classes of Skippers that inhabit Arkansas that have “hooked” antennae’s instead of straight ones, to photographs of the most popular butterflies: the swallowtails. One in particular, was the beautiful zebra swallowtail. She also included photos of the white and sulphur butterflies, great spangled fritillary, and the common buckeye with its “eyes” on it wings to deter being eaten by birds.

We learned that butterflies are nearsighted, cold blooded, scales covering the wings are slippery and that monarchs are flying north at this time of the year. Their journey begins to the south and we will see more monarchs in our gardens. Birds that eat the monarch caterpillar get sick but the ants and wasps are able to withstand the toxins.

Butterflies like to “mud puddle” on concrete and absorb sodium from the concrete. This is very important to their diet. Butterflies range in size of your pinky fingernail up to the size of your thumb nail and some the size of your palm.

Lori was instrumental in 2007 by convincing the state legislatures to introduce the “Diana fritillary” as our state butterfly. She has also written a book on Arkansas butterflies and moths.

After the program she provided some amazing door prizes, including a beautiful yellow knit shawl that she made herself. We adjourned to visit the gift shop where Lori autographed the second edition of Arkansas Butterflies and Moths. We also were able to tour several gardens. Everyone met inside the lodge to enjoy lunch while overlooking the spectacular view from the highest garden in Arkansas.

Note: Photos provided by Linda Fulbright and Laura Sholes (this page and previous page)

CHECKLIST FOR JULY by Carol Randle

It's that time of year again. We can expect hot, dry days. It is very important that we remember that water is a most important thing during this time. Make sure that you avoid watering during the peak hours of the day. Watering in the early daytime hours is better because the foliage dries quicker, the moisture can work its way into the roots before the heat stresses the plants and we lose less moisture due to evaporation. Mulching will help to keep out weeds and pests and will preserve moisture so that you don't have to water as often. Avoid wet foliage when the sun sets, so that you can cut down on disease issues. Every garden should have a rain gauge in it so you know how much rain you receive in the garden. Janet says that every year gardeners ask how much and how often they should be watering, but there is no clear cut answer since every yard is different.

VEGETABLES

If you are going on vacation, ask a friend to check on the garden, pick vegetables when they are ripe and water and scout for problems. Letting your garden go unharvested can not only slow down production, but can also lead to rotten fruit, which will attract insects and animals to the garden. Tomatoes have begun to slow down in production. When temperatures exceed 95 during the day or stay above 75 degrees at night, they quit ripening and setting fruit. Keep the plants watered and mulched and they should rebound and begin to set fruit once the temperatures settle down. Blossom End Rot is a calcium deficiency that is controlled by Stop Rot. Mothballs around the base of Cucurbits control vine borers. You can plant all of the Summer crops again starting in mid-July through early August for a Fall harvest. Monitor your garden frequently and catch problems as they arise. NOTHING is better than biting into a home grown, juicy Tomato! (Purple Hull Peas might run a close second.)

FLOWERS

Perennials and annuals give us an abundance of color. Most of our gardens did not have much color during the Winter, so we are ready for beautiful color. Deadheading-removing the spent flowers after they bloom, pruning back leggy plants, fertilizing and watering can keep these plants lush and full of flowers. Keep flower beds well weeded. Remove faded blooms. Make sure you keep the soil moist, but not soggy, around ferns. They may become dormant if they get too dry. Summer annuals need regular fertilizer to keep blooming all season. If you have annuals that have stopped blooming, a little extra care now can give them renewed life and keep them going through Fall. If you chose the right plants for your garden, they should be blooming from frost to frost. Angelonia, Lantana and Periwinkle (Vinca spp.) are great performers in full sun and thrive in hot Summer days. Impatiens, Caladium and Torenia are great for shade and some need more water than others.

CONTAINERS

Remember that containers dry out quickly, the smaller the container, and the more sunlight the plant gets, the quicker they dry out. Salt deposits can build up in the soil of container plants. This will cause the foliage to burn. Flush out these deposits with water at least once during the Summer. If you are growing flowers in containers, they need even more fertilizer than if planted in the ground, because you water more. You can use either a water-soluble or granular fertilizer, but make sure that the plants aren't water stressed before applying.

PERENNIALS

Perennials such as Liatris, Lilies, Canna and Elephant Ears (Alocasia spp. and Colocasia spp.) are in season. Hosta and Heuchera look good all summer with regular water and fertilizing and hardy Hibiscus have large showy flowers now.

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SHRUBS

Spring blooming trees and shrubs are setting their flower buds now for next year's blooms. Don't let them get too dry now, or it could impact your flowers next Spring. To have great blooms next year, do not prune on these plants any more this season. For most trees and shrubs, all you should be doing now is making sure they have water when dry. July and August are not great months to prune shrubs. You can deadhead Summer-flowering shrubs to keep them blooming, but leave your Spring bloomers alone. Fertilization should have occurred in the spring and we are good to go until next Spring. If your Gardenias and Hydrangeas need pruning because they are big and overgrown, now is the time to do it as they finish blooming. They set buds in the Fall. Shear back Gardenias by selectively thinning branches and growth. Hydrangeas need OLDER CANES to be removed down to the ground line. Lightly fertilize after pruning. If your garden needs some color, consider shrubs that bloom now. Crape Myrtles are a standard bearer for Summer color and they come in all sizes.

LAWNS

The main thing we are concerned with, in our lawns now, is mowing and watering. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, you are probably watering the lawn more than it actually needs to keep up with flower and shrub irrigation. While we may all want a lush, bright green lawn, lawn grasses can get a bit dry in between watering and still survive. Deep water lawns, trees and shrubs to encourage deep rooting and to avoid heat stress. Watch out for yellow patches, leaf curl or poor growth. Increase watering if you notice any of these signs. Set your lawnmower at a higher level. Longer grass will shade the roots from heat. If you want to control any weeds, now is the time to do it before they get too large. You will find that some weeds are easier to kill than others. Nut Sedge is tough. A sledgehammer is probably your best bet, in this case. Always read and follow label directions. If you want one final application of fertilizer, mid to late August is the time to do it. Pay attention to the weather conditions.

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