

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



“Ice Follies”

April 2018

U of A

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Presidents Corner

The first daffodil bloom of the season at the Pulaski County Extension Office Master Gardener Project (pictured above) “Ice Follies”- as it first opens the cup is yellow and then as it matures it turns white. It is a great daffodil for Southern gardens.

**“And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.”**

William Wordsworth, 1804

HAPPY SPRING!

Joellen Beard, President

PCMG NEW PROJECTS UPDATE

By Joellen Beard

There is exciting news from our two new Pulaski County Master Gardener projects.

DIG, Dig into Green, at the Hillary Clinton Children's Library and Learning Center, began its first session on **March 13**. Chairman Martha Coop says, "The theme for the next few months will be The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter. In addition to enrichment activities, the focus will be experiences in gardening, a la Mr. McGregor! The garden location is the 4' X 26' raised bed in front of the library (around the READ sculpture.) There will be planting, tending, harvesting, cooking, and nibbling going on ... Move over, Peter Rabbit- Here come the preschoolers!"

The **Demonstration Garden** at the C. A. Vines 4-H Center committee is powering forward planning the exact placement of the fence, the sprinkler system, the raised beds, the bee hives, the compost area, the fruit trees, the small fruits, and the native plants. Funding for the first and second phases are completed with several grant applications in the works. Decisions concerning the running of sewer lines, electricity, and water have been discussed. Placement of the box for power and meters, how many plugs are necessary, and the size of the water pipes have been determined. There are many, many more details to be covered before an ounce of soil can be moved! The plan is to have plants in the ground by June.

DO NOT FORGET TO PAY YOUR DUES! The treasurers prefer that yearly \$20 dues are paid at the meeting. Have your \$20 check or cash ready when you get in line or if you can not attend the meeting, mail your check to:

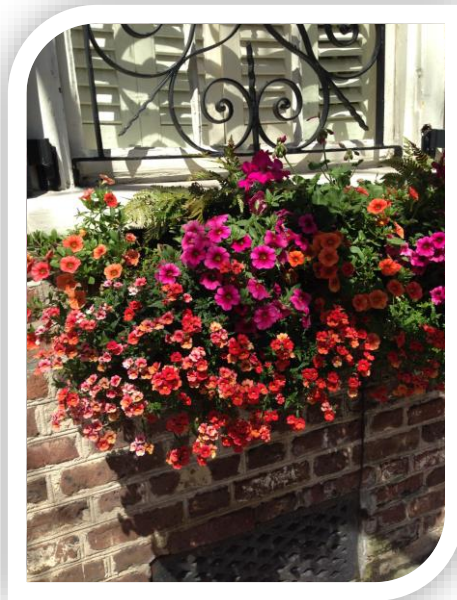
PCMG
Pulaski County Extension Office
2901 W. Roosevelt Road
Little Rock, AR 72204

Write your check to PCMG. Dues are \$20 until May, when they rise to \$30.

Springtime in Charleston

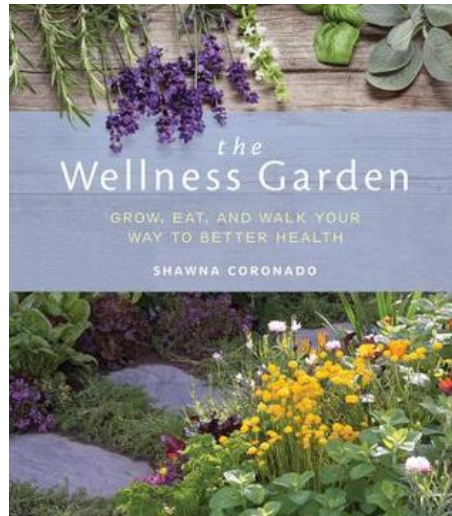
By Phyllis Barrier

I think the loveliest time of year to visit Charleston is the springtime. The gardens and weather are at their best, and you can take advantage of tours of some of the beautiful historic homes and gardens. This year the tours run from mid-March to April 21. For more information visit www.historiccharleston.org. I enjoy walking the gardens, but I equally enjoy walking the historic streets and admiring the window boxes. Many of the homeowners have little or no garden space, but they put much creative energy into their window box displays. Here are some of my favorites.



THE WELLNESS GARDEN

AUTHOR: Shawna Coronado



Book Review

By Debra Redding

Shawna Coronado's fight against her own chronic illness and pain was the inspiration behind The Wellness Garden; despite suffering from osteoarthritis, she didn't stop gardening when the pain became too much. She realized the benefits of being outdoors, of keeping active, and of tending and harvesting her own healthy food crops – and the point of her book is to encourage others to turn to (or keep on!) gardening as a way to cope and heal and stay fit and focused (and more positive!) in the face of illnesses such as arthritis and depression.

Gorgeously presented, thorough (and thoughtful) research, and meaningful, practical solutions make The Wellness Garden a stand-out: Coronado covers everything from fragrance/sensory and therapeutic garden designs, to selecting and growing nutrient- and vitamin-packed edibles (including tips for composting and boosting soil health), and choosing and using ergonomic, safe, and appropriate garden tools that don't stress the body.

The second part of the book is specifically devoted to fitness: walking outdoors, and yoga practice (as well as breathing exercises), meant to be undertaken in the garden. Frequent interaction with nature is key, as there is no doubt about the benefits of being outdoors and the way it elevates mood and well-being. This valuable book will inspire you to get out there and enjoy your garden even more!

APRIL CHECKLIST by Carol Randle



April is a great time to garden. Temperatures are cooler, we usually have ample rainfall and it is just a pleasant time to be outdoors. For gardeners, there usually isn't enough time in the day to get everything done. By April, we are usually frost free, but we still need to pay attention to weather forecasts. Even if we don't get a frost, we still have some cool nights. Don't be too quick to plant heat loving annuals, bulbs or vegetables.

A TIME TO SOW

Sow these seeds: early asters, basil, canterbury bells, celosia, columbine, cosmos, foxglove, gomphrena, grasses, hollyhock, marigolds, melampodium, morning glories, petunias, sunflowers, sweet peas, sweet william and zinnias.

Plant warm season vegetables (tomatoes and peppers) inside until the chance of frost has passed. Rotate vegetable crops to help control pests. Combining flowering plants with vegetables helps deter most insects. Examples are: henbit, geranium, asters, calendulas, chrysanthemums, and marigolds. You can still plant cool season vegetables (lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, radishes and spinach).

ROSES

Do not plant dormant roses until 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 or Daconil or Bayer Advanced.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

Leave foliage on spring bulbs at least 6 weeks or until they die back. They need to replenish their strength for next year. Check for thrips on your daffodils. If you find infestation, remove and destroy the infested part. If you are shopping the garden centers for young perennial plants this time of the year, look for the ones that have the fullest, sturdiest growth and the best foliage color. You will find either divisions or spring-sown seedlings. The divisions may be more expensive, but they do produce larger plants the first year. Apply bone meal to crocus as the flowers fade. Don't tie the greenery back as the flowers fade for it will weaken the bulbs. Allow the leaves to remain for six weeks. Plant new Lily of the Valley pips. Mulch well with compost to protect against cold spells.

For shadier gardens, look at Oak Leaf Hydrangeas, which bloom in the summer and then have outstanding Fall Foliage. Itea is another showstopper in the late spring and again with fall foliage. Loropetalums are another great perennial and they come in standard or dwarf size, so pick the right plant for your location. If purple foliage and pink flowers are not to your liking, try the green leafed, white flowered forms of Loropetalums.

ANNUALS

Annuals that can take a little cool weather, plus summer heat include: petunias; calibrachoa; geraniums and begonias. Hold off on the heat loving impatiens, lantana and zinnias until mid to late April or even into May. Planting in cool soil won't spur them on to growth, so don't get too anxious. For Annuals, we want to push the plants as much as we can to encourage rapid growth and plenty of flowers. Good soil, plus regular watering and fertilization should give you large, free-flowering plants. Plant water plants now. Plant snapdragons and dianthus now.

CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

Inspect the buds and undersides of leaves for signs of aphids. Control white fly, aphids and lacebugs with insecticidal soap. Mulch all new plants, trees, and shrubs at the time of planting to reduce weeds and help retain moisture.

VEGETABLES

April is the best month for vegetable gardening. You have until mid month to plant or replant all the cool season crops. Rotate vegetable crops to help control pests. Edible gardening is becoming more and more popular, however, you need to use caution when it comes to the size of your garden, especially if you are a beginning Vegetable gardener. Start small and build on success. A large garden may seem like a good idea this month, but be a challenge by late June or July. (You might want to try square foot gardening, see **THE NEW SQUARE FOOT GARDENING** book by Mel Bartholomew). All vegetables and herbs can be grown in containers. If you live in an apartment or condo, or simply have a yard with all shade, find a sunny spot on the patio and plant your garden there. If you use your outdoor grill a lot, put some pots of fresh herbs nearby to throw on your food as you are cooking. Fresh and easily accessible produce will have you eating better all summer.

When starting a vegetable garden, choose a site that gets plenty of sunlight and that is well drained, but near a water source. Gardens in Arkansas won't survive without supplemental water, and if it is difficult to do, many gardeners either don't have the time or the energy to make it work. Raised beds are an excellent way to deal with rocky soils. You bring in the compost and soil. Plant perennial plants such as asparagus and strawberries on the edge of the garden to keep them undisturbed. Divide the garden into thirds and practice crop rotation, not planting in the same place with the same vegetable for at least three years. You have until mid month to plant even the cool season crops like broccoli, kale, along with green beans and early sweet corn. Hold off on tomatoes, peppers and eggplant until mid to late April, giving the soil time to warm up. Plant corn in several short rows to aid in pollination, versus one long row.

INDOORS

Keep your houseplants indoors until the middle or end of the month. Then, slowly acclimate them to the sun. Otherwise, they can sunburn. As you move the tropical flowers like hibiscus, mandevilla and bougainvillea outside, repot them and prune them back by at least 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. Limited new growth means less flowers as well. Start fertilizing every three to four weeks and your plants should be blooming again in no time. Or, if you buy new plants every year, start shopping. New colors, new plants and old favorites are all available now and will continue to arrive in nurseries and garden centers on a regular basis.

GENERAL YARD CARE

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 baskets full of moist soil. Dig in compost, manure and other amendments in planting areas when the soil is dry enough. If you have planted cover crops for the winter, turn them under now. Water new plants and early blooming plants regularly.

LAWNS

Lawns are greening up all over and some of it is still winter weeds, but the lawn grasses are also almost all actively growing as well. It is during this transition period between dormancy and growth that you need to use caution when applying herbicides. Wait for your lawn grass to be totally green before you apply your first application of fertilizer. 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 areas.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR APRIL

The Downtown Dames are pleased to announce the 2018 programs for the Mount Holly Garden Series.

Celebrating our 10th Anniversary in 2018, 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 provided by the Downtown Dames! Attendance may be counted as educational hours for Master Gardeners.

2018 Mount Holly Garden Series

April 21, "A Better Way to Green" by Andrew Kenley. A program on soil first fertilization.

May 19, "Gardening for the Forgetful Gardener" Holly Wyman, Governor's Mansion Horticulturalist will discuss succulents- how to plant the keep them.

June 15, "Water Gardens" by Mark Gibson. Always a favorite, Mark will delight with another water garden segment, exploring fresh ideas for your garden.

July 21, "Shady Characters" by Rand Retzloff. Rand will share the ultimate direction for shade gardens.

August 18, "Propagation 101" by Susan Rose. We always adore Susan! This segment will provide tips and guides for propagating your plants, roses and perennials.

September 15, "Ancient Botanical Wonders in Arkansas" by Theo Witsell, Ecologist and Botanist, with the Department of Natural Heritage. This program will certainly be a highlight of our series! There will be something for everyone to enjoy, no matter what your interests.

October 20, "Earths Bounty--Planning Your Pollinator Garden" by Chris Wyman, Heifer Village and Urban Farm. Chris' program will include native plant and pollinator housing techniques.

Sunday, April 15th – GARDEN TOUR – Irises and azaleas in full bloom

1 pm until 5 pm. Come and stroll through Phyllis' White Rock Garden in Benton. From Little Rock: I30 West to exit 117 to Hwy 5 South. Turn right at signal light approximately 1-1/2 miles to Salt Creek Rd, turn right to approximately 1-1/2 miles to Woodridge Ln. Turn right to 265 Woodridge (last house on right). **Park on street.** Cell phone: 501-626-7258 or email: phylliskirtley@att.net

+++++

PCMG PROJECT – HAM GARDEN

Historic Arkansas Museum Master Gardener Project By Chris Lalande

The Master Gardeners began their project at HAM in 2002 under the tutelage of Trudy Goolsby. Originally there were seven volunteers. We currently have twenty-two volunteers. Our goal is to recreate gardens of the 1840's as the pioneers settled in Arkansas. We grow heirloom vegetables, collect and preserve seeds, practice companion planting and crop rotation. It is a constant learning experience. Some years are better for tomatoes or carrots, etc. than others. Since we have three growing seasons in Arkansas, spring, summer and fall, we constantly amend the soil and rotate crops and varieties. Blackberries line the fence around a portion of the garden.

The Master Gardeners are responsible for three areas:

- 1) The Kitchen Garden is on the main grounds of the museum. It is planted with herbs: dill, parsley, basil, thyme, rosemary, etc. and seasonal vegetables that early settlers would use in cooking. Examples are: kale, lettuce, tomatoes, beets, eggplants, etc.
- 2) The Well House garden is dedicated to flowers, mostly perennials. Our pioneer women appreciated a seasonal bouquet on their tables.
- 3) The Plum Bayou farmstead, now called the Parker Westbrook Farmstead, is located across 2nd Street. It consists of 4 larger raised gardens planted seasonally. It is surrounded by a split rail fence planted with native shrubs, understory trees and flowers.

Some years are better than others with some vegetables being prolific and others failing. We are always feeding Mother Nature with what we grow: squirrels, rabbits, bugs, and children who tour the gardens. Tours are given to school children, participants in summer programs, and anyone who wanders through. Our goal is to educate. Pictures on the next page illustrate the specific areas.

April 2018



Other activities outside of PCMG group: April is IRIS Month!



Central Arkansas Iris Society – IRIS SHOW

Saturday, April 28th from 1-4 pm

Grace Lutheran Church in Little Rock – off Kavanaugh

If you would like to submit an iris for our show – please contact Susan at 416-6390 for more information. The irises must be named and entered either the afternoon prior to the show or by 9:30 am on Saturday.

Mountain View IRIS Festival (first year)

Friday, Saturday and Sunday – May 4-6

Mountain View, Arkansas

Festival includes: iris show, crafts, car show, vendors, music, children's activities, etc.

For more information: 913-952-7001

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.

April 2018