

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



**HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our PCMG.
May your 2019 garden bloom to
your expectations.**

January 2019

Presidents Corner

"I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape. Something waits beneath it; the whole story doesn't show." Andrew Wyeth

Happy New Year 2019 and welcome to a new, exciting year of Master Gardeners! As I sit here and gaze out at my garden so dormant now, I think of the 150 daffodil bulbs that we planted in November, still under the ground, but soon ready to emerge—especially if this unseasonably warm weather continues. I imagine the flowers gently swaying in the wind—a mini Wye Mountain! Even though the ground looks just like it did back in November, I know the bulbs are busy producing roots and soon stems. I think of our Master Gardener program. Even though our first general monthly meeting is not until January 15, much is going on behind the scenes to make this a fun, educational, rewarding year.

Seventeen people are currently working in our online class to become new MGs this Spring, with the Training Committee already discussing plans for another ZOOM training class in the fall.

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Our 32 projects are starting to get together and envision and plan their gardens. Some are getting to know brand new, enthusiastic Master Gardeners from the 2018 fall training class. The PEST Committee, (Project Evaluation and Support Team) will continue to visit the last nine projects not visited the past two years to offer encouragement and suggestions.

There are several statewide events that we can look forward to--The AR Flower and Garden Show at the AR Fairgrounds which is just seven weeks away. The State Conference takes place April 29-May 1, held this year in Hope, AR. Registration for the Conference has begun. Within our own Pulaski County chapter, the Social Committee has several events planned—a Valentine Chocolate Tasting at the Military Museum in February, a May event and a holiday party in December.

The Continuing Education Committee is planning an interesting program in February after the general meeting, “Plant Oddities, The Garden of Evil and Plants That Have Changed the World”. Registration is currently underway for that event (more information to follow in this issue).

Even though most projects have not started working in their gardens yet, there is lots of planning underway, to provide us many opportunities for educational and fun times together. I hope you are looking forward to making new friends and learning new things as we garden together.

Suzanne Potts

PCMG PRESIDENT



State Fairgrounds

2019 Show Dates
March 1-3, 2019
Mark your calendar!

Plant Oddities, the garden of evil and plants that have *Changed the World*

Usually when we think of things that changed the world, we think of events, people, discoveries, etc. Have you considered how plants have changed history? There are many plants that have changed the course of events such as wheat, sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, cacao, coffee, tea, rubber, marijuana. The first plants domesticated were wheat, barley, lentils, peas, rice and potatoes. When people stopped chasing and gathering their food and stayed in one place to cultivate food, we call it the Neolithic Revolution. That's right, domestication of plants caused a revolution in how people lived! There are still plant revolutions going on today; think marijuana!

The word, evil, usually conjures up images of monsters and bad guys. But plants can also be evil! Consider dodder, jumping cactus, cocklebur, castor bean, slobber weed, water hemlock



and poison ivy.

If you are unfortunate to be allergic to poison ivy, you know what is meant by evil plants.

Water hemlock, though, is the most violently toxic plant in North America.

A small amount of this toxin is all that is needed to poison livestock or humans. It attacks the central nervous system and causes convulsions.



And then there are just the really weird plants. They were never programmed to appear "normal". Consider these "stand outs": cork oak, Wollemi pine, jackfruit, cashew tree, strangler fig, pitcher plant, Spanish moss, African baobab. Did you know that jackfruit is the largest fruit in the world? It can reach up to 100 pounds in weight; no grocery sack can hold it! Some consider it a miracle fruit as it is rich in magnesium, vitamin B6, and has antioxidants. The taste has been compared to pulled pork. Even the seeds have nutritional benefits and can be boiled, roasted or ground.

- If you would like to know more about this trifecta, join the PCMG Continuing Ed committee on Tuesday February 19, 2019 immediately following the regular monthly meeting at St. James United Methodist Church. The program will begin with a box lunch at 12:30 for all pre-registered guests.

Ann Wood, a White County Master Gardener and well known speaker will present an exhilarating session on plants that have change our world, are evil or just weird. Ann is a former high school teacher, grows an assortment of vegetables, and has shade and sun perennial gardens featuring roses and day lilies.

How can you be certain to attend this exciting educational experience? Check your email beginning January 7, 2019 and complete the registration form and mail a check for \$25 (includes a box lunch) to Katie Reddick at the extension office. PCMGs will earn two and a half hours of educational credit. Registration is limited to the first 75 registrants. No refunds after February 11, 2019. Need additional information or just want to say how excited you are about the training, contact Lisa Johnson [**sajemj@comcast.net**](mailto:sajemj@comcast.net)

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On a recent trip to the Brittany and Normandy areas of France and with our itinerary focused on the history of and venues related to World War II, two experiences were perfectly suited for this Master Gardener – Ferme Durand at Camembert and Giverny.

Ferme Durand by Jeffrey McKinley

After driving through the French countryside with hedge rows, rolling hills and crops of all variety, we arrived in the tiny hamlet of Camembert, home of Ferme Durand. Local legend traces the origin of Camembert in the area to the French Revolution. A fugitive monk Abbot Charles-Jean Bonvoust was protected by Marie Harel a local citizen (who died in 1844). In appreciation, the story is that Bonvoust shared his secret cheese recipe. Regardless of the origin, Marie Harel is the Mother of “Camembert” – a raw milk delicacy unique to Normandy.

Ferme Durand is the one of the few farms, if not the sole remaining one, at which Camembert is made by the traditional method and basically without machinery. Established in 1981 by the two Durand brothers, local lore says they took less than 10 days of vacation for many years. One brother retired; the other remains the owner. Production continues with 7 - 8 employees.

Set in a bucolic landscape, the farm is home to a herd of 85 cows and 10 calves who enjoy luxury living by cattle standards. We were introduced to the Normande cows with a dark brown or black and white coat and eyes accented with a pink edge. The small staff milks the cows in the morning and afternoon to start the production of the single herd cheese.

In the morning the previous day’s raw milk (unpasteurized) is poured into round molds. After the molds are turned to allow draining of the liquids and creation of the small rounds of cheese. The camembert is then aged on wire racks for up to 45 days in a specially climate-controlled area. The finished delicacy goes to market wrapped in paper and placed in a wooden box.

We were graciously welcomed to picnic in the small shop/room in which the cheese is sold and the employees eat lunch. The Durand Camembert is unbelievably delicious and creamy. Complimented with pate, the local cider and a regional dessert, lunch was as idyllic as the setting.

Our experience at Camembert was completed with a stop at Maison du Camembert which tells the history of Camembert. If you are in the area, this is a “must”. **(For information: www.camembertdurand.fr)**



Monet's Home at Giverny by Jeffrey McKinley

In 1883, Claude Monet moved to a small farmhouse at Giverny. He lived and painted here until his death. Monet had always been fascinated by gardens. So, the property at Giverny was particularly appealing. With his second wife Alice they relocated a combined family of eight children - his two sons and her six children. Monet's presence along with the magnificent landscape would bring other impressionists to live and work in the area.

The property which Monet acquired had on it a small house and several outbuildings including a barn which he would use as a studio. The sole garden upon acquisition was "The Walled Garden". This very geometrically designed area was wild and overgrown. Monet and his family would transform this into an abundant flower garden with a "grand alley" surrounded by lilies, clematis and irises among hundreds of other specimens. Iron trellises were covered in roses. Monet sought and accepted seeds from many sources. As the years passed this included a kitchen garden for the residence.

The house which is open to the public is very charming and inviting. A large studio mirrors the way it would have looked when Monet painted including copies of his works which hung there. The dining room and kitchen reflect Monet and Alice's commitment to sharing their home. Artists, politicians, notables, family and locals gathered around their dining table. The yellow, blue and white décor, tiles and china make you want to sit for a while. Japanese prints hang in the entry and small sitting rooms reflecting Monet's affection for the style.

Later Monet acquired the adjacent property. Interestingly when he did so, a railroad track ran between the land on which the house sat and the newly acquired property. This boundary remains a busy thoroughfare. On this sight, Monet would develop the Water Garden. A local source was diverted to create the water feature. The gentle weeping willows, Japanese maples and water lilies give rise to a serene environment. And, of course one must have a picture taken on the Japanese Bridge.

Although visiting in October, the water lilies as well as other flowering plants were in bloom in the Japanese Garden. I had not encountered a Japanese oriented garden with so many floral varieties. Our guide said that the staff today debates whether the elements in the Japanese garden should remain more like the original or be complimented with other varieties. Monet's gardens reflect how the seeds we plant create a long and lasting heritage. Although traveling frequently, Monet always returned to Giverny until his death in 1926. A step-daughter who was an artist would reside with him until then. Monet's own sons passed away without heirs.

Nearby are two stops worth a visit. Monet's grave is a short walk at the Eglise Sainte-Radegonde. And, lunch at the Hotel Baudy is a must. This was a boarding residence for artists who came to Giverny to paint.

For a Gardener, this is a must see. However, allow me to offer you travel tips. Monet's house and gardens are at their peak bloom in May and June but can be very crowded. The small cruise ships also bring groups. So, plan ahead both to determine the best time and acquire the tickets in advance. Ours were issued for a particular entrance time!!

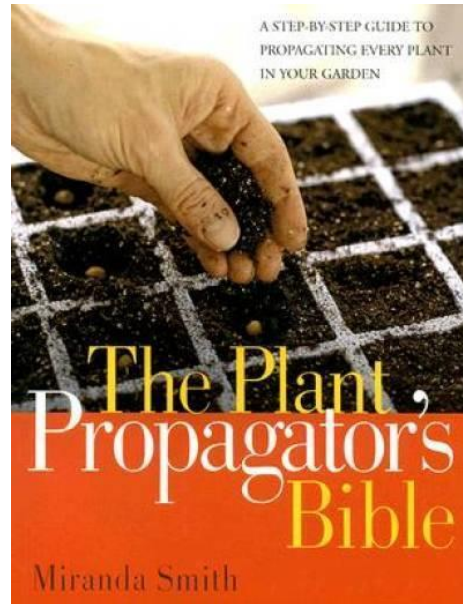
Bon Voyage!



Monet's garden and ponds



The Plant Propagator's Bible



Book Review by Debra Redding

One of gardening's most satisfying benefits is the opportunity to create new plants from old. Many gardeners are attracted to the economics of inexpensively increasing their existing garden stock, while others relish the chance to develop brand-new hybrids. But plant propagation can intimidate even the most accomplished gardener. An experienced horticulture instructor and prolific gardening-book author, Smith demystifies propagation by providing an exceptionally well-organized and comprehensible guide to various processes, from the simple sowing of seeds to the more intricate grafting of root stock. Color photographs and well-defined line drawings clarify step-by-step procedures, an A-Z directory of more than 1,000 plant species outlines corresponding propagation methods, and an extensive section devoted to tools and techniques furnishes helpful checklists and troubleshooting advice. Smith covers all the bases in this rudimentary and practical guide.

MIRANDA SMITH has been teaching horticulture for more than 30 years. Author or coauthor of 13 gardening books, including *The Gardeners' Problem Solver* and *Your Backyard Herb Garden*, she lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.

JANUARY CHECKLIST BY CAROL RANDLE

ANNUALS

Fertilize winter annuals regularly when we have any warm spell. Water regularly, especially before a winter freeze.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

If you are planning any major changes to your garden, it is best to do it now while the soil is damp, but not if the soil is still frozen or water logged. Make changes from now until early spring. Remove dead stalks and other debris, destroying infested material and adding the rest to compost. Cut back frost-nipped perennials now, leaving 2-3 inch stalks to help locate dormant crowns when planting in early spring.

This is your last chance to plant those spring blooming bulbs. When planting, be sure to pick a site with well drained soil. Plant two to three times the size of the bulb, deep in the ground. Make sure no skins from bulbs are left on the ground to encourage the squirrels to dig up the bulbs.

ROSES

Wait until late February or early spring to prune your Roses.

VEGETABLES

Start cool weather vegetable seeds indoors in January for transplanting in six to eight weeks. In late January, poppies and sweet peas can be planted directly in the ground. Turn cover crops into the soil with a fork or tiller during January to give the green material time to break down before planting time. Prepare soil for new beds by adding compost, manure, or other organic matter. Although growth of leafy greens will stop in cold weather, if plants are mulched it will resume in Spring and produce greens into May. Add a six to eight inch layer of mulch to root crops so the vegetables can be harvested as needed.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Plant camellias for winter colors. They come in colors ranging from whites to pinks to reds and mixtures. Plant in a well drained area out of the afternoon sun. Evergreen trees and shrubs will drop some of their older leaves. If the flower buds and newest foliage at the end of the branch are okay, don't worry. It is normal. Be sure to water regularly if it doesn't rain.

LAWNS

Remove fallen leaves that may smother grass and plants. Apply lime to lawn.

GENERAL YARD

Winter has always been considered the slowest time in the garden, but it can be very busy if you start planning for next year's garden. Now is the time to order seed catalogs. Remove plants that aren't thriving in the current locations. Try to ascertain the reason for the lack of success. Often, it's a matter of planting depth or an over-accumulation of mulch or a diseased root system.

INDOORS

Enjoy the blooms of forced bulbs such as hyacinth and paper whites. Amaryllis bulbs will add more color. Pot them and give them a little water after you get them home. After growth starts, water well and keep in the sunlight. They will bloom in six to eight weeks. Stake because they will get tall and top heavy (especially the amaryllis). If you are going to overwinter poinsettias, place them in a sunny window in a cooler area of the house now.

January 2019

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