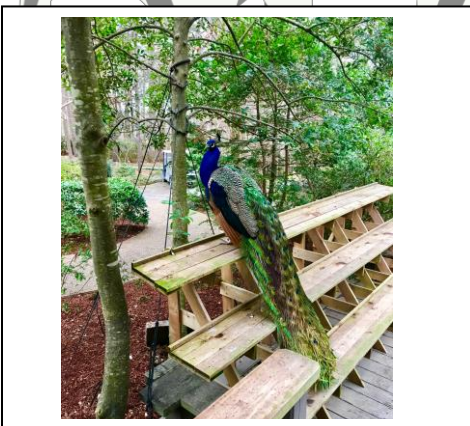


The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



U of A

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Peacock at Garvan Woodland Gardens – late February 2019. Courtesy of Jeffrey McKinley

March 2019

Presidents Corner

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold—when it is summer in the light and winter in the shade." Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

We have certainly had an unusual beginning to March with near record setting low temperatures. Like many of you, I had planned by now, to be outside digging in the dirt and readying my gardens for planting instead of standing inside looking out my window at the daffodils lying on the ground.

Did you know that your garden reflects your personality? You may prefer a formal garden, being influenced by the formal gardens of Europe with clipped shrubbery and evergreens and well-defined, crisp edges. If this is your choice, you like to experience nature in control. One of the best ways to think of formal gardening is that you're extending your house outdoors.

You may have a natural garden, influenced by nature itself with native plants. Natural gardeners place value on what is around them and are willing to put in the time and effort to keep or restore the native landscape. Your style is looser than traditional, formal gardening.

You could be the edible gardener, having been influenced by your grandmother or WWII victory gardens. Certainly the oldest gardening style known to man, edible gardens started out as purely practical. Kitchen gardens were very popular in the New World and what people are doing now has surely evolved from that. Today, however, edible gardens are more about enjoyment, convenience and the pride that comes with saying you grew it yourself.

Lastly, you may be an eccentric gardener, influenced by American folk art. All plants are welcome in your garden. As Wisconsin MG, Barbara McHugh says of her eccentric garden, *"It is like an heirloom quilt that I'm piecing together from scraps ...and I'm never going to finish."* Eccentric gardeners are creative souls who don't like to abide by notions and rules. You have a tendency to accept all plants and all objects of art that come your way and incorporate them into the landscape. Nature is not the enemy. (Article by Laurie Arendt, [Milwaukee's Lifestyle Magazine](#), June, 2009)

What kind of gardener are you?

Suzanne Potts

PCMG President

+++++

Carolyn Turner, PCMG, has Southern Woodland ferns that need dividing and are free. She lives in Hillcrest.

Please contact her for more information. Email:

cturner70@sbcglobal.net

Cell: 501-680-4550



Arkansas Arts Center Project

By Phyllis Barrier

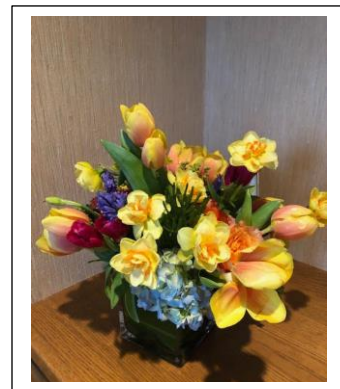
The Arkansas Arts Center (AAC) honored the decades-long dedication, passion, and hard work of the Pulaski County Master Gardeners (MG) who have worked in the MG arts center project with a lovely luncheon at Watercolor in the Park on March 13. As you may know, the MG project at the arts center ended in December 2018, in anticipation of the upcoming complete renovation of the arts center.

Master Gardeners from the arts center project have now joined other MG projects. The arts center will be closed for more than two years, but there are plans for the MG project to return once the renovation is complete. As an example of longevity at the arts center, Shirley Acchione started volunteering there in 1998, 21 years ago.

Eighteen Master Gardeners attended the luncheon. Much of the luncheon organization was handled by Master Gardener Brenda Mize, who joined the MG arts center project in 2007. Brenda is also a member of the AAC Board and serves on the Finance Committee.

Special recognition was given to Lorene Wright for serving the longest as Co-Chair or Chair of the project – nine years! Mary Harrison was also honored for being the oldest Master Gardener present. They both received beautiful flower arrangements.

Another flower arrangement was given to Leighanne Alford, an AAC employee who worked on the invitations and luncheon logistics. Special thanks to Lorene Wright for supplying the pictures.



Living Color in the Train Garden! AF&GS

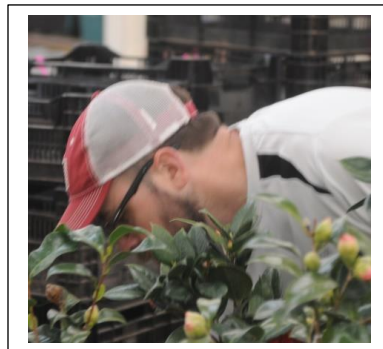
By: Mary Russell- Evans



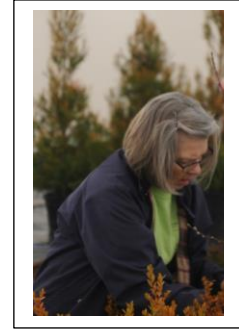
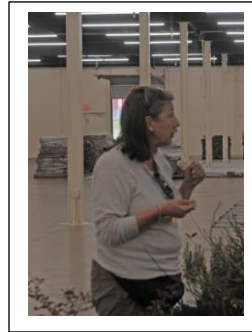
Living Color was surely present in the train garden this year! River Valley Horticultural Products is our kind annual sponsor for the train garden & April Higgins is a champion plant –picker- outer! She made numerous calls to me about plants in winter color! Ordinary *nandinas* took on new life as fall foliage along with the purple foliage on *junipers*, red winter color of *cryptomeria* “globosa nana” & some fantastic color on boxwood “Baby Gem.” (Don’t under-estimate the power of winter color in everyday evergreens.)



Richard Davis is our fearless leader from the Central Arkansas Garden Railway Society. He is shown here laying out track on the first day.



Miniature shrub forest to the left. Chris Kotoun above installing plants.



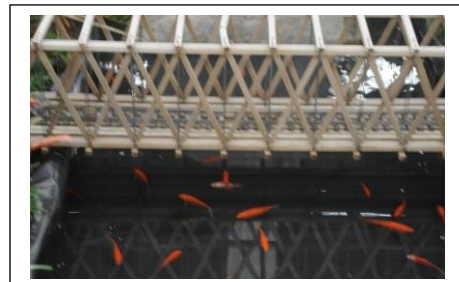
Danny Murdaugh, Peri Doubleday (Pulaski Co.), and Caroline Medlock (Saline Co.)



Our editor Susan Rose noticed the use of different size plants to imply distance. She also noticed the windswept western forest of blue Atlas cedars, emulating the harsh winds on western (US) mountain slopes. The interesting car is called a "crocodile" from Switzerland.

This is the first time in a long time we've added water & Richard bought too many fish. You'll be happy to know, no animals (nor any Master Gardeners) were harmed in the production of this project. Danny & I took them home to our own ponds.

Each year at the conclusion of the whole thing, I get to drive the train & park all the cars. I can always hear Aretha Franklin singing "Riding down the highway..... love in a pink Cadillac" when I see this pink convertible. Looks like today the bride & groom were lucky to have brought along a second convertible.



I would like to thank everyone who participated & help make the project a HUGE success!



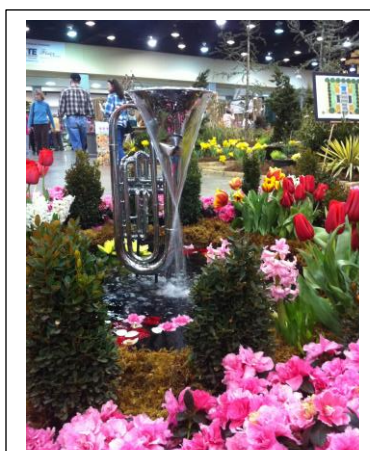
The 2019 Gardening How To stage was dedicated to the memory of Judy Bradsher who always contributed to the success of the garden show & had for so many years (15) been a permanent fixture, both constructing the theme garden & the “Gardening How To” stage. She will be greatly missed!

Mary Evans

Note from the editor: As many of you all know Judy and Mary were two peas in a pod & always “joined at the hip”. When you saw one you saw the other. They both put in many hours to make the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show special for all of us to enjoy each year. They were responsible for interpreting the themes & were always adhered to no matter how difficult. The show was always a SHOW to remember and helped us prepare for spring.



Mary and Judy



Baritone fountain – “Floral notes”2010 AFGS



“Local roots” – 2017 AFGS



The Little Rock Garden Club April lecture will feature the fabulous Meryl Gordon, author of **Bunny Mellon: The Life of an American Style Legend**. Meryl promises to be a fun and interesting speaker. Above is a photograph of the Whitehouse garden designed by Mrs. Mellon. You can purchase your tickets to hear Meryl speak below.

On-line payments are handled securely via your credit card using PayPal, and the total has been adjusted to include the discounted, but required credit card processing fee of 2.2% plus 30 cents. **Please disregard any messages regarding shipping as you make the on-line payment.** Should you have any questions before placing an order, please contact [Jeanne Joyner](#).

**Guest ticket to the Meryl Gordon Lecture April 18th
@ Arkansas Arts Center 5:00 pm until 7:00 pm**

\$41.21

Purchase Now

The Little Rock Garden Club is a 501(c)3 organization founded in 1923 with the purpose of advancing and encouraging the knowledge of, practice of, and interest in horticulture, garden history and design, flower arranging, and conservation. The club is engaged with civic improvement through a variety of community projects and maintains active membership in the Garden Club of America, National Garden Clubs, Inc., Arkansas Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Greater Little Rock Council of Garden Clubs.

MARCH CHECKLIST

By Carol Randle

I think everyone is ready for Spring and some sunshine. My Lenten Roses (Hellebores) are blooming profusely. They certainly brighten my flower bed.

VEGETABLES

March is a prime planting season. Vegetable gardens are up and running. It is a great time to plant cool season crops such as lettuce, broccoli, potatoes, onions, radishes, turnips, kale, cabbage and spinach. Cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower are planted as transplants (small plants, not seeds). Onions are planted using sets or transplants, rarely as seeds. Most feed stores sell them in bundles of small plants which are then set out in the garden. Janet usually plants them two inches apart and, as they grow, she uses every other plant for green onions, giving the other onions plenty of room to grow. Remember to fertilize at planting and then side-dress six weeks later.

Cool season vegetables have less disease and insect issues and give you a great start to the gardening season. We tend to have more energy now and sometimes we have ample moisture. Diseases and insects have not become firmly entrenched yet, so grab your shovel and start planting. If you don't have space for a large garden, plant some vegetables in pots or among your flowers. A minimum of six hours of sunlight is all you need.

If you want to grow your own tomato transplants, they should be started now. You can't get quality transplants in an ordinary home window. You need either a greenhouse or a supplemental light source. The light source needs to be on for up to 12 hours a day. It typically takes 8 to 10 weeks before a transplant can safely be planted outdoors. Tomato planting time shouldn't happen before mid-April. If you didn't prepare your beds in January, do it as soon as possible. Cool season crops, from carrots to turnips, can be planted until mid-April. Sweet corn can be planted about the middle of the month. Seeds for warm weather crops, such as peppers, can be started in the greenhouse or your windowsills. It takes six to eight weeks to get good size transplants. Our last frost date is March 20 to April 1, depending on what part of the county you live in. Potatoes should be planted from certified seed potatoes. Fertilize, water and mulch after planting.

ANNUALS

Fertilizing and dead-heading all these Winter annuals will give them a boost and help them to rebound. If you lost your Winter color, or you never got around to planting any, buy some geraniums, English primroses and ranunculus now. They make great transitional color for the garden and can tolerate light freezes with ease. Start planning your Summer color, but don't actually buy any until mid-April. (This is hard to do when you are at the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show and you buy plants you really like, but have to keep them alive indoors until it is safe to plant them outside!)

BULBS

Bulbs are blooming now and extra care is needed to replenish them for another season. Fertilize your bulbs with a complete fertilizer and let the foliage remain healthy and growing for at least six weeks after bloom. Summer bulbs are popping up at nurseries and garden centers all over the state. You can buy these bulbs, but don't plant them. They like warm soils, and if planted in such cool soils, they could rot or deteriorate. I would not plant caladiums until at least May. Remember, the important time for bulb growth is right after bloom. If bulbs are over crowded or in too much shade, they won't be able to store the energy they need to bloom next

Spring. If overcrowded, thin them and replant with the foliage intact. The same applies to overly shaded bulbs, move them to a sunny spot now, with their leaves growing. Let the foliage die down naturally to give them as much time as possible to replenish themselves. If you cut the leaves off too soon, you won't have great flowering next year. They need at least six to eight weeks of green foliage AFTER flowering to set flowers for the following year. Once the foliage begins to die, their season is over. They will be dormant until the following season.

PERENNIALS

As Summer and Fall blooming perennials begin to grow, assess whether or not they need dividing. Crowded plants don't bloom as well. If they do need dividing, now is the time to do so. Dig up the plant and divide, leaving two or three crowns per division. Divide established perennials and replant at their depth in an enlarged area with organic matter and fertilizer. Keep mulch handy for a late freeze.

When choosing new plants, you don't have to plant exactly the same thing that died. If we have a season with little rain, you may want to opt for more drought tolerant plants. Even the most drought tolerant plants need water during establishment and would benefit from supplemental irrigations when we have miserable seasons. Soil preparation can go a long way in building a stronger root system which will, in the long term, give you a stronger plant.

Many perennials are up and growing. Hellebores are in full bloom, along with bleeding heart, columbine and foxglove. Peonies are up and growing and you may even see the beginning of flower buds. Now is a great time to put some perennial stakes around your peonies. These wire rings need to be in place before the plant gets much size. That way, the foliage grows up into the rings and is supported when heavy rains try to topple the blooms.

Spring ephemerals like bloodroot, trilliums and trout lilies are a great addition to the early Spring garden. They are called ephemerals because they are here today and gone tomorrow. They often complete their life cycle before the trees have fully leafed out. If you have many early season perennials in your garden that do go dormant quickly, consider some method of marking where they are planted so that you don't disturb them during the garden season when you are planting other plants. You might try using old golf tees, just put a tee next to the crown of the plant and move on. As you are gardening throughout the Spring and Summer and you come across a golf tee, just move over a foot or so. Summer and Fall blooming perennials can be divided now, if needed.

HOUSEPLANTS

Houseplants don't look all that perky indoors, so many gardeners think they would benefit from some sunshine on a mild March day. While it is a nice thought, it isn't a good idea. Plants should stay put where they are now and make their move outside in late April. Now that the days are getting longer and temperatures are warming up, you will see some new growth appearing. If you have tropical flowering plants inside, you can give them a haircut now, but hold off on repotting until you move them outdoors.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Most plants that bloom in the Summer set their flowers on new growth, with the exception of big leaf hydrangeas, oakleaf hydrangeas and gardenias. Leave these three alone, since their flower buds are already set. If you have peegee hydrangeas or smooth hydrangeas, butterfly bush, crapemyrtles, althea or rose of sharon, clethra, roses and abelia and you haven't pruned them yet, grab your pruning shears and get going. While new growth is beginning, it isn't too late to prune. **CAUTION: PLEASE DO NOT COMMIT CRAPE MYRTLE MURDER!!** They don't need severe pruning every year.

All Roses need annual pruning, including Knock Out Roses. Hold off on pruning climbing roses until after their first bloom. Some antique shrub roses only bloom once a year, so let them flower and then prune. For all-season-blooming shrubs, prune them back to 18 inches above the ground. Pruning encourages continued blooming and removes the mites, which overwinter in the upper portions of the bush and spread Rose Rosette Virus.

LAWNS

Winter weeds were growing long before Winter weather arrived this year. The weeds are blooming their hearts out and many have set seeds and are ending their season. It is too late to worry with herbicides. In lawns, try to mow the weeds to prevent seed set. If your lawn is showing signs of green, it is from Winter weeds. Spray with a broad leaf killer, if you have an abundance of them, or spot spray or pull them. A few clumps of wild onions (or garlic) can easily be dug. Applying fertilizer now before the grass is fully awake is a waste. You will actually end up fertilizing all those Winter weeds that are in your lawn now. There is still time to use a pre-emergent herbicide, but do so very soon. Try to find a stand alone product without fertilizer. Your fertilizer application should be no sooner than mid-April, when the lawn is totally green. Waiting until May is not a bad idea.



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