

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Foxglove from Phyllis Barrier's garden

May 2019

Presidents Corner

"The glory of gardening, hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul." Alfred Austin, English poet Laureate, 1896

Isn't it a joy to be able to work outside cultivating the dirt, no matter how small your plot may be? It is a true delight to go out in the cool of the morning and see how your plants have grown and changed (hopefully the change is not that wrecked by deer or other varmints!) from the time you last checked.

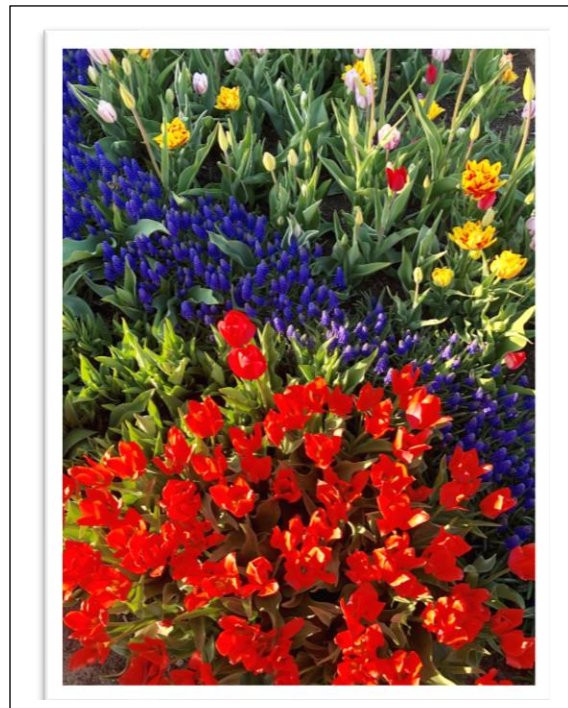
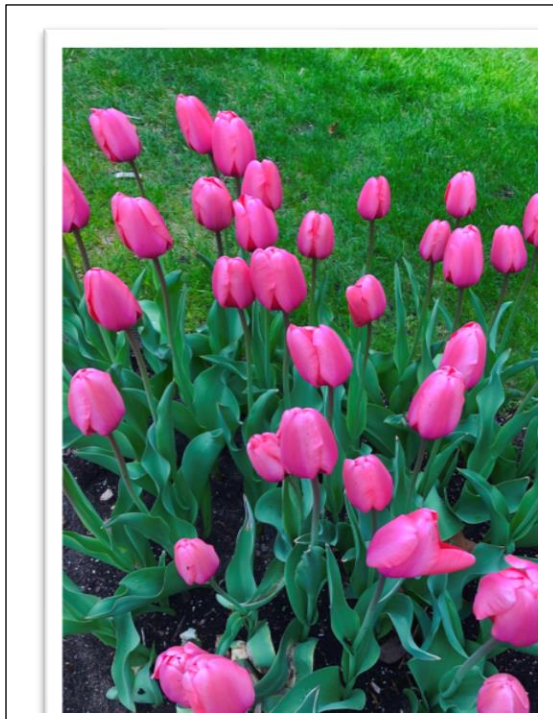
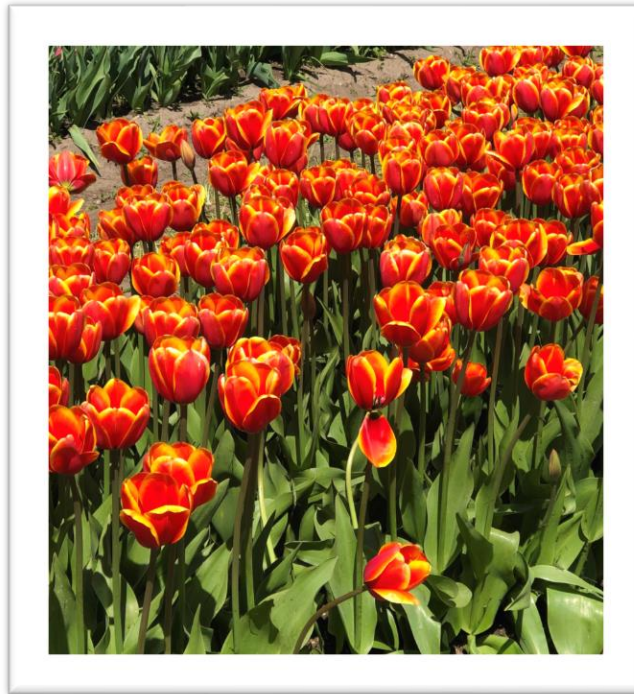
I have been granted the awesome opportunity this spring of helping start a gardening project at the Ladies Prison in Wrightsville. We have 20 women in our pilot class and 10 raised beds within the prison yard. The ladies applied for the class and the most common reason given for why they wanted to be a part was "to be outside and dig in the dirt and watch things grow." Several of them want to learn how to have a garden so they can teach their children when they are reunited. They are so very excited when a single seed sprouts and as we tenderly planted our baby cucumber and tomato plants last week, they cradled them like precious infants. They question every weed and check carefully before removing them—oh the joy of just seeing something grow! May we all enjoy our gardens a little more, even the weeding, as we appreciate the plots with which we have been entrusted. Happy Gardening!

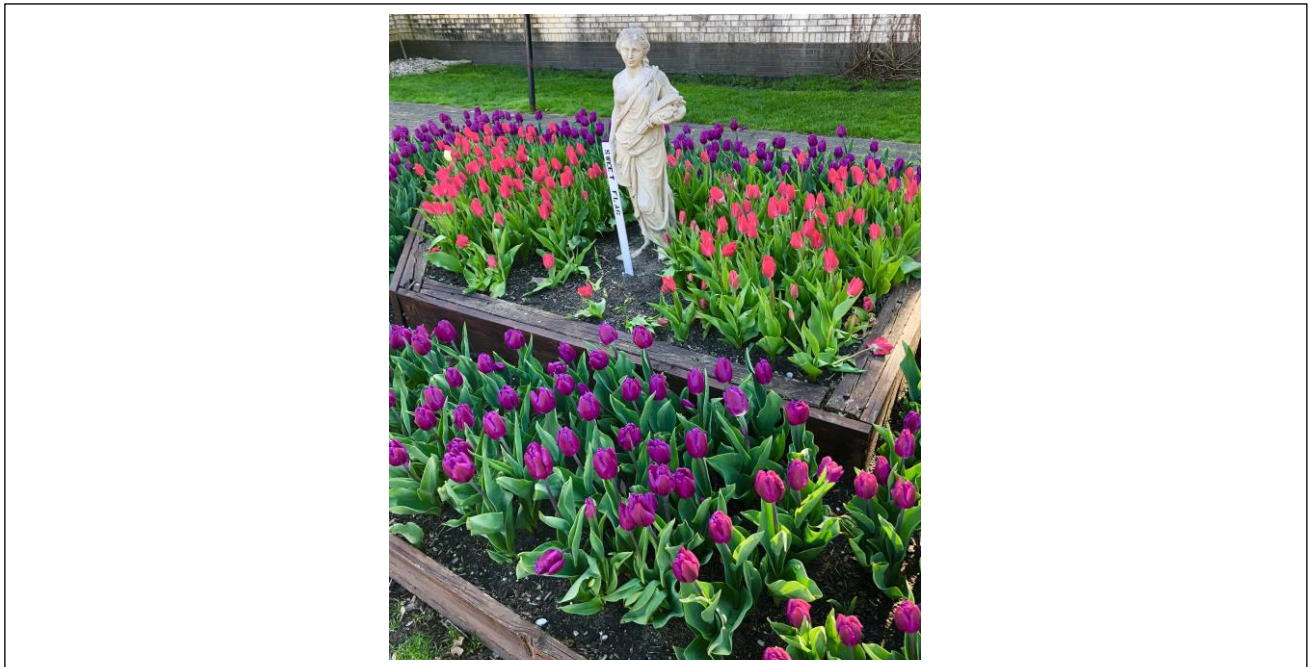
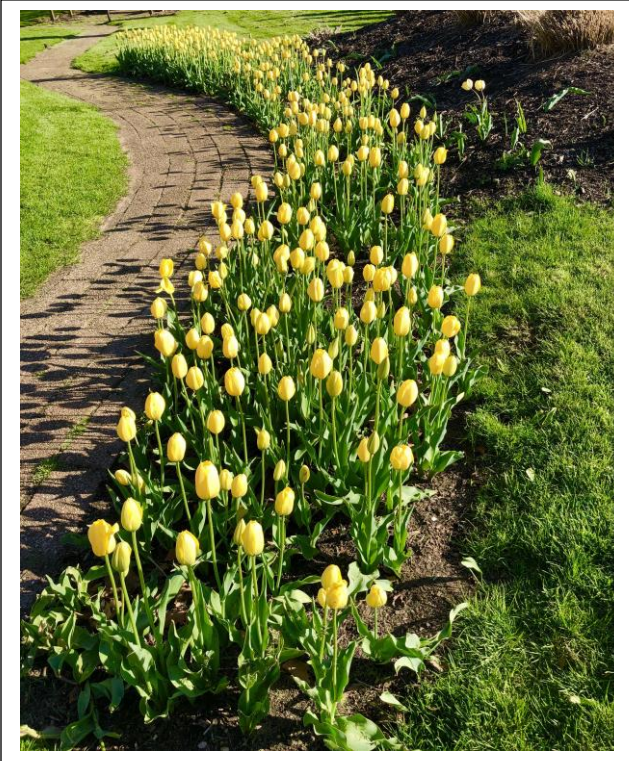
Suzanne Potts

PCMG PRESIDENT

Holland Tulip Time Festival 2019 By Debra Redding

For 90 years millions of people have gathered to attend the Tulip Time Festival in Holland, Michigan. This year it was my turn. Here are a few photos of the stunning tulips of Tulip Time.....Enjoy!







From the Editor.. I could not resist posting this sign.

I have some Chinese indigo that need new homes.

I have had them for 3 years now and they have pretty much taken over where I planted them. If you have an area that needs vegetation – dry shade is perfect for them. They are invasive but given the right home they would be beautiful. Email if you are interested. They are blooming now..

Thanks,

Susan Rose

Daffodilsrose555@gmail.com



Next month we will have a double issue – June/July. If you have interesting photos, information, plants needing a new home, etc. please send me the information by June 12th. If you are planning a visit to a garden – please send photos and information to share with all our PCMG.

I also need profiles and photos on the rest of our PCMG projects. If you have not had your information printed in the last two years – please send me pictures and information. Thanks so much!!

Susan Rose

May CHECKLIST

By Carol Randle

BULBS

Spring flowering bulbs may be ready to be cut back, but it all depends on when they finished blooming. If the bloom period has been done for at least six weeks, cut away. Some of the later tulips may not yet be finished replenishing themselves, so let them grow until the foliage dies back. Spring flowering bulbs can be left in the ground year-round, or you can lift and store them and then replant in the fall. The growing season is fully upon us. The soil temperature should now be warm enough to plant summer bulbs. Summer bulbs offer a lot of seasonal interest both in foliage and flowers. Canna bulbs and elephant ears are perennials for us in Arkansas, but caladiums are annuals. They prefer warm growing conditions and should kick in and grow quickly now. Other summer bulbs include dahlia, gladiola and tuberose.

ANNUALS

Despite the old saying, “April showers bring May flowers,” wise gardeners must still think about unpredictable heat and drought conditions when planting spring gardens. With winter annuals nearly finished, this is an excellent time to plant blocks of summer annuals for a splashy impact. Start pulling out the pansies and violas and replace them with plants for the summer. Whether you have sun or shade, there are so many options to choose from. Summer annuals arrive weekly at nurseries and garden centers. Impatiens reign supreme in the shade garden, but sunpatiens are made for the sun. Caladiums, elephant ears, begonias and coleus are also good options for the shade. There are so many color choices these days for coleus, and they will grow in full sun to total shade. Angelonia (summer snapdragon) is a showstopper along with cupheas, the Zahara-Series Zinnias and petunias. Heat lovers can go in, including lantana and ornamental sweet potato vine. When choosing annuals, mix in one to three colors and group plants in blocks to make the “WOW” factor. Annuals need regular fertilization to get the most out of them. Start with a complete slow-release fertilizer at planting, then use a water-soluble form every two to three weeks throughout the season. If you want to try something new, look for the new Arkansas Diamond Annuals. You can identify them by the blue diamond logo in nurseries and garden centers. They are grown in Arkansas by local growers and are tough performers statewide.

PERENNIALS

Perennials are looking great right now. Peonies are blooming beautifully along with baptisia, amsonia and foxglove. Taller flowering perennials often need a little extra support from stakes to help hold their blooms upright, especially in heavy rains. Know which of your plants need fertilizer and which don't. Most spring bloomers will benefit from an application of fertilizer after bloom. Hosta plants need fertilization two or three times a season. My Caramel and Citronella Heucheras are looking great now, and my hellebores are still going strong.

VEGETABLES

Vegetable gardening is gaining in popularity every year. Harvesting of cool season crops is going on now, but all the warm season vegetables can still be planted, from snap beans and corn, to tomatoes, peppers, squash and eggplant. By May our soil is warming up and we can begin to plant okra, southern peas, and even

watermelon and cantaloupe. As temperatures heat up, so do pest problems. Monitor for insects and diseases to catch them early. Mulch your vegetables with shredded leaves, newspaper or a similar product. Not only does mulch maintain soil moisture and help to keep weeds away, but it also keeps soil from splashing on the stems which can lead to diseases. As one plant finishes its life cycle, remove it and replace it with another. Utilize your space to get the most from your garden. Diseases and insects thrive in warmer temperatures, so walk your garden daily and scout for problems. Weed as you go to keep them from competing for water and nutrients.

HERBS

Fresh herbs are a wonderful addition to your cooking talents, but they also make great ornamental plants. Herbs are easy to grow whether you are interspersing them with flowers in the vegetable garden or in a stand-alone herb planting. Perennial rosemary, sage, oregano, lemon thyme, and curly parsley do well year-round, while the annuals basil and dill thrive in our summers. Fennel, both green and bronze, is showy and adds great interest to cut flower displays. My Greek Oregano and Lemon Thyme are going crazy, and my curly parsley is twice as big as it was last year. My rosemary is doing fine, and it is not “taking over” like my oregano and thyme. I planted bee balm in my herb garden, and it is also big.

HOUSEPLANTS

Houseplants and heat-loving tropical flowering plants can all go outdoors safely now. Most tropical flowering plants need bright light to bloom well. If you are growing plants that you have kept for several years, repot them now and fertilize regularly or you won't see as many flowers this growing season. Tropicals such as mandevilla, hibiscus and others bloom on new growth and if they are old and root-bound, you won't see much new growth and you won't see as many flowers. If you overwintered last year's plants, make sure you have cut them back by at least 1/3 and repotted them. Other tropicals that do well in our gardens are allemanda, ixora, plumeria and banana. As temperatures increase, watering needs increase. The more you water, the more fertilizer you need.



Red caladiums
from Phyllis
Barrier's garden
2018

SHRUBS

Spring blooming shrubs should be pruned as needed after bloom. Try to prune as soon as possible after bloom. We need to give them ample time to recover from pruning before the heat of summer hits and growth slows down. With azaleas we prefer to do selective pruning, instead of shearing. Shearing cuts encourage all the new growth to be at one level. What is preferred is a fuller growth habit with foliage throughout the plant and thus more flowers. Fertilize with an azalea fertilizer at the same time. This is also the month to be on the lookout for lace bug damage. Lace bugs begin feeding in May on the underneath side of the leaves. If left alone, there will be multiple generations and severe damage. It is too late for the preventative insecticides, but you can use Orthene now. All spring-blooming plants set their flower buds in late summer through early Fall.

LAWNS

Most of the weeds that are in our winter and early spring lawns now appear to be dead; however, they are simply dormant and will return with fall's cooler temperatures. We currently have summer weeds, such as nut grass and crabgrass to manage. Lawn lovers also contend with moss that grows in areas with too much shade.

If you are not an *Arkansas Gardener* subscriber, you are missing a great treat.



Blue false indigo from Phyllis Barrier's garden this month.

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