

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Angelonia and boxwoods at the Old State House Museum MG project

June/July 2019

Presidents Corner

"To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds, and watch the renewal of life—this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a person can do." Charles Dudley Warner, 1829-1900, American essayist, friend and coauthor with Mark Twain.

Our gardens are really beginning to flourish in this early Arkansas summer. The flowers are beautiful, we are at last eating those wonderful homegrown tomatoes and the herbs are putting on a real show. I am particularly enjoying the basil, "*Ocimum basilicum*", a member of the mint family. It is native to tropical regions from Africa to India and SE Asia. Tradition has it that basil was found growing around Christ's tomb after the Resurrection and, consequently, some Greek Orthodox churches use it to prepare holy water and pots of basil are set below church altars. In India, basil was believed to be imbued with a divine essence and oaths were sworn upon it in courts. Basil leaves can be eaten to aid digestion, rubbed on the temples to relieve tension headaches or into the skin as a mosquito repellent. Basil is chiefly enjoyed as a culinary herb in vegetable and meat dishes or as a key ingredient of pesto and other condiments. Pesto can be made by taking enough leaves to fill a cup (you can combine with arugula or flat leaf parsley leaves) and putting in a blender with a few garlic cloves and a few tablespoons of olive oil. Add a good handful of pine nuts and another of grated Parmesan cheese with a bit of salt and blend. Enjoy on fresh sliced tomatoes-- such a good taste of AR summer!

I hope you slow down and enjoy your garden this summer. See you in September for our next monthly MG meeting.

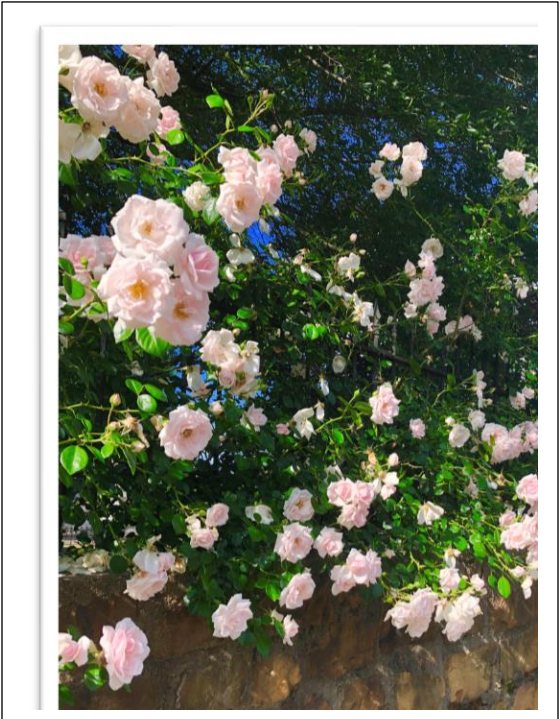
Suzanne Potts, PCMG PRESIDENT

Mount Holly Cemetery

Photos by Debra Redding

Every May, the beautiful “New Dawn” Roses put on a show. They were simply stunning! Thank you to all the Master Gardeners who take such good care of them.





Old State House Museum MG Project By Rita Borecky

My Journey began in December 2018 meeting all the wonderful Master Gardeners for the Old State House Museum to spruce up the fall colors and ready the beds for “winter is coming”. I am a “Newbie” in the MG Program. Class of Nov 2018.

I really was excited about showing up for the first time as a Master Gardener. The pride I felt at being assigned to this project. The anticipation of seeing this beautiful site, and to be a part of it, rather than just a visitor. Every one of the members of this team welcomed me warmly and enthusiastically. Pointing me in the right direction, giving me 2 mentors instead of one. They gave me a special tour and introduction to the professional and thoughtful staff and property. Then to top it all off, I got to dig in the dirt and see the wonder, of these Master Gardeners with the majority having over 15 years experience, work their magic in designing and implementing all the elements for a visual welcome to this historic building that has such a wonderful and fascinating history! I should have been intimidated, but I “bent the knee” to these gardeners that day. What will it be like the next time we meet? It can’t get any better than this, right?

Well, it has. The Old State House Museum, January 2019, there was a planning meeting and watering teams assigned for the new year. We met in one of the conference rooms on the second floor of this beautiful building. The light and view from this room was overlooking the majestic effect of the front entrance. Pastries, cookies, coffee and tea were served. Eighteen members were in attendance. What Spring/Summer plants for containers and beds? Where and how many? When? Our chair this year is Jody Allison. She was as excited as any of us to start a new year of gardening and enjoying each other’s company. We implemented the plan and by April we were planting! Artemisia, Kimberly Queen and Foxtail Ferns, impatiens, begonia, angelonia, boxwood, and yew to name a few. It has been only 6 months and the photos represent what has been done in just a short space of time. I look forward to “pledging my fealty as a Master Gardener to the Old State House Museum Project” and may her reign continue as the oldest surviving capitol building west of the Mississippi River for many, many years to come.

(Please excuse the quips. I’m having Game of Thrones withdrawal.)

NOTE: Photos provided by Rita Borecky





JUNE/JULY GARDEN CALENDAR

By Carol Randle

JUNE CHECKLIST

ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS

Keep your annuals deadheaded. Check your beds daily, watering in the early morning, so that they are protected from the hot afternoon sun.

Weed prevention is the best way to control weeds. Learn to hoe and hand weed effectively. Do frequent "weed checks" in your garden. Mulch exposed soil and pathways early to stop weeds before they start.

Weed all-around all your plants. If this presents physical problems, space the work out. Do one or two areas a day and then rest. Keep the weeds under control and remove before they flower. Setting seed is a major way that weeds stick around and cause more work for the gardener. Annual weeds produce thousands of seeds. They are carried in the wind, by people and animals and each seed develops into more seeds. To break this cycle, don't ever allow annual weeds to go to seed. Get rid of them when they first begin sprouting (usually after a rain).

Perennial weeds need to be dug up by the root. If you don't get the entire root, the weed will grow back. They grow on reserve energy until the new shoots reach sunlight. If you can continue to catch these before they get too high, they will use up all their reserve energy and will eventually die.

ROSES

Feed Roses with a complete fertilizer in June. Weed well. Remove faded blooms and sucker shoots as they come. Watch for aphids, mildew and blackspot. Deadhead and light prune Roses regularly through the Summer.

BULBS

In early June divide Narcissus bulb clumps. If you decide to store bulbs rather than leaving them in the ground, remember to replant in late Summer or early Fall. Divide grape hyacinth bulbs to increase next year's production. These bulbs increase rapidly. Squirrels consider these bulbs a delicacy. If they are planted with daffodil bulbs, the squirrels will leave them alone. (Be careful with your dogs, if they dig keep them away from the daffodil bulbs. My brother and sister-in-law lost a little dog because she dug up the bulbs and ate them.) Plant gladioli in early June. These bulbs will flower in about three months. To deter thrips, soak the bulbs in a mixture of two tablespoons of disinfectant to a gallon of water for 3 hours before planting them.

Wait until the foliage of Spring-flowering bulbs turns yellow before removing them. Lift and replant Lycoris as foliage yellows. This prevents it from getting too deep as it multiplies. Iris should be left alone for 6 weeks after blooming. Then lift and divide and cut foliage to three inches.

I am waiting to see what my Orienpet Lilies will look like when they bloom. They have big buds on them. Debbie Stults told me about them, She planted them two years ago and hers are big and fragrant.

PREVENTION

Mulch plants to keep moisture constant and protect against weeds and soil borne diseases. Watch for chinch bugs and lawn fungi in your lawn. Fireblight is a bacteria spread by bees and rain. Prune below infected parts. Streptomycin sprays will reduce damage.

Use insecticidal soap to control aphids, whiteflies, and lacebugs. Cut strips of bright yellow plastic, coat with petroleum jelly and hang to make a trap for whiteflies. Use aluminum foil around tomatoes, peppers and eggplants to reflect more light and confuse aphids. (Unfortunately, flea beetles thrive in bright, bright hot spots).

To control blackspot, continue spraying red-tipped photinias. Clean up and destroy any diseased foliage. **DO NOT COMPOST.**

VEGETABLES

Harvest your lettuce, peas, carrots, radishes and onions now. The time of day vegetables are harvested can make a difference in the taste and texture. For sweetness, pick peas and corn late in the day. That's when they contain the most sugar. Other vegetables, such as lettuce and cucumbers, are crisper and tastier if you harvest them early in the morning before the day's heat has a chance to wilt and shrivel them.

Plant other quick maturing vegetables or plant more of these varieties for continuous growth. Continue to thin out your lettuce plants. They should be about a foot apart. Lift early potatoes now. To avoid damaging them, use a fork. Blossom end rot on tomatoes, caused by calcium deficiency, can be treated with "Stop Rot". Another way to prevent the corn earworm is to use mineral oil on the silks.

If your squash plants wilt suddenly, check near the base of the plant for a small hole and a mass of greenish-yellow frass. An obese white caterpillar with a brown head hidden in the stem is the ugly cause. Squash vine borers are difficult to control once they are inside the plant. They are native pests, so they were here first

TREES AND SHRUBS

A pest you should look for is the Asian Ambrosia Beetle. It bores into thin skinned trees, such as Japanese Maples, Dogwoods, etc. When it bores into the trunk, it leaves waste that looks like a toothpick sticking out of the tree.

GENERAL YARD CARE AND WATERING TIPS

Pick up all leaves and faded flowers and add them to the compost. These are a favorite hiding spot for slugs and snails. Turn and dampen your compost often. Flies will breed in the grass clippings if you do not turn it regularly.

Watering and feeding is of the utmost importance. Do not forget the plants when you are suffering from a heat wave or low humidity. It is amazing how much water can be pulled up from the ground in a very short time. Check your beds daily.

Pick the faded flowers of Fuchsia as they start to wilt. This will force more blooms. Control Aphids by washing with the water hose. Watering is a pretty simple concept; ensure the garden has enough moisture to grow to its full potential. There are, however, a couple of things you need to think about. Water before plants start to wilt, by the time the plants show signs of dehydration, their growth has slowed and the plants may even be damaged. Try to ensure the garden has a continuous water supply throughout dry periods. Pay particular attention to greenhouses, baskets, tubs and pots. When watering, ensure the moisture gets deep into the soil, not just onto the surface.

LAWNS

Water lawns regularly. Deep water lawns, trees and shrubs to encourage deep rooting and 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. Taller grass will shade the roots from heat. Don't forget to save your clippings for the compost pile. Never add your cuttings after a weed treatment. Install new edging around borders and beds and check existing edging after long periods of rain because the ground will swell and once it dries the edging will move.

JULY CHECKLIST

We now enter the fun months for gardening in Arkansas. Temperatures are heating up, natural rainfall can be hit and miss (that would be a change after the rainy Spring we have been experiencing!) and insects and diseases have found their foothold. Try to garden smart, working early in the day. Watering in the early daytime hours is also better, the foliage dries quicker, the moisture can work its way into the root profile before the heat stresses the plants, and we lose less water to evaporation.

INSECTS

When temperatures heat up and dry weather occurs, some insects start to buildup in large numbers. Aphids, white flies and spider mites are all poor swimmers and thrive in dry conditions. Using a spray from the garden hose can knock them down, but pay attention and try to catch them when they get started. As with any pest problem, the sooner you catch them, the easier they are to control. Another insect which is becoming a problem is grasshoppers. They can ravage a plant in a short amount of time, so move quickly when you see problems.

TOMATOES

If you are growing tomatoes, the number one vegetable in the home garden, don't be alarmed if your plants quit setting fruit in the hottest days of Summer. Many varieties won't set fruit if the daytime temperatures exceed 95 degrees and the nighttime temps stay above 75 degrees. Keep the plants watered and mulched and they should rebound and begin to set fruit once the temperatures settle down. If the plants are strong and viable, they can continue to bear fruit through frost. If blights have taken their toll, consider starting some new plants from the suckers of your existing plants or buy new plants. Be on the look out for blossom end rot. Even moisture helps prevent cat-facing and fruit cracking.

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. Now is the time to pick those beautiful perennials for a fresh bouquet indoors. This will also encourage more blooms on most perennials. Salt deposits can build up in the soil of container plants. This will cause the foliage to burn. Flush out these deposits with water once during the Summer. If your gardenias and hydrangeas need pruning because they are big and overgrown, now is the time to do it as they finish blooming.

HERBS

Harvest blooms of lavender now to keep the plant tidy and encourage more blooms. Cut sprigs of rosemary and freeze it for future use. Cut back about three-quarters of the new growth on your thyme plants regularly throughout the Summer. For a nice fragrance in your kitchen, tie several branches of sage together and hang it upside down in your kitchen. Pinch the stems of basil regularly to prevent flowering. Harvest about once a week. Clip the flower stalks off garlic. Once the leaves have turned brown, garlic can be harvested.

ROSES

Lightly prune bush roses to encourage Fall bloom. Continue spraying roses for black spot. Use a registered fungicide (i.e. Funginex or an organic one (i.e. 4 teaspoons baking soda plus 1 teaspoon liquid soap or vegetable oil per gallon of water) on affected foliage (try not to spray the soil) for fungal problems.



'Anastasia' Orientpet (cross between oriental and trumpet lily. Has the best qualities of both lilies – size and fragrance.

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