

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



Pumpkin house at Moss Mtn –
Roland, AR

Oct/Nov. 2019

U of A

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Presidents Corner

“Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.” Albert Camus, 1913-1960, French-Algerian author.

Welcome to Autumn! It seems as if it is finally arriving, having been anticipated and indicated on our calendars for several weeks, but not on our thermometers. With the coming of the fall season, we are seeing beautiful golden orbs everywhere—pumpkins!

Pumpkins are believed to have originated in NE Mexico. The oldest evidence of pumpkin fragments date back to 7,000-5,500BC in Mexico. Pumpkins are much loved and truly emblematic of fall—pumpkin pie, pumpkin bread, pumpkin latte, pumpkin beer, pumpkin soap, pumpkin scented candles, pumpkin decorations, as well as jack-o-lanterns. The Irish tradition of carving turnips or potatoes and putting a candle in them to ward off evil spirits, began in this country when Irish immigrants in the 1800s found the pumpkin to be a much more suitable vessel.

Some other interesting “pumpkin facts”:

- Illinois grows more pumpkins than any state, with 90% growing within 100 miles of Peoria.
- The average number of pumpkins that can be grown from one seed is between 10-15.
- According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Beni Meier of Germany presented the largest pumpkin for judging in 2014, weighing 2323.7 pounds!

- Pumpkins are grown on every continent except Antarctica.
- In some Asian countries, pumpkins are grown on rooftops to enable the spread of the vines, and provide protection from large mammals. Some home growers in the U.S. are opting for rooftop pumpkin gardens as well.

I hope you are enjoying this glorious change of season and at least one Cucurbita pepo. Photo at right are pumpkins growing in Vermont.

Suzanne Potts

PCMG President



Book Review By Debra Redding

[The Humane Gardener: Nurturing A Backyard Habitat for Wildlife](#)

Author: Nancy Lawson

Part gardening how-to, part philosophy, and part spiritual guidance, this is the "next generation" gardening book that takes you to a new level of gardening fulfillment. The author combines the joys of gardening with the joys of treading lightly on this earth by co-inhabiting one's little space of land with the numerous wild critters large and small that call it their home, too.

Informational and inspirational, this is a beautiful read about accepting and encouraging the life around us. Nice photos and a very readable style.

LEAVE NO TRACE COMES TO Baptist Rehab Institute (BRI)

By Arlene Sevilla-White



One million years...That's how long it takes for glass to decompose!

Those plastic bags we use every day? ...Up to 1,000 years! Disposable diapers? ...Up to 500! Our plastic water bottles? ...450 years or more!

It only takes a “mere” 80 years for aluminum cans to decompose, 50 for tin cans, and 10 for cigarette butts. And tinfoil - it doesn't decompose at all! The BRI project combines fun with education. During their August ice cream social, project member Nita Sheth arranged for “Leave No Trace” facilitators to come in and also do a training on “leaving no trace” in our environment.

Despite it being such a serious subject about the environment, facilitators Nancy Deckard and Nancy Eddy made it just as much fun as the ice cream social! Both Nancy's are members of the Arkansas Master Naturalists Program along with Nita. The Master Naturalists are volunteer educators, citizen scientists and stewards of the environment striving to protect and preserve Arkansas' natural beauty. They distributed pictures of different objects and had BRI members line up according to what they thought decomposed the quickest to what took the longest.

There were a lot of surprises when the correct answers were revealed! “Nancy and Nancy” further discussed how we can minimize our impact in the natural world with their seven principles. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is in all 50 United States and countries around the world. Their goal is to “leave no trace” in all parks and protected areas through education and messaging. Challenges they take on include trashed natural areas, polluted water, misinformation in the outdoors, wildlife at risk, damaged trails, destructive fires, connecting youth to nature, and crowded parks. They also undertake research studies. If you are interested in getting more information about “Leave No Trace” or becoming involved, check out their website <https://lnt.org/state/arkansas/>

SOURCES:

Leave No Trace. (n.d.). Leave No Trace Arkansas chapter. Retrieved September 22, 2019, from <https://lnt.org/state/arkansas/>

BRI Master Gardeners. (2019, August 17). Leave No Trace training.

The Balance Small Business. (n.d.). The decomposition of waste in landfills: A story of time and materials. Retrieved September 18, 2019, from <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-long-does-it-take-garbage-to-decompose-2878033>

How much is a tree worth?

You love it for the shade it gives, the way the fall color matches your front door, the limb that perfectly supports your baby's swing.

But what is it really worth?

Location:	Suburban Chicago, Illinois
Species:	Swamp White Oak
Tree condition:	Good (Healthy)
Trunk diameter:	25 inches
Sun exposure:	Full sun

Value: US \$215 per year

(Calculations courtesy of the Tree Benefit Calculator at treebenefits.org)

HOW?

By intercepting approximately **3,336 gallons** of storm water per year, raising the property value by **US \$38** a year (if planted in the front yard), conserving **302 kilowatt hours** of electricity for cooling, reducing consumption of oil or natural gas by **45 therms**, and reducing atmospheric carbon by **907 pounds**.

And you thought it was just for the shade.

The Value of Trees

Trees make communities healthier. Children who live in neighborhoods with more street trees are less likely to have asthma. People who live in areas with plenty of greenery are less likely to be overweight or obese. They also increase property values – homes with mature trees sell for 3.5 to 10% more than neighborhoods without trees.

Trees clear the air we breathe. Urban trees capture fine particles from the air as well as carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrous dioxide and other pollutants. Scientists estimate the value of this pollution reduction in the U.S. at US \$7 billion a year.

Trees save energy. Trees shade buildings to reduce the need for air conditioning. Evergreens that block winter winds can save on heating.

Trees shelter and feed wildlife. Birds and other wildlife live and find food in trees. The flowers of trees provide pollen and nectar to feed bees and other insects we depend upon to pollinate plants in our gardens and farms.

Trees naturally manage storm water. Trees collect rain on their leaves and channel heavy rainwater to the soil. Together a community's trees reduce the water that flows into storm sewers. The USDA Forest Service estimates 100 mature trees intercept about 250,000 gallons of rainfall per year.

Information above courtesy of the Morton Arboretum, a 1,700 acre living museum in Illinois, dedicated to the scientific study, conservation, education, and outreach on behalf of trees. Printed in Lionmagazine.org, March, 2019. Provided by Jan Bowen, PCMG.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER GARDEN CALENDAR

By Carol Randle

CHECKLIST FOR OCTOBER

Fall is a great time to garden in Arkansas, with plenty of things to do. This is the time to make sure your garden is healthy. Cleaning up our beds is very important. Pay attention to moisture levels, especially prior to a hard freeze. Healthy plants should bounce back more easily than those that are stressed. October is harvest season. October and pumpkins go hand in hand. Look for pumpkins with a smooth outer rind, free of blemishes and with a stem attached. From miniatures to giants, they now come in a wide array of colors, shades of orange, red, white, green striped and speckled. Throw in some gourds, a few mums and you have instant landscape pizzazz.

Leaves will soon begin to fall, so it is also the perfect time to replenish your compost pile. Many perennials benefit from fall division. You can also plant your winter seasonal color. Grab your shovel and your work gloves and start gardening. How well your garden goes to bed for the season can predict in many ways how healthy it will be by next growing season. When cleaning up the vegetable or annual flower beds, don't add diseased or insect infested plants to the compost pile, but simply worn out plant materials are great additions.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

Starting in October, you can plant and transplant perennials. Enrich your beds with organic soil amendments. List and divide plants that have finished blooming. Most perennials bloom better if they are divided and replanted every three years or so. Remove suckers from roses and lilacs. Winterize, protect or lift tender perennials for winter storage. Mark dormant bulbs so they won't be destroyed when the ground is prepared for spring planting. Be ready when shipments of bulbs such as crocus, daffodils, irises, daylilies, freesias, hyacinth and tulips arrive at nurseries, then plant immediately. Water well to encourage root development and cover with plenty of mulch.

VEGETABLES

Fall and winter gardening has become quite popular. With season extenders or coverings for the garden, people are gardening year round. Our summer season may not have been the best due to the extreme heat, but fall harvest is underway and you can still plant if you can cover and protect. Lettuce, radishes, and greens are coming into production, along with a second crop of squash, peppers and tomatoes. Carrots, kale, spinach and cabbage are quite cold tolerant. Carrots and turnips may die back on top with a heavy frost, but you can leave the roots underground with a light layer of mulch to harvest as needed throughout the winter.

HOUSEPLANTS

Houseplants that need to come inside for the winter need to be there now. The transition from outside to inside can be tough on plants. They go from high humidity to no humidity and light levels also drop dramatically. Moving them when inside and outside conditions are more similar can make transition easier. Check them thoroughly for insects before making the move and spray with insecticidal soap before bringing inside. Often a nice spray of water can remove some insect issues and clean them up. Be sure you have some means of trapping the overflow of water; also be sure you let your plants dry out between watering. Overwatering is the leading cause of death in houseplants. Don't be alarmed if you see some yellowing of leaves or leaf dropping while they make the transition. For tropical plants that you store in the garage or in the crawl space of your house, you are simply keeping them alive, not thriving and growing.

LAWNS

The lawn is transitioning into dormancy now, so the only thing you need to do is mow. Lawns still need frequent mowing and leaves are falling in earnest. Weekly mowing not only takes care of the lawn's needs, but also the leaves. The mulched leaves can be bagged for use in the garden or landscape, or allowed to stay on the

lawn. They will gradually break down into organic matter in the soil. Heavy layers of leaves should be raked and either composted or shredded and used as mulch. Catch winter weeds before they get well established.

COLOR IN THE GARDEN

If you need color in the garden, besides the seasonal pumpkins, there are shrubs and perennials that provide color every fall. Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) provides gorgeous purple or white berries. Japanese Anemones have pink or white flowers; also the fragrant white flowers of sweet autumn clematis; and the blue flowers of the blue mist plant (*Caryopteris app.*). Itea has outstanding fall foliage and great summer blooms, as does oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*). Gingko gives us golden yellow; crape myrtles have gorgeous fall color, as well as beautiful blooms in the summer and pretty bark in the winter.

OCTOBER BLOOMS

Abelia, ageratum, sweet alyssum, asters, barberry, beautyberry, bittersweet vine, buddleia, ornamental cabbage, calendula, camellias, cannas, celosia, chelone, Chinese pistache, chrysanthemums, clerodendron, crape myrtle, dahlias, dianthus, dogwood, euonymus, four o'clock, gaura, ornamental grasses, gums, hibiscus, kale, lantana, larkspur, lobelia, maples, marigolds, Mexican sage, nierembergia, sweet peas, petunias, poppies, roses, rosehips, salvia, scabiosa, snapdragon, stock, torenia, tricyrtis, verbena, viburnum, viola, wisteria and zinnias.

CHECKLIST FOR NOVEMBER

Now is the transition time from active growth to dormant season, which runs through February. Cleanup in the garden will go on, but we typically have a lot of plant material we can add to a compost pile in November. How happy and healthy your garden is now can determine how well it starts growing next spring, so do your cleanup chores.

BULBS

One of the easiest ways to add color in the home landscape is by planting spring flowering bulbs. It is bulb planting time. What could be easier than to dig a hole, drop in a bulb and wait for floral excitement next spring? Even better, dig up a large circle or square, then layer in different bulbs. Mass planting gives a stronger statement next spring. Remember, we plant bulbs based on their size. The larger the bulb, the deeper in the ground it goes. A good rule of thumb is to plant three times the size of the bulb, deep in the ground. Once you are done planting, place winter annuals on top for twice the color. Choose large, blemish-free bulbs. You can immediately plant or store them in a cool place until you get around to planting them. Spring bulbs need to go through a minimum of 12-14 weeks of cool weather before the stems can stretch and grow properly. If you can't plant quickly, then store the bulbs in a cool spot in the garage or in your refrigerator-away from other produce (NOT THE FREEZER). Plant all remaining bulbs by early January if you can. Tulips, daffodils, crocus and hyacinths are the most common, but there are some unusual bulbs available as well. They do well in the ground or in containers.

TREES

November is the ideal time to plant a new tree. Soils still have some residual heat; we often get ample rainfall and while the trees are dormant, they can focus on putting out roots, before they have to worry about supporting leaves and new growth. Choose trees based on mature size. If you are looking for a particular fall foliage color, choosing it while you can see those leaves is smart. Be sure to look up when planting a tree—avoid planting under power lines or your tree won't be able to reach its full potential. Some large shade tree choices are: willow oak (*Quercus Phellos*); tulip poplar (*Linodendron Tulipifera*) and lacebark elm (*Ulmus Parviflora*). Some good mid-sized tree choices are: little leaf Linden (*Tilla Cordata*); red maple (*Acer Rubrum*) and Chinese pistache (*Pistacia Chinensis*). Prepare the site well and amend in an area three times the size of the planting hole to encourage root spread. Dig a hole three times the width of the root ball, but only as deep as the depth of the root ball.

You want the crown of the plant to be planted at the soil line or slightly more shallow. Don't dig out the planting soil and throw it away and plant in a bag of potting soil, that won't encourage root movement. Instead, mix the existing soil with compost and spread it out over a wide area. Once planted, mulch and water. **AVOID THE VOLCANO MULCHES**, use no more than two to three inches of mulch and be sure to leave an air pocket next to the trunk. Even the oldest and most drought tolerant plants benefit from regular water for at least the first year of establishment, but would prefer the first three years of growth.

VEGETABLES AND HERBS

Fall and winter are quieter times in our vegetable gardens, but there are still things to do. After you have planted the winter vegetables, cleaned up and composted, try to prepare some of the beds for spring planting. Then, in February, instead of waiting for the soil to dry out, you can plant sugar and snow Peas. Plant a cover crop in the other beds.

ANNUALS

When it comes to winter annuals, the later you plant, the larger the plants should be. Hopefully, if they are flowering winter annuals (pansies, violas and panolas) they are blooming. Flowering kale, cabbage and Swiss chard are also available, but get them planted and mulched soon. If you planted earlier this fall, don't forget to fertilize periodically. Also, pay attention to moisture levels, especially if you have these plants in containers. Water as needed, especially prior to a hard freeze. If you didn't get all your winter annuals planted, **NOW** is the time. They must have their root systems established before it gets too cold. Be sure to fertilize when you plant and side dress during the winter on warm days. In addition to pansies, violas and panolas, consider dianthus, dusty miller and snapdragons. For vertical interest, try mustard, kale, collards or Swiss chard. Look for healthy, large flowering annuals now. Not only will you have instant gratification with flowers, but they should bloom well for you all winter. Fertilize at planting and every three to four weeks during the winter to keep them growing. If we do have dry spells, don't forget to water, especially newly planted plants.

HOUSEPLANTS

In central Arkansas, the average frost is early to mid November, so pay attention to the weather forecasts and take whatever precautions are needed. If you have not moved your houseplants indoors, please move them in now. Don't be alarmed if they start dropping leaves because there will be a huge shift in their growing conditions. If you are storing houseplants or tropicals in the garage or under the house, make sure the move is made prior to a frost so you don't lose your plants. The consensus is that, by now, all houseplants and overwintering flowering tropical plants should have been indoors for at least a month. They may still be showing the signs of transplant shock. Houses are particularly dry indoors with heat and lower lights, coupled with a more static temperature, taking its toll. Cut off any yellow or damaged leaves and greatly reduce the amount of water you are giving them. Try to give them as much light as possible, but avoid fertilization. Our goal is to keep them alive and as healthy as possible. Overwatering is typically the number one killer of houseplants.

NOVEMBER BLOOMS

Asters, ornamental cabbage, camellias, chrysanthemums, clerodendron, dahlias, English daisies, euonymous, eupatorium, gaura, gingko, ornamental grasses, gums, oakleaf hydrangea, kale, larkspur, maples, poppies, rosehips, snapdragon, solidago, sourwood, stock, torenia, tricyrtis, verbena, viburnum, viola, wallflowers and witch Hazel.



CALADIUM BULBS

By Phyllis Barrier

It's getting close to the time to dig up your caladium bulbs (actually tubers) if you want to store and replant them again next year. Not only is this thrifty, but you're guaranteed to have the caladium you love. As you know, caladiums come in a variety of colors, designs, shapes and sizes. In years past I sometimes couldn't find the caladium I wanted. Hence, I started saving the tubers. Here I am seven years later still growing my caladiums from the same tubers.

Caladiums are tropical plants and start looking droopy and sad when cooler temperatures arrive. It's easy to lift the bulbs from the soil and then remove any leaves. I place them on sheets of newspaper until they dry, and I can shake the dirt off the bulbs. I then store them in a couple of shoe boxes (not touching) layered with newspaper. You can also store them in a paper sack with dry peat moss. In the winter I store them in the attic. My mother stored hers under her bed!

Plant when the ground has warmed up - usually in mid-April to Mother's Day. You might see little eyes or maybe not on the tubers. Plant them pointed side up, smooth side down about 1 1/2 inches deep in moist soil. Keep the bulbs moist but not so moist that they would rot. In a few days you'll see little dark shoots coming up, and then small leaves. In no time, you'll have a lovely plant that will keep getting larger and more beautiful as summer progresses. Caladiums prefer shade or filtered sun and will add color to a shady or dark area in your garden. There are newer varieties that can take more sun. If there is no rain, I water my caladiums every day or so depending on how hot it is. And don't forget to use caladium leaves in flower arrangements or just on their own in a vase. Left photo - newly planted caladiums. Right photo - after a few weeks - they are growing well.





SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Arkansas Extended Learning Center 666-0759 www.extendedlearning.org

**Christmas wreath & centerpiece
workshop**

Dec 3 & 10

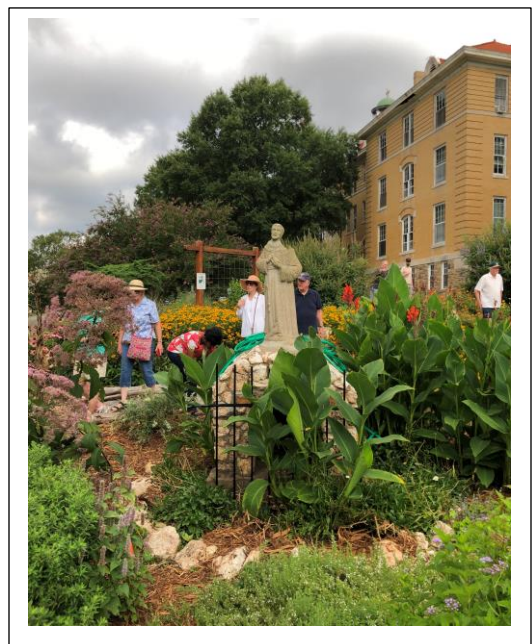
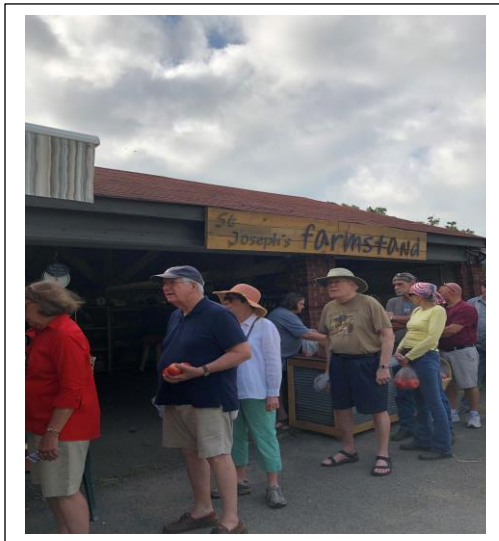
**Garden Design Toolbox - March 12, 19, 26, and
April 2**

Note: All provided by Mary Evans, PCMG

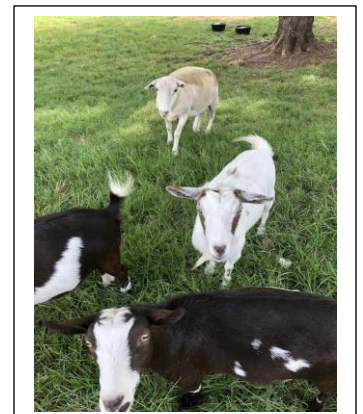
Farm Life City Living By Phyllis Barrier

On July 13 Master Gardener Ruth Landers led a large Master Gardener group on a tour of the St. Joseph's Center of Arkansas, which is an independent nonprofit organization formed to restore and preserve the St. Joseph Orphanage in North Little Rock through sustainable farming and food production, and programs that educate, promote agritourism and support community outreach. Architect Charles Thompson designed the 56,000 square foot building, which is on the National Historic Register.

The Farm Stand is open every Saturday until October 26 (8:00 to 12:00) and supports 20 businesses and farms. Proceeds go to the upkeep of the 100-year old building.



The 63-acre property includes a community garden, a hunger relief garden, pollinator garden, bee hives (center photo), and a pasture of cows and goats (right photo). Ruth Landers in the left photo leading the tour.



Historic Waterfall Is Restored at the Old Mill

By Valerie Boyce



Master Gardeners Valerie Hart, Deena Montgomery, Wanda Paes, Valerie Boyce, Janet Beck, Sherrie Mays, Peggy Trokey, and Mike “Mo” Majkowski pose in front of the restored cascading waterfall at the Old Mill.

On Wednesday, September 18, 2019, the City of North Little Rock, the North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of the Old Mill, and Master Gardeners hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Old Mill to celebrate the opening of its restored cascading waterfall. The waterfall sits on the northern edge of the park and cascades over a 50-foot-wide natural stone wall. The waterfall has not been operational since the late 1940s or early 1950s. With its restoration, the waterfall now powers the wheel of the replica gristmill, which appeared in an opening scene of the 1939 film *Gone With the Wind*. The waterfall also feeds a creek that winds through the park and empties into a series of ponds between the mill and the lake. A pump in the lake below the mill circulates the water up to the waterfall. However, Bert Turner, President of Friends of the Old Mill, said at the dedication that he would only mention the pump and about 400 feet of pipe once, because the waterfall was really “magic.”

The ceremony was attended by about 50 people, including NLR Mayor Joe Smith, Director Terry Hartwick of NLR Parks and Recreation, and eight Master Gardeners from the Old Mill project.



Bert Turner speaks at the ribbon cutting ceremony

In preparation for the restoration, the Old Mill Master Gardeners helped clear vegetation around the waterfall area by transplanting desirable plants to other areas of the park so that they could be saved and “fostering” other plants at home until they could be replanted. The Master Gardeners also helped prepare the park for the ceremony.



Mayor Joe Smith cuts the ribbon.

The Old Mill is located in T.R. Pugh Memorial Park at Lakeshore Drive and Fairway Avenue in North Little Rock. The Old Mill is Trip Advisor’s #1 thing to do in North Little Rock (2018 Certificate of Excellence), the #2 Attraction in Arkansas according to USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice 2018, and a TripSavvy Editors’ Choice Award Winner for 2018. It has been a Master Gardener project since 1991.

The Old Mill Master Gardeners invite you to drop by the Old Mill to see the new waterfall and the grounds.

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