

The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



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Presidents Corner

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness?" Alfred Camus

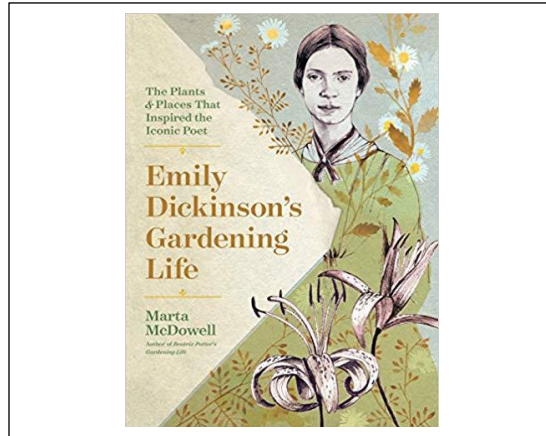
First, I want to thank the Social Committee for all their hard work and the fun times they afforded all of us this year. The reception after November's meeting in honor of the new Master Gardeners had tables laden with special treats and it was so nice to have time to visit with old and new friends.

As winter quickly approaches and 2019 draws to a close, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve you as PCMG President this year. I have been deeply honored. May your holidays be a blessing as you enjoy family and friends. And then, may you look forward to having some time to curl up with a hot cup of tea to peruse your seed catalogues and dream about next year's garden!

Happy Holidays!

Suzanne Potts

PCMG President



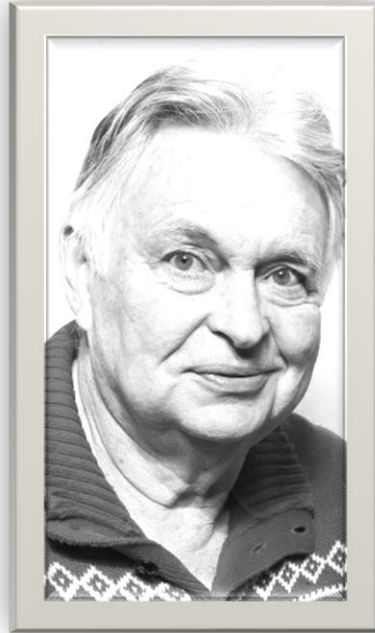
Book Review
By Debra Redding

Emily Dickinson's Gardening Life
The Plants and Places that inspired the Iconic Poet

Author: Marta McDowell

A book for both gardeners and fans of Emily Dickinson. As a gardener, I love how Marta McDowell brought the Dickinson garden to life through Dickinson's poems. And I think those enthralled first with Dickinson's poems who don't really garden, will learn quite a bit about gardening while enjoying the poetic references. The book takes you through a year in Dickinson's garden while providing biographical information about the poet. There is also a chapter on planting your own garden and a chapter on visiting Amherst and Emily Dickinson's home. The book concludes with references including a long list of the flowers, vegetables, and fruits grown in the Dickinson garden, plus the wildflowers Dickinson mentions in her poems or collected in the surrounding woods and fields. Marta McDowell has done a masterful job of combining both gardening and poetry from one of America's most loved poets in one book. Very enjoyable read!

Pulaski County Master Gardener Past President 2014 Walter Jennings



In October, the Pulaski County Master Gardeners lost a wonderful man who was loved by all.

Walter Jennings, a PCMG for 15 years, was part of the Cammack Fruit Demonstration Garden Project. All of his team members including myself, thought the world of Walter. Walter was also a past President of the PCMG.

Recently, members shared their thoughts of Walter:

“He was dedicated and set a fine example by working hard on anything our team did together”. “He had a spirit of kindness all the time you were around him. He was happy to see you, always willing to accept a challenge that we were working on whether it was moving dirt or building new strawberry or blackberry beds, Walter was right there ever so helpful “. “It was a pleasure to work with Walter, as he was a good man and a dear friend”. He will be missed.

Submitted by Laura Sholes, along with the Master Gardener's that volunteer at the Cammack Fruit Demonstration Garden Project: Allen White, Mary Battreal, Marcy Bujarski, Alan Hall, Sandy Harrison, Sandy Heister, Doyle Hughes, Eva Lathrop, Linda Muldrow, Ann Owen, Diana Nolte, Hannah Phillips, Marylee Robinson, Corey Scott, Robbie Schuchard, Cydney Smith, Ann Stoker, and Mary Vancura.



Braylon and his huge cabbage.

Each year Bonnie Plants, the largest producer of vegetable and herb plants in North America, with 70+ greenhouse facilities across the country, trucks free O.S. Cross, or "oversized," cabbage plants to third grade classrooms whose teachers have signed up for the program online.

The National Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program's winner for the state of Arkansas is Braylon Carpenter of Gibbs Magnet Elementary School in Little Rock. **Braylon is the son of Lauren Carpenter, a PCMG.**

He grew a beautiful, huge cabbage and was randomly selected by Arkansas's Agriculture Department. Braylon will receive a \$1,000 saving bond towards education from Bonnie Plants.

"The Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program is a wonderful way to engage children's interest in agriculture, while teaching them not only the basics of gardening, but the importance of our food systems and growing our own", said Stan Cope, CEO of Bonnie Plants. This unique, innovative program exposes children to agriculture and demonstrates, through hands-on experience, where food comes from. The program also affords our youth with some valuable life lessons in nurture, nature, responsibility, self-confidence and accomplishment".

DECEMBER/JANUARY GARDEN CALENDAR

By Carol Randle

DECEMBER

I suppose everyone is full of turkey and dressing, has been “Black Friday” shopping (if that is your thing) and has turned thoughts toward Christmas decorating. While there is not so much to do in the garden, there are a few things that still need doing. It is time to get those bulbs planted, change your containers for your front porch to winter plants (if you have not already done so) and do general cleanup and mulching.

BULBS

If you have not started with your bulbs, remember that your spring bulbs need 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 (NOT THE FREEZER). Plant all remaining bulbs by early January, if possible. General guidelines for depth of planting are two to three times the size of the bulb.

ANNUALS

Winter annuals can also be planted if you have gotten behind. The later you wait to plant, the larger the transplants should be. Janet looks for plants that are blooming, especially if she is planting pansies, panolas, violas and dianthus. Swiss Chard, kale and cabbage need time to get roots established before a hard frost, but the past few years they have done extremely well. Fertilize at planting and every three to four weeks during the winter to keep them growing. If we have dry spells, remember to water, especially newly planted plants.

PERENNIALS

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. Remove dead stalks and other debris, destroying infested material and adding the rest to compost. Cut back frost-nipped perennials now, leaving two-to-three stalks to help locate dormant crowns when planting in early spring. Be sure your perennials, especially the tender ones, are mulched for the winter.

VEGETABLES

Vegetable gardening continues to grow in popularity. More gardeners are planting a fall and winter vegetable garden. You may want to use covers or high tunnels as season extenders. This can make winter production even easier. Janet has grown cabbage, kale, and bok choy all winter outdoors with no added protection and still has had a good harvest. Insects and diseases are not a challenge in the cool months.

CLEAN UP

Early winter is an important season for cleanup. As your plants drop their leaves or when you pull up spent annuals and cut back perennials, get any damaged plants out of the yard. Letting the spent debris remain in the garden invites disease spores and gives overwintering insects a place to live. This leads to more problems next growing season. Some cleanup may be needed if you have heavily diseased plants. They may need some cleanup in the mulched area underneath them. Oils can be used to combat scale insects, but they are tougher to use on evergreen plants since it is hard to get thorough coverage on both sides of the leaves and stems.

CHRISTMAS PLANTS

Christmas plants are in all outlets now. Poinsettias still are the top sellers, but you have many more options on sizes and colors. From desk-top miniatures to topiaries or hanging basket poinsettias, they all need the same type of care—bright sunlight and even moisture. With proper conditions, the colorful bracts can stay showy for months. Color choices range from the traditional reds to pink, white, plum and even a new orange variety. Speckled and bi-colored choices also abound. If you want to try something different, bromeliads come in great shades of red and green and last inside with minimal care for months. There are also Gerber daisies, azaleas, ornamental peppers, paper white narcissus and amaryllis from which to choose. Amaryllis come in many different colors, also. Christmas decorations often add an amazing amount of color inside without plants but having something that can last after the season is over is also nice and they make great hostess gifts.

If you use fresh greenery or Christmas trees indoors, remember how quickly they dry out. Try to keep the plants fresh with ample moisture. If possible, redirect or close the heating vent closest to the tree to keep it from drying out. Once you are done with your tree, consider recycling it in a lake for the fish or as a haven for wildlife in a state park. Many parks collect them after the season. You can also decorate one for the birds outdoors. December blooms are camellias, hollies, nandina, osmanthus, aquifolium, possum haw, rosehips, tea plant, viburnum and violets.



Possum haw



JANUARY

ANNUALS

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

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 six to eight inches of mulch to root crops so the vegetables can be harvested as needed.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Plant camellias for winter color. 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. 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.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!





Laura Sholes, Dr. Gerald
Klingaman, and Terri
Waterman

Early in the Fall, the Greater Little Rock Council of Garden Clubs presented an event titled “For the Love of Azaleas”, which was held at the St. James United Methodist Church auditorium. The guest speaker was Dr. Gerald Klingaman, Professor Emeritus of Horticulture at the University of Arkansas, who is currently project manager of the Klingaman Arboretum at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks.

Did you know that all Azaleas are Rhododendrons? But, with major differences, was one of the tidbits shared by Dr. Klingaman to over 60 garden club members and guests. He was a delightful speaker as he gave the history and origin of azaleas. His knowledge and wit kept the attention of the audience. Dr. Klingaman presented pictures of varieties of azaleas, such as “The Evergreen Azalea Kurume Coral Bells” and gave information on how to grow azaleas successfully in your area. Another tidbit is to use pine bark as mulch only because pine needles take a while to break down in the soil. But, of course, either is fine.

The program ended with thanks to all who bought tickets and congratulations to the winners of gift certificates given as door prizes by local nurseries. Submitted by Laura Sholes.

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