



# The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

## President's Report

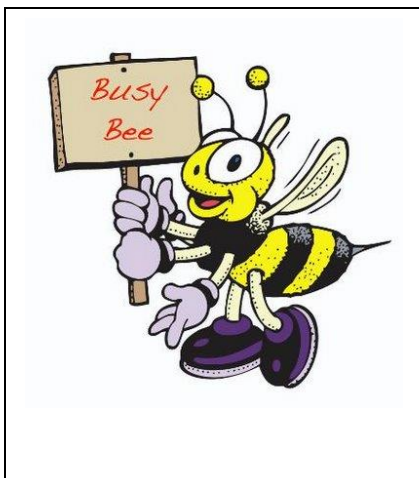
We have had a busy couple of months. All the committees are busy planning events. Save the date for the PCMG Picnic in the Park on April 30. We will be enjoying the Old Mill. This is a master gardeners only event. You will be receiving an invitation. No cost and no phone reservations. Be sure to check the offerings of the Travel Committee on the [armgs.org](http://armgs.org) website.

96 Master Gardeners were awarded Busy Bees at the February meeting. That represents over 3840 hours of hard work in the community. If you were unable to get your Busy Bee at the last meeting, you can pick it up BEFORE the next meeting in Jones Hall. Time is 10:30-11:30.

*"The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another. The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month."* Henry Van Dyke (1852 - 1933)

**Happy Gardening!**

**Sharon Priest**



**MARCH 2020**

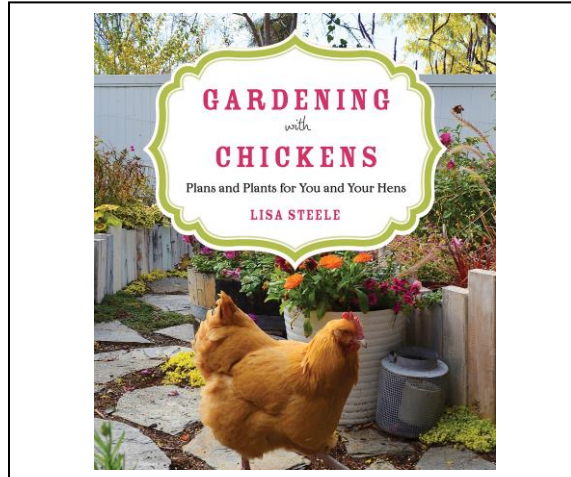
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Don't forget to check out the plant information on these sites. Programs, videos, plant selections, etc. Excellent way to obtain more education hours as well.

<https://www.thegoodearthgarden.com/>

<https://rivervalleyhp.clickforward.com/content/6/Services/>



## Gardening with Chickens: Plans and Plants for You and Your Hens

Author: Lisa Steele

### Book Review by Debra Redding

Join Lisa Steele, chicken-keeper extraordinaire and founder of Fresh Eggs Daily, on a unique journey through the garden. Start by planning your garden and learning strategies and tips for keeping your plants safe while they grow. Plant with purpose, choosing from a dozen plans for theme gardens such as Orange Egg Yolks or Nesting Box Herbs. Or choose a design that's filled with edibles - sharing the bounty with your family and your feathered friends. Then comes the fun part: enjoy the harvest, even let the chickens graze! Lisa's friendly writing, together with inspirational photos and illustrations, will have you rolling up your sleeves and reaching for your gardening tools. Lisa also covers a range of topics just for chicken-keepers, including:

- Chickens and composting
- Using chickens to aerate and till
- Coop window boxes
- Plants to avoid when you have chickens
- Lists of the most valuable crops and herbs
- Advice on how to harvest and use many of the plants
- And much more!

Whether you're an experienced chicken keeper, master gardener, or just getting into these two wonderful hobbies, *Gardening with Chickens* is an indispensable guide for a harmonious homestead.

## **The Last Wild One – republished from National Parks fall magazine by Nicholas Brulliard**

One October evening 10 years ago, Dan Gluesenkamp was driving on the busy stretch of freeway between downtown San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge when something on the shoulder caught his eye. It wasn't much to look at — a waist-high bush growing amid litter and rusted car parts. "That plant was fairly ugly," he said. "It was not photogenic."

At least that's how it must have appeared to other commuters, but Gluesenkamp is a botanist who has dedicated his life to protecting California's flora, and he had a hunch the ordinary-looking plant was by no means ordinary. It was impossible to park safely and walk over, so Gluesenkamp looped around to get another look. By the third pass, he was pretty sure he'd found a rare kind of manzanita, an evergreen shrub named for its berries, which resemble small apples. ("Manzanita" is the diminutive form of the word "apple" in Spanish.) He didn't know exactly which manzanita he had discovered, but he immediately left an excited voicemail message for Lew Stringer, a biologist the Presidio Trust.

Before long, Stringer and two colleagues found themselves sprinting across six lanes of traffic. Michael Chassé, an ecologist with the National Park Service, took out his plant guide. At the time, Chassé was working on a master's thesis about San Francisco's manzanitas, but when his guide pointed to the Franciscan manzanita, he still had doubts. "I thought it was impossible because it was extinct in the wild," he said. They recruited two additional experts to weigh in, and within a few days, the biologists from San Francisco State University confirmed that the plant was indeed the first wild specimen of the Franciscan manzanita identified in more than six decades.

The discovery was a stroke of good luck in more ways than one. That section of Highway 101, which cuts through the Presidio of San Francisco, was undergoing a major renovation project. Shortly before the manzanita finding, Chassé had looked at that very island in his effort to identify plants worth saving from bulldozers, but all he had seen was an overgrowth of ornamental shrubs. Highway workers later chopped down those bushes but somehow spared the manzanita. It was only after the plant was exposed that Gluesenkamp was able to spot it.

### **ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER**

The Presidio is also home to the only wild specimen of the Raven's manzanita, a species rediscovered in 1952 by biologist Peter Raven. Biologists have planted cuttings from the original bush, but they all share the same DNA. "Currently, the Raven's manzanita is incapable of producing offspring," Stringer said. "It's virtually an extinct species."

The project managers for the California Department of Transportation and representatives of several agencies including the Park Service and the Presidio Trust looked at alternatives for saving the plant. It was not feasible to build the new highway around the bush, which was already suffering after having lost its cover, and moving it to a botanical garden would have meant that the plant would again be extinct in the wild. So they decided to relocate the manzanita to a natural location in the Presidio, away from roadside trash and exhaust gases.

Before the move, biologists collected soil from around the plant, stem cuttings and seeds. Workers placed a tent over the plant in the days ahead of the transplantation to keep the dirt dry and one dedicated fellow stayed overnight in the tent during a rainstorm to make sure it didn't blow away. Finally, one early morning in January 2010, more than three months after the manzanita's discovery, the team used a crane to lift a 10-ton ball of plant and soil and deposit it onto a flat-bed truck. The manzanita was taken on a short drive to a secret location in the Presidio, a vast park that has undergone major habitat restoration since the military transferred the land to the Park Service in 1994. Operators used another crane to lower the manzanita carefully in a pre-dug hole. CalTrans workers, contractors and biologists cheered.

The plant's fame increased significantly when a conservative media outlet highlighted the relocation as a waste of taxpayer money. Right-wing talk show hosts picked up the story and ran with it. Gluesenkamp said he was dismayed to see the rescue of the manzanita turned into a divisive issue, especially because it had been the result of a collective effort. Gluesenkamp said the construction workers, who told their kids how they helped relocate the manzanita at the end of their workday, understood the value of the plant. "We do things because of how we feel," he said, "and that's the strongest argument for saving biodiversity: We feel it's important."

The Franciscan manzanita's distribution likely never extended much beyond the limits of present-day San Francisco, but urbanization drastically reduced the plant's range. By the late 1930s it was known to exist only in a city cemetery slated for destruction. Some local botanists would not let the Franciscan manzanita plants blink out without a last-ditch effort, though. "These biologists saved them in the middle of the night, threw them in a gunnysack and took them to a local botanical garden," said Stringer, now the Presidio Trust's associate director of natural resources.

Those pilfered plants are now crucial to the manzanita's recovery efforts. Biologists believe the plants held in botanical gardens come from at least three genetically distinct shrubs. Last year, they started planting cuttings from those plants near the rescued manzanita, and they hope pollinators will play their role as matchmakers to produce a crop of viable seeds.

**NOTE: Thanks to Jan Bowen, PCMG, for providing this article for our newsletter.**

## 2020 Pulaski County Master Gardener Board

Picture  
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able

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**Pulaski County Master Gardeners  
Appreciation Picnic  
Thursday, April 30, 2020 10:00-2:00  
The Old Mill in Lakewood**



**Menu:** Barbeque/Vegetarian and all the trimmings. Lakewood Pavilion is reserved for dining. The pavilion seats 100 people; therefore, the- first 100 reservations will be seated at 11:30AM and the second 100 reservations will be seated at 12:30PM. You will be notified of your reservation time slot.

**Transportation:** Please carpool if possible because parking is limited. Transportation by Golf Cart from the Old Mill to Lakewood Pavilion will be provided as needed.

**Reservations:**

Complete the reservation form below and return it to:

**PCEX Attn: Katie Reddick, 2901 W. Roosevelt Rd. Little Rock, AR 72204**  
**Please: "No phone reservations."**

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Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone & Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Project: \_\_\_\_\_

I am an active Pulaski County Master Gardener \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

## **GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR MARCH**

**By Carol Randle**

### **BULBS**

Bulbs are blooming, 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. Remember, the important time for bulb growth is right after bloom. If bulbs are overcrowded or in too much shade, they won't be able to store the energy needed to bloom next spring. If they are overcrowded, thin them and replant with the foliage intact. The same applies to overly shaded bulbs - move them to a sunny spot 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. Once the foliage begins to die, their season is over. They will be dormant until the following season.

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 soil and if planted in such cool soil, they could rot or deteriorate. Wait to plant your caladiums until at least May.

### **PERENNIALS**

As summer and fall blooming perennials begin to grow, assess whether 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.

When choosing new plants, you don't have to plant 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 terrible seasons. Soil preparation can go a long way in building a stronger root system that, 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 into the rings and is supported when heavy rains try to topple the blooms. Spring ephemerals, like bloodroot, trillium and trout lily 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 very many early season perennials in your garden that do go dormant quickly, consider some method of marking where they are planted, so you won'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. 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. Divide established perennials and replant at their depth in an enlarged area with organic matter and fertilizer. Keep mulch handy for a late freeze.

### **ANNUALS**

Fertilizing and deadheading all the winter annuals will give them a boost and help them 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 buy any until mid-April. (This is



hard to do when you are at the Flower and Garden Show and you buy plants you really like but must keep them alive indoors until it is safe to plant them outside!)

### **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.

### **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 seed. Most feed stores sell them in bundles of small plants which are then set 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 we sometimes 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. 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 1st, depending on what part of the county you live in. Potatoes should be planted from certified seed potatoes. Fertilize, water and mulch after planting.

### **TREES AND SHRUBS**

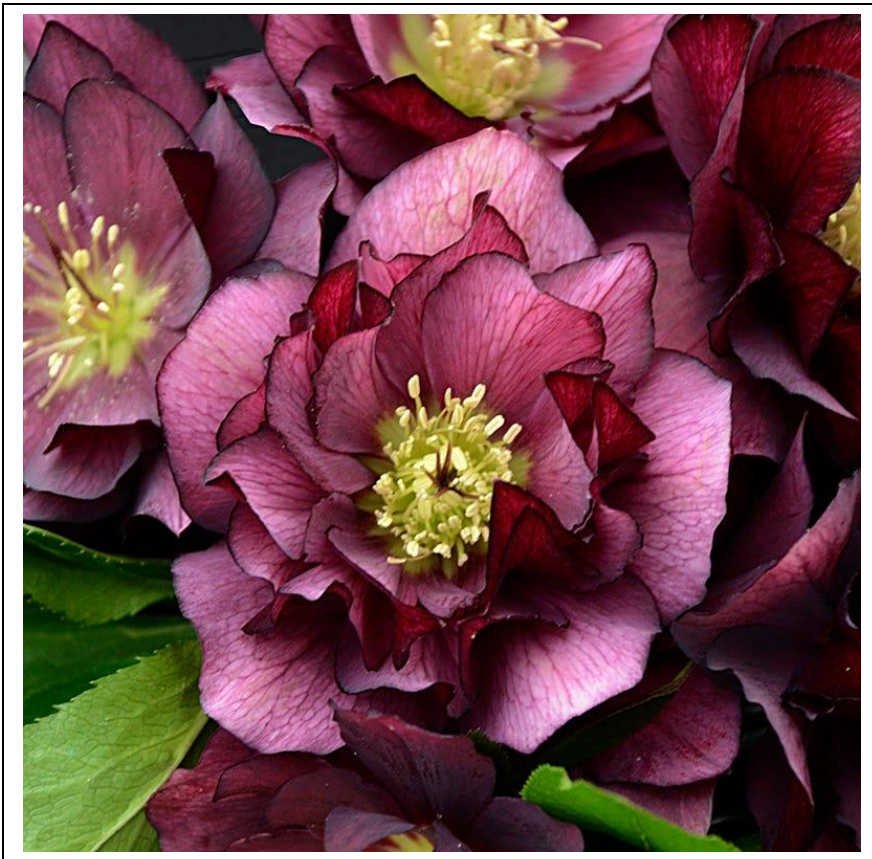
Most plants that bloom in the summer set their flowers on new growth, except for Big Leaf Hydrangeas, Oakleaf Hydrangeas and gardenias. Leave these three alone, since their flower buds are already set. If you have Peegee Hydrangeas or smooth hydrangeas, butterfly bush, crape myrtle, althea or rose of 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. Mow the weeds in lawns 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 be 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 standalone 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, either.

### **WE LOVE SPRING!**



‘Wedding Party True  
love’  
hellebore.  
Photo courtesy of  
Walters Gardens



**Central Arkansas Iris Society  
IRIS SHOW  
Saturday, April 25th 1:00-4:00 PM  
Grace Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall  
Kavanaugh Blvd @ Hillcrest Street (next to Mt. St.  
Mary's Academy)  
FREE**

**The Little Rock Council of Garden Clubs is sponsoring  
Carol Shockley, Rosarian, American Rose Society  
Thursday, April 30th from 1-2:30 pm  
St. James worship center  
\$10.00**



**Carol will take questions after the program regarding rose care.**

Lenten Rose “babies” available from Deborah. She has pink, white and purple small Lenten Roses (Hellebores). Please email her at: [beeinyourgarden@icloud.com](mailto:beeinyourgarden@icloud.com)  
She lives in Sherwood.

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