

# The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

## President's Report

**Nov/Dec 2020**

Well, 2020 will soon be coming to a close. It has been quite a year for the master gardeners. Thanks to your perseverance, projects have been done and judging by all the pictures, looking great.

As we close out 2020, I hope you continue to stay well. I am remaining optimistic that 2021 will be a new beginning. Sure it may be a few months, but maybe by spring we can get together again, if carefully.

Here are a couple of pictures I took a few weeks ago. The impatiens have been put away and the angel trumpets are blooming better than ever now. Keep the faith and enjoy a safe holiday season. Don't let down your guard, I want to see you all next year. Happy New Year and Happy Gardening.

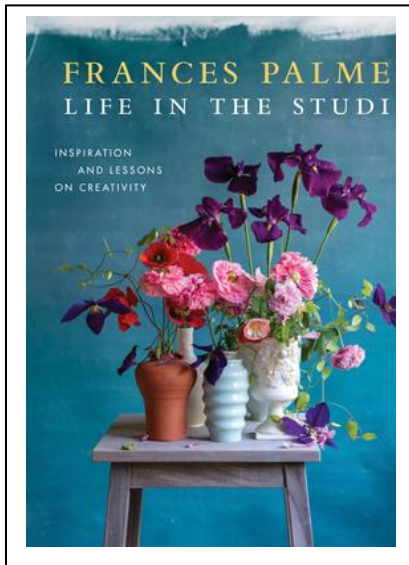
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*Sharon Priest*, PCMG President





**Life In The Studio: Inspiration and Lessons on Creativity**

**Author: Frances Palmer**

**Book Review by Debra Redding**

What makes a creative life? For an artist like Frances Palmer, it's knitting all of one's passions--all of one's creativity--into the whole of life. And what an inspiration it is. A renowned potter, an entrepreneur, a gardener, a photographer, a cook, a beekeeper, Palmer has over the course of three decades caught the attention not only of the countless people who collect and use her ceramics but also of designers and design lovers, writers, and fellow artists who marvel at her example. Now, in her first book, she finally tells her story, in her own words and images, distilling from her experiences lessons that will inspire a new generation of makers and entrepreneurs.

Life in the Studio is as beautiful and unexpected as Palmer's pottery, as breathtakingly colorful as her celebrated dahlias, as intimate as the dinners she hosts in her studio for friends and family. There are insights into making pots--the importance of centering, the discovery that clay has a memory. Strategies for how to turn a passion into a business--the value to be found in collaboration, what it means to persevere, how to develop and stick to a routine that will sustain both enthusiasm and productivity. There are also step-by-step instructions (for throwing her beloved Sabine pot, growing dahlias, building an opulent flower arrangement). Even some of her most tried-and-true recipes.

The result is a portrait of a unique artist and a singularly generous manual on how to live a creative life.

## CHECKLISTS FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Carol Randle

### NOVEMBER

Cleanup in the garden will go on, but we usually 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.

### PERENNIALS

Cut back perennials as they finish for the year, pull out the spent summer annuals and rake leaves. If you have hardy shrubs, trees or perennials that need to be moved from one part of your yard to another, now is a good time to move them. Be careful if digging plants when the temperatures are really low so that you don't expose the roots to very cold air or to drying winds for very long. Have the new hole ready before moving the plant. Perennials that sometimes struggle in a cold winter, such as hydrangeas, azaleas, and figs should be moved at the end of the dormant season to allow the bulk of winter weather to be over first.

### 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 two and one half 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. If you can't plant quickly, then store the bulbs in a cool spot in the garage or your refrigerator-away from other produce (NOT THE FREEZER). Plant all remaining bulbs by early January. 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.

### 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 you need to get them planted and mulched soon. Jennifer from The Good Earth showed us some really pretty plants at our regular Master Gardener meeting. She had some *Chiller Pansies*. She mentioned the Nature series of pansies. She had a gorgeous antique pansy that was a pale yellow. She also mentioned the trailing *Cool Wave Pansies*. The one she showed was called "Raspberry". She also had a beautiful ornamental cabbage. 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 of 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, snapdragons and dusty miller. For vertical interest, try mustard, kale, collards or Swiss chard. Swiss chard has worked well for us at the Sherwood Senior Center. 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.

## **VEGETABLES AND HERBS**

Fall and winter are quiet 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. More gardeners are planting a fall and winter vegetable garden. Season extenders in the form of covers or high tunnels can make winter production even easier. Janet has grown, in the past, cabbage, kale and bok choy all winter outdoors with no added protection and still had a good harvest. Insects and diseases are not a challenge in the cool months, either.

## **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.

## **DECEMBER**

### **BULBS**

If you have not started with your bulbs, remember that your spring bulbs have to have a minimum of 12-14 weeks of cool weather before the stems can stretch and grow properly. Plant all remaining bulbs by early January, if possible.

### **CHRISTMAS PLANTS**

Christmas plants are arriving in all outlets now. Poinsettias still are the top sellers, but you have many more options on sizes and colors. From desktop 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 month. Color choices range from the traditional reds to pink, white, plum and even an orange variety. Speckled and bi-colored choices also abound.

If you want to try something different, Bromeliads can come in great shades of red and green and last inside with minimal care for months. There are also 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.

## **HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Cool Wave  
pansies



Panolas



Tulips and daffodils



Ornamental cabbage



Toad lilies at Wildwood Park



Resurrection fern at  
Wildwood Park

## **BRI MG Fall Social - Wildwood Park**

### **By Susan Rose**

On October 17, 2020 our Baptist Rehab Institute PCMG toured Wildwood Park in West Little Rock. It was a beautiful day to be outside! I emailed Wildwood Park to confirm they would be open at 10 am on Saturdays. Ryn Davies, rental and volunteer coordinator answered by email promptly and confirmed they open at 10 am on Saturdays. She mentioned some MG would be touring Wildwood to Cherith Beck. Cherith is the PCMG co-chair of the Asian Woodland Garden. Cherith called me and said several of her master gardeners could be on hand to greet us and show us around the Asian Woodland Garden that Saturday. She also arranged for us to have four tables for our lunch set up in the pavilion. 15 of our BRI PCMG attended the social and all were very appreciative of these PCMG that went out of their way to help us have a wonderful experience at Wildwood. Some of our PCMG had never visited Wildwood and they were just thrilled to see the gardens. Ryn Davies also provided us with some colorful handouts and maps of Wildwood.

Since our BRI Horticulture Therapy program had been put on hold due to the pandemic, we had not seen each other since March. Kathleen Phillips, Chair of the Asian Woodland Garden at Wildwood made us some beautiful fern masks to wear on this special day. Since their Asian Woodland Garden is a shade garden she picked some beautiful material with ferns. Kathleen also gave us handouts on Wildwood and information about the other gardens. We all divided up and went on tours of the other areas while we were there.

Diane Smith showed us around as well. The Asian Woodland Garden had several varieties of camellias blooming. They also had toad lilies, resurrection fern, and Japanese maples that gave the shadows and shade such vibrant color for the fall. Their Asian Woodland Garden was also named the Arkansas State Master Gardener Project of the year in 2011. They have done an excellent job keeping it serene and inviting. We all wore our masks and practiced social distancing.

It really made me think what a wonderful idea – what if other PCMG visited with other PCMG at their projects. We could all enjoy a tour and also learn more about growing different types of plants from our fellow PCMG group. It is also pleasant to meet other gardeners that share our goals and love of gardening.



BRI MG at  
Wildwood –  
Tea House at the  
Asian Woodland  
Garden



Gardening articles welcome! Please email me your gardening articles. Interesting pictures of garden creatures, funny things that you may have encountered as you garden, etc.

The deadline for submission is the week before the end of the next month. For January – the deadline would be December 28<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks so much!

Susan Rose

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