

The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

President's Report

June 2021

Remember the commercial that talked about “something” and then “spending time with... priceless “. Well I experience that often. I got to spend the weekend with my granddaughter this weekend. She is almost 11 now. So grown up!! Her parents and her brother were in NW Arkansas for baseball. Riley not wanting to be at a baseball game all weekend stayed with us. She went to my project on Saturday am with me and was helpful. I am hoping to turn

her into a gardener. I hope it is working 😊. Think what it did for P. Allen Smith! Time spent with her ...priceless!

This has been a crazy spring, but it has been spring. I hope your plants are bouncing back from the horrible freeze we had. My gardenia and sweet olive may be goners. But everything else is doing well. With all this rain, it's hard to keep up with the weeds and everything else that's growing so fast. I had petunias in a flower box and much to my surprise they have seeded and bloomed. Mother Nature is truly amazing. I hope everyone is still being cautious and I hope we can get together in person in September. Stay healthy and I hope to see you then.

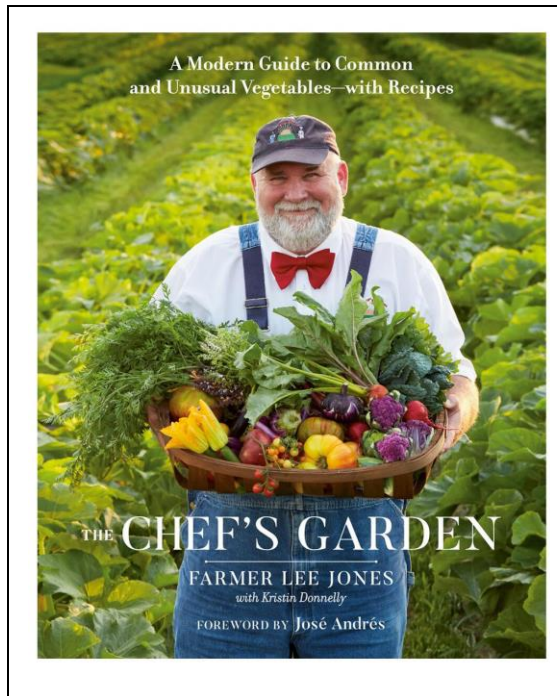
Happy Gardening.

Sharon Priest,
PCMG President

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The Chef's Garden

Author: Farmer Lee Jones

Book Review: Debra Redding

Near the shores of Lake Erie is a family-owned farm with a humble origin story that has become the most renowned specialty vegetable grower in America. After losing their farm in the early 1980s, a chance encounter with a French-trained chef at their farmers' market stand led the Jones family to remake their business and learn to grow unique ingredients that were considered exotic at the time, like microgreens and squash blossoms. They soon discovered chefs across the country were hungry for these prized ingredients, from Thomas Keller in Napa Valley to Daniel Boulud in New York City. Today, they provide exquisite vegetables for restaurants and home cooks across the country.

The Chef's Garden grows and harvests with the notion that every part of the plant offers something unique for the plate. From a perfect-tasting carrot, to a tiny red royal turnip, to a pencil lead-thin cucumber still attached to its blossom, The Chef's Garden is constantly innovating to grow vegetables sustainably and with maximum flavor. It's a Willy Wonka factory for vegetables.

In this guide and cookbook, **The Chef's Garden**, led by Farmer Lee Jones, shares with readers the wealth of knowledge they've amassed on how to select, prepare, and cook vegetables. Featuring more than 500 entries, from herbs, to edible flowers, to varieties of commonly known and not-so-common produce, this book will be a new bible for farmers' market shoppers and home cooks. With 100 recipes created by the head chef at The Chef's Garden Culinary Vegetable Institute, readers will learn innovative techniques to transform vegetables in their kitchens with dishes such as Ramp Top Pasta, Seared Rack of Brussels Sprouts, and Cornbread-Stuffed Zucchini Blossoms, and even sweet concoctions like Onion Caramel and Beet Marshmallows.

The future of cuisine is vegetables, and Jones and **The Chef's Garden** are on the forefront of this revolution....I love this book!

GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR JUNE

By Carol Randle

After the terrible Winter we had, we are still assessing our plants. The purple loropetalum I thought I had lost bloomed and was full of purple leaves. My flowering cherry, however, had only eight blooms and has no leaves, except where blooms were. It looks as if it has leaf buds, but nothing happens. I hope I haven't lost it. If you have to replace a plant, try a different plant instead of replacing it with the same plant you had. Think about what time of year you would like to have more color and choose something that blooms in that season.

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. Try cutting 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.)

VEGETABLES AND HERBS

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 sweetest taste, 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. Tomatoes are the number one vegetable grown by home gardeners, typically we start harvesting this month. This is also the month for blossom end rot to rear its ugly head. This black, rotted area on the base of the tomato is not a disease, but a calcium deficiency, often caused by major fluctuations in the moisture, we often see it when we have a dry period followed by heavy rain. This deficiency can be treated with "Stop Rot". Try to keep the garden mulched and evenly watered to avoid the problem. Tomato fruit worms and hornworms are also out and can quickly devour tomatoes. Larger worms should be picked and destroyed, smaller ones can be controlled organically with BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). Also, remember that tomatoes do not set fruit well when the temperatures stay above 75 degrees F. If you have not planted any vegetables or herbs yet, there is still time. The time is ideal to plant winter squash and pumpkins. These long season plants take up room in the garden, but give great results in the fall. Southern peas and okra love the heat as well and do nicely all 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. Wait until the foliage of spring-flowering bulbs turns yellow before removing. Lift and replant lily bulbs 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 back foliage to three inches. 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. 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.

ROSES

Feed roses with a complete fertilizer in June. Weed well. Remove faded blooms and clean up around the plant. Watch out for aphids, mildew and blackspot and spray when necessary. Cut roses above a five leaf cluster to encourage growth. Plant chives or garlic in between roses to discourage aphids.

ANNUALS

Keep your annuals deadheaded. Especially in the heat of summer, your annuals (and all plants) need to be watched for signs of wilting. Be sure your plants get enough water. Plants in containers will need watering daily to maintain their good looks. Mulching flower beds will help to conserve moisture and keep your plants looking pretty. Water early in the morning, so your plants will be fresh in the hot afternoon sun. Fertilize annuals, peonies and camellias early in June. My sunpatiens are doing well. A trip to the nursery is so much fun. Seeing all the different and new plants is so much fun and an education! I love to go through BJs Plants by Seven Oaks and Four Seasons nurseries. Of course, I always see something I haven't seen before and I want more than my pocketbook or the lack of room in my yard can stand! It's still fun!

PERENNIALS

Perennial plants are those that come back for at least two seasons. Many are in full bloom now, including purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea), daylilies (Hemerocallis), gaillardia, hardy hibiscus (H. mascheutos) and lilies (lilium app.). Deadheading long season bloomers encourages more flowers and less seed production. Deadheading is simply pinching or cutting off flowers as they fade, so that they don't set seeds. When a plant sets seeds, it puts energy into seed production rather than producing more blooms. Fertilize hosta plants at least two or three times during the growing season and keep them watered. They are not drought tolerant. Watch for slugs. If slugs are a problem, consider mulching your plants with sweet gum balls. This spiny mulch works well at deterring slugs and cats, keeping them away from the garden.

COMPOST

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

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.

HAPPY GARDENING

'Whopper Flopper' Daylily and coneflower



EDITORS NOTE: This was scheduled for the May PCMG newsletter and got left off by mistake.

Weather, Plants & Garden Gnomes

By: Mary Russell- Evans

Well, here we are again talking about the weather! A possible frost on April 21 with snow predicted in the Boston Mountains. I told someone the other day I will be in the NUTHOUSE from all this someday! In the nuthouse watching the weather! Later I had a visual of myself sitting in the TV room with the other inmates fighting over the remote, "Get back! I need to watch the weather!"

I was right in my fears over the cold weather we had. Instead of fully enjoying the 20" snow, I was (of course) watching the weather updates and trying to keep my own greenhouse warm. Nurseries all the way to the Gulf coast had tremendous losses, some lost everything. Nurseries in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas were affected. South Texas growers/nurseries sold out of tropicals (Bougainvilleas, etc) to their own gardens, with zero making it onto trucks. I worry about how many years it might take to recover from the loss (propagation). There was a houseplant/ tropical shortage before the freeze. North Texas nurseries are traveling to Kansas for nursery stock materials. Arkansas nurseries travelling to Illinois. One Louisiana nursery lost \$400,000 in nursery stock. There were big losses in the Tulsa area- land of Encore azaleas. Collapsed greenhouses under the snow everywhere.

I am collecting plants for a friend in Mobile who plans to pick it up in 2 weeks when she is up here.... nothing in Mobile is nuts! Nurseries are having to hide and lock -up sold materials. Customers are even snatching plants off trucks in the parking lots- leaving employees in the awkward position of having to retrieve them. Be sure to play nice when you go in the nurseries!

Yes, the prices will be – already are- reflective of all this. Any tropical type stuff – IF we get any- will have to come from Florida or Monrovia and will be expensive! Shipping costs from Oregon are over double the usual rates.

Last year with the Pandemic there were huge shortages of "everything garden." Once underway we had to settle for whatever we could get & be glad for it. At least last year there was something to be had at the beginning of it. This year- don't be picky. Get it when you see it- it will not be there when you go back.

Our own freeze damage. I have been out looking at damage since the snow melted. The most shocking thing was Privet! Is life as we know it is over if the privet froze? The most affected were hawthorns, gardenias, lorapetalums and some varieties of azaleas. Some still look awful. The hawthorns are leafing out. Lorapetalums and azaleas are blooming, I have yet to see a gardenia that does not have green wood. **DO NOT** dig these up & chunk them. They are possibly/probably fine. **AND you won't get a replacement-** more the reason to give them more time! I was very surprised to see the hydrangeas leafing back out. Yay!

And finally, to make things even worse.... I've been wondering what is on those big ships stuck in the Suez Canal... Now we know... two containers of GARDEN GNOMES! Turns out there will be a shortage on Garden Gnomes! What will we do? Better get 'em before they are gone!

Food for Thought:

Don't forget to add succulents to your garden spaces this season.

Their unique shapes, colors, textures, and sizes add interest to any space.

They're so easy to grow and can handle drought!



Blast from the Past

By Jane Gulley

I am going to talk about the Contemplation Garden again this month because after it was mentioned in March's History Moment I actually got several emails with questions about the garden. One was why is it called the Contemplation Garden? I felt terrible, as a former school teacher, I realized I had not covered the basics?

So let's review a minute, and remember you can find all the PCMG History at Arkansas Master Gardeners.org (armgs.org) use the same information you use to record your hours to get on the site.

First, the PCMG started in 1989 and the Contemplation Garden became one of our sanctioned projects in 1991. It was also one of our first and for awhile our only Saturday project. Because of the new landscaping planned by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts we no longer will have the contemplation garden as a project. I have no idea what the plans are for the future of the garden. but Katie sent out a memo from Sharon Priest that bulldozers would be razing the garden and if any projects needed plants they could come dig and take anything they could use.

We learned that right after our group took over the garden in 1991 a huge rain washed away the plantings and MG Breck Campbell took his tiller and knowledge as an engineer and fixed the drainage problem.

I wanted to find out when the Contemplation Garden was dedicated and what was the original intent of **the** garden. I Googled and even searched the limited digitalized archives of the Democrat Gazette. I could not find the information so I emailed the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Dept.

Remember last month when Randy teased Sharon Priest about looking like she had a halo on her head in **her** ZOOM picture-well she does. I emailed the city parks department and they contacted Sharon. Sharon said because the MG are involved with the Contemplation Garden and MacArthur Park, and she is with the MGs the city constantly uses her as their resource. After she and I talked she called her "sources" and that same day I received a nice response from Parks and Recreation.

This is it:

The Contemplation Garden was dedicated on April 22, 1990. A plaque attached to a boulder at the northeast corner of the garden contains the following inscription: "This garden is dedicated to all those who have suffered the tragedy of violent crime. May its beauty and peace rejuvenate our spirits as we continue to work toward a safer world."

Parks also sent a copy of an article from the April 23, 1990 issue of the Arkansas Democrat that said the garden is a spring fed pond was dedicated on Earth-day, there were concerns about rain during the dedication, 50 people attended, and the garden was not complete at the time of the dedication.

I interviewed two different people about the garden, Colleen Vollman who was a committee member in 2003. Colleen is a CPA by profession and chose the project because she could work on Saturdays. I also interviewed Terri Bonner who was the committee chair of the project when it was terminated.

I sent questions about problems with the project, perks of working on the project, and special memories. It will be interesting for you to know that their answers were almost identical even though 16 years separated their experiences. Both Colleen and Terri said the pump not working in the pond and problems getting the city to fix it, plus litter, plants disappearing, and geese made the project a challenge.

Both said the reason for the pond, giving victims of violent crime a place to rejuvenate their spirits, made it a worthwhile satisfying project.

Colleen's memory was frequently having to put on waders to get in the filthy water to get the rocks that were supposed to line the pond out of the bottom and back up to the side. She said still has the waders but has no reason why! She also saw Colleen Nick, the mother of Morgan Nick, there one day. Terri's memory was finding a duck nest with 19 eggs and watching the babies grow and finding a yellow flower she couldn't identify before she realized it was plastic!

Hilda Boger and I have memories of a wild experience we had at the Contemplation Garden. We were bus tour guides for the International Master Gardener Convention that was held in Little Rock in 2006. We had mostly people from Northern states on our bus and our tour was supposed to go to the Old Mill and the Contemplation Garden. After the Old Mill we drove to the Contemplation Garden and just as our group was getting off the bus an ancient, boat sized, battered station wagon drove up and parked right in front of our bus. When the station wagon arrived geese and ducks from parts unknown started to run/fly to the area. They had their necks stretched out and were honking and calling as they ran. Our bus people panicked and Hilda and I were trying to help them get back in the bus; it was like Alfred Hitchcock. Just as the last bus person got in the bus the driver shut the glass door and a huge goose slammed into the door. An older woman had gotten out of the station wagon and opened the back hatch and we could see the vehicle was filled with laundry baskets piled high with bread. It looked like the woman was being mauled as she threw out the bread and ducks and geese tried to get in her car. Obviously she knew what she was doing and had done it before so we pulled away and left. We took our tour on to Mount Holly since it's tour was over. Janet Carson said she thought everyone on our bus wrote about the geese on their evaluation sheet. It was a weird hit with our group!

iPhone phone introduced in June 2007

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