

# The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

## President's Report

**September/October 2021**

There's an old saying that goes something like "He who plants a tree - plants hope".

Well while I have only planted one tree so far this year, I have a lot of hope.

Hope that our Master Gardeners will be able to meet in person this year.

Hope that people who are eligible who haven't been vaccinated will get the shot.

Hope that you and yours have stayed healthy and happy this summer.

Hope that our children and grandchildren will have a successful school year.

Hope that your gardens have survived the heat.

Hope that you have had a restful and productive summer.

And I hope that 2022 will be a great year for Pulaski County Master Gardeners. Thanks to all for hanging in and hanging on.

Stay safe and healthy.

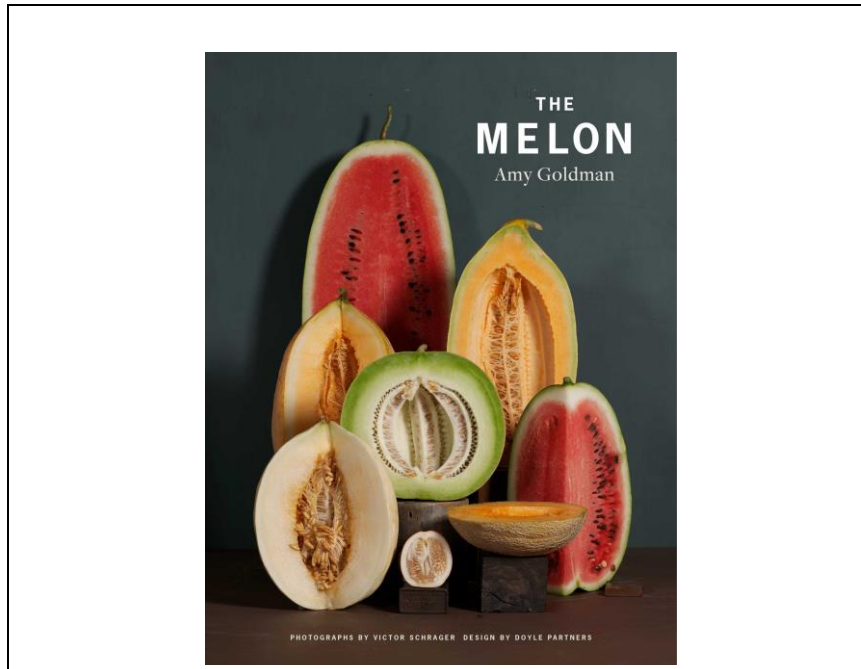
Happy Gardening.

***Sharon Priest,***  
PCMG President

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## The Melon

**Author: Amy Goldman**

**Book Review: Debra Redding**

**The Melon** reflects Amy Goldman's long love affair with a vegetable which she first grew in her teens. You can almost smell the melon-y goodness emanating from Victor Schrager's photographs. Both lush and beautifully composed, his work here is reminiscent of Dutch Golden Age still life. Simultaneously voluptuous and practical **The Melon** explains the differences between classes of melons, clears up misconceptions about them—a cantaloupe is really muskmelon--and reveals heretofore unknown varieties.

I fell in love with the Queen Anne Pocket Melon at first sight. If you want to buy them, cultivate them, pollinate them cook with them, drink with them, understand their origins, the information is right here, offered in the lively, yet precise, prose that readers of Goldman's previous four books have come to expect.

Melon and watermelon are now among the world's most important vegetable crops. **The Melon** has gone global too: The 125 varieties illustrated and described here comprise 85 melons and 40 watermelons from all over the map. Their stories are as diverse as the melons themselves.

## GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

By Carol Randle

### CHECKLIST FOR SEPTEMBER

September is a critical month for preparing plants for the winter ahead. **Water is still a primary concern, so monitor local rainfall amounts.** Spring blooming plants are setting or have set flower buds for next spring's display, so no more fertilization is needed. If you fertilize now, you may encourage new growth too late in the season.

### BULBS

Spring bulbs are showing up at local nurseries. It is time to buy them to get the best selection, but **don't plant them until it gets cooler. Keep them in a cool place for another few weeks before planting.** If you plan to dig up and store your caladium bulbs, make sure you are fertilizing them now. The more energy they can store in their roots, the larger the bulb will be and the bigger your plants next year. Make sure you dig them up prior to a killing frost.

### VEGETABLES

If your vegetable garden is still producing, then you are properly maintaining it. Vegetable gardens quickly turn to ruin if left untended. Fall gardens are by far the most difficult to manage, since insect and diseases have had all season to drive and multiply. We are still growing peppers, eggplants and harvesting melons. Now is a great time to replant. You can still plant some Fall crops including lettuce, radishes and fall greens, Swiss chard, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, Asian greens such as bok choi, and Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, onions, turnips, spinach, and radishes. Water is a vital component for survival and mulch is always a plus.

### HERBS

Fresh herbs are showing up in flower gardens, containers and stand-alone vegetable gardens. If you have annual herbs such as basil and dill, harvest them regularly to keep them producing foliage. As we near fall, be a bit more sparing in your pruning of the perennial herbs, rosemary, thyme and sage. They can continue to be harvested and used in cooking, but don't butcher them, since they are permanent plants in the garden and won't put on a lot of new growth this late. Unless you want to have an abundance of garlic chives in your garden, you may want to deadhead these plants now, as they can be quite aggressive. If you don't have herbs growing in your garden, they can be planted now, as well. Don't forget to water to get them established.

### PERENNIALS

If early season perennials such as peonies and lilies are looking ragged, don't wait for a killing frost to begin clean up. Start cutting them back now. They have finished their life cycle and will be heading into dormancy. **The key to gardening success now is to clean up and water.** Mid September through October is the ideal time to divide peonies. Herbaceous crowns are set one to two inches below soil level. Now is also the time that many perennials can be divided. Mulch is important the first winter after division to prevent the plants from heaving out of the ground.

If your garden needs late-summer color, consider planting some late summer bloomers. Perennials include Japanese anemones (*Anemone hupehensis*), turtle head (*Chelone spp.*), toad lilies (*Tricyrtis*) and Joe-Pye weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*). Ornamental grasses are beginning to set their plumage and will continue to grace our fall and winter landscapes.

## ANNUALS

Summer annuals that got regular application of fertilizer and water are still performing nicely. **Wait to get Pansies until the temperatures begin to cool off.** Pansies that get exposed to warm weather tend to stretch and get leggy, resulting in weaker plants all winter. Calendulas, snapdragons, callibrachos, flowering kale and cabbage, Dianthus, asters and chrysanthemums are all blooming now. Ornamental peppers are a great way to add color in the fall garden.

## SHRUBS

Shrubs that are blooming now include butterfly bush (*Buddleia spa.*), crapemyrtles if deadheaded (not “crape-murdered”), althea and caryopteris-with lovely purple flowers. Summer spirea (*Spiraea spp.*) may set more flowers if they continue to put on new growth, as may the reblooming hydrangeas, such as ‘Endless Summer’ and ‘Blushing Bride’. Beautyberry will soon be showing off purple or white berries.

## INDOORS

Dig up your begonias now and bring them indoors as a houseplant. They will bloom all winter, so you can use the cuttings outdoors next spring. Feed your houseplants less frequently as the days get shorter. Houseplants that have had a summer siesta outside need to be prepared for the move back indoors. Late September to early October is the ideal time to do so. Clean up the pots, check for ants and other insects and spray as needed with insecticidal soap before you bring them in, and once again after they are in, to control hitchhiking bugs. Moving them in before really cool weather starts will be an easier transition for them. Cut back on the amount of water you give them and don’t be alarmed with a little leaf dropping.

## CONTAINERS

Container gardens should have color in them year-round. Some may need refreshing now with the addition of new plants, while others may simply need some pruning and/or fertilizing to spruce them up. You can also add some Fall plants into the mix to keep the color going. Remember, water is even more critical with a finite amount of soil and roots. Frequent watering also leaches out nutrition, so don’t forget to fertilize, also.

## CHECKLIST FOR OCTOBER

Crisp, cool mornings often turn into warm afternoons, but fall is definitely here. Fall is a great time to garden in Arkansas, with plenty of options. Harvesting pumpkins and gourds, to summer vegetables if they were well tended or replanted, to ornamental seeds, October is harvest season. 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. While compost piles do get hot in the center, most home compost piles aren’t uniformly hot throughout, and disease organisms and insect eggs, may not get killed out. You don’t want to add them back to your garden next season. Once you have harvested everything in the vegetable garden, consider mulching the space for the Winter, or growing a cover crop. Leaving the soil fallow all winter invites winter weeds, which you have to contend with before planting next spring.

## PERENNIALS AND BULBS

Starting in October, you can plant and transplant perennials. Enrich your beds with organic soil amendment. 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 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. When you plant, water well to encourage root development and cover with plenty of mulch.

### **VEGETABLES AND HERBS**

By mid-October, or if frost is predicted, pick all tomatoes, whether they are ripe or not. Store ripe tomatoes on the counter and wrap green tomatoes in newspaper and store in cool, dark pantry or closet. They will ripen slowly. If you have more ripe tomatoes than you can eat, freeze them to use in sauces. Or hang the entire plants (with unpicked fruit) upside down in the garage.

In late October, cut back asparagus stalks to the ground. Mark the location. Mulch three or four inches. Prepare vegetable beds for spring and remove all debris. Cool weather annual herbs, such as cilantro and parsley can be planted now. Warm weather herbs such as basil and dill should be gathered now and dried. tarragon should be divided annually. Chives and sweet woodruff should be divided every three or four years.

### **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 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.



**Central Arkansas Iris Society  
2021 Annual Rhizome Sale  
Various other plants also available**

**Saturday, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>**

**8 am until sold out – come early**

**Unitarian Universalist Church  
1818 Reservoir Rd. Little Rock  
Please Observe Covid Protocols**

## Historic Waterfall Is Restored (Again) at the Old Mill

By Valerie Boyce



*Master Gardener Valerie Boyce, Friends of the Old Mill President Bert Turner, and Master Gardeners Sherrie Mays, Deeana Montgomery, Debbie Denton, Debbie Henry, and, Janet Beck at the Old Mill.*

On Thursday, August 23, 2021, 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 and open house at the Old Mill to celebrate the opening of its newly-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, which had not been operational since the late 1940s or early 1950s, was originally restored in September 2019 but collapsed in September 2020 after heavy rains. After extensive construction work, which involved feats of both engineering and art, the water now flows again and adds to the peaceful atmosphere of the park.

The ceremony was attended by about 50 persons, including NLR Mayor Terry Hartwick, Director of NLR Parks and Recreation Steve Shields, Friends of the Old Mill President Bert Turner, and six Master Gardeners from the Old Mill project.

Heavy construction equipment and months of work by construction crews have left their mark on the north side of the park. Once the contractor and NLR Parks remove all equipment, clean up the area, and put hardscape such as decorative boulders in place, the work of restoring and improving the vegetation can start. The Old Mill Master Gardeners will work with Friends of the Old Mill to come up with a plan to landscape the area around the waterfall, with advice on plant selection and location. The Old Mill focuses on native and old-fashioned plants which enhance the historic architecture of the site. The location is sure to become a new favorite backdrop for pictures at the Old Mill so the new landscaping will be important for the park.



The Old Mill is listed on the National Register of Historical Places and is best known for its appearance in the opening scenes of the film classic, *Gone With the Wind*. It 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 (Certificate of Excellence, 2021 Travelers' Choice), the #2 Attraction in Arkansas according to USA Today's 10 Best 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.





# ARKANSAS FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

## **Garden Show Butterfly Houses..... 2000 & 2001**

**By: Mary Russell- Evans**

I don't remember who came up with the idea to do a butterfly house, but I was (am) crazy enough to take it on. With some help from Tom Flammang and MGs David Dodson and John Prather we made it happen. Together we decided on the shape, materials, etc. Basically, it was like a double greenhouse with plastic over a PVC frame. We made flaps for doors to prevent escape. They left me in charge of the "inside." We used azaleas from the MG greenhouse and I ordered nectar plants from Florida (wintertime) to fill it up. I borrowed palms and other assorted plants from a local nursery. We put in many clay pot saucers with sand and a little water for the male butterflies. Other saucers contained fruit. I brought fresh fruit everyday for them and monitored the temperature inside the house. (I babysat these butterflies)

Jarret Daniels, a butterfly expert came from South Carolina and brought the butterflies for us. He did several programs about the butterflies and habitats as well as staying inside the house answering questions the entire show. The butterflies arrived in chrysalis form. We got to watch them start morphing. Because of PETA he had to collect all of them, dead or alive and take them back with him. At the end we could not dismantle the house until we captured them all. WHAT? I rounded up a swarm of wandering volunteers to help out. It wasn't a strenuous job...

I had spent a lot of time at Disney World with some former bosses. He was working part time at Disney. He showed us all the cool behind-the-scenes tricks, including hiding lines of people.... When you stand in line at Disney you never know just long the line is- you can never "see" the line. So, I had the idea to make the line go all the way around the house and enter on the opposite side.... We always had a line! Success!

The first one was so successful, we did a second one the next year (2001.) We used similar materials, similar plants, etc. One addition was a sizable water feature. For whatever reason, I did not anticipate having to do so, I had to go into it. Keep in mind it is winter. I had to roll up my pants and wade in, not having shaved my legs since fall. I was so hoping no one would come in. I had negotiated a deal to borrow some mulch from Chris Olson at Horticare. Chris came in, saw my legs and created a huge scene, pointing at my legs.... I wanted to



kill him. We made a deal again the next year for mulch and the deal hinged on- I had to shave my legs- which he checked before he released the load of mulch... every year! This continues to this day, him always checking my legs- deal or no deal. This was an annual “personal sacrifice” on behalf of MGs to shave my legs in the winter. He would tell people that my husband thanked him every year. Now you know where that tradition came from.

One of the funniest things that ever happened at the show was after the second butterfly house. For whatever reason during take-down the doors were closed a lot. I think the east door wouldn't open. It didn't take long before the fumes started to build up inside from the trucks, forklifts, etc. It was really bad! We had just completed gathering up all the butterflies. There was a woman MG came stumbling by outside. This was a true “blonde” moment. She said “What is that awful odor? Dead butterflies?” After she'd passed through, we all lost it. Truck fumes! To this day, I still wonder how big of a mountain of dead butterflies would be necessary to smell like that?

After our show in 2000, I went to the Philadelphia Flower show with Janet Carson (+52) .... It was amazing! I had a chance to go again in 2016 and work as a volunteer with a friend that lives up there. We rode the train every morning and worked a whole week at the show. I was very excited on one of my breaks to finally visit “their” big city, fancy butterfly house. There was a \$3 fee, but the ticket lady saw my apron and let me slide through. I was so glad I didn't have to pay for it! It was a big cage with a few hanging baskets and a couple troughs of blooming flowers. The other inhabitants were running around screaming, terrified of the butterflies. If one would light on them, they would scream- outright panic attacks. I secretly took pictures of some of this. I saw several petrified adults frozen in fear, with a butterfly sitting on them. The butterflies were equally fearful! You'd think they could at least put on a brave front for the kids! I couldn't imagine them never seeing or experiencing a butterfly. Really? Had they never been outside before? It all made me very sad. Do we take butterflies for granted? We never had any outbursts like that at ours. It makes you proud to be a MG and the joy that we bring others through sharing our experiences with others without even knowing it. Happiness comes when a butterfly lights on you!



2000 Butterfly House  
Ark. Flower & Garden  
Show



The “plain” butterfly cage at the Philadelphia Flower Show



A few butterflies clinging to the top of the cage at Philadelphia Flower Show



2001 Butterfly House  
Ark. Flower & Garden  
Show

## MG Talk for September 2021

(we did not have ZOOM in July or August)

By Jane Gulley

This is a quick summary of our history bits: remember you can look at all this fun information at [www.armgs.org](http://www.armgs.org)

We talked about the Pulaski County Master Gardeners being the oldest of the state MG programs. We started in 1989 after a 4 county pilot program in 1988. Our logo, the oak tree, was created in 1988 by PCMG Kathleen Ragsdale and shows the statewide reach of Arkansas Master Gardeners. We also learned about the exhaustive search for a meeting place that could fill our lengthy list of requirements and how glad we are to have St. James United Methodist Church for 17 years. We also had a wonderful story of serendipity about Mackie Hamilton as the first PCMG chair of fund raising in 1990. 21 years later, a year before her death, she gave a wonderful gift to help build the PCMG greenhouses so we would not have to go to craft fairs to sell our homemade items to support our projects or create a cookbook to sell.

We learned 1993 was a huge year: instead of meeting every other month we started meeting monthly in 1993, we elected our first officers in 1993, paid our first dues, \$10.00, in 1993, and Janet left to go to the State Extension office and Beth Phelps became our extension leader in 1993. We also talked about the much needed name change for our newsletter-from Master Minutes that started in 1990 to Magnolia Chronicle in 2014.

To get you in the mood for history, in 1990 there was a reminder from Janet to please return her gardening videotapes and that she was going to start a check out procedure for borrowing from her library of tapes. Remember the days of clunky VHS tapes!

In Oct. 1990 we had 22 members at our meeting and that was an improvement because in August we had 15! But we had 55 new members listed at the end of the 1990 year and in 1991 there were 44 new MGs.

Our spring picnic at Lakeside Community building would be catered by Backyard burgers with: hamburgers, cheeseburgers, chicken sandwiches- all cooked on site. French fries, coke slaw, baked beans, tea or lemonade, apple or peach cobbler **cost \$6.00 per person!** Oh, and you could **order a T-shirt for \$7.00 and a sweatshirt for \$10.00.**

There was an article about crape myrtles referring to them as the “lilacs of the south” and how great they were because except for powdery mildew that was more unattractive than fatal they were disease free. I know we all wish that were still true!

Recipes were listed in every Master Minutes -we were contemplating putting together a cookbook to raise money-usually the recipes were from the Holiday or spring social. I will add a couple to each history and will also compile them so Paul can add them to our history site.

## **Mexican Lasagne**

**By Anne Turner**

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano crushed
- 3 cups small curd cottage cheese
- 6 to 8 flour tortillas
- 1 or 2 cups chopped onions
- 8 ounces green chilies drained and chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 1/2 cups salsa
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro or parsley
- 1 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese.

Brown ground beef, onion and garlic in a large skillet. Drain fat. Stir in chilies, chili powder, cumin, oregano, and half cup salsa. Set aside. Mix cottage cheese and cilantro. Place two tortillas on a greased jelly roll pan. Spread each with 1/4 of the cheese mixture then 1/4 of the beef mixture. Top it with tortilla. Repeat layers, ending with tortillas. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes. Spoon off liquid. Top with salsa and cheese. Bake 10 more minutes or until cheese melts. Makes six large servings.

## **Spaghetti - Holiday party** **no name given**

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 large onion chopped
- 1 stock celery
- 1 can Rotelle tomatoes
- 1 can Italian tomato
- 1 pound Italian sausage and remove skin
- 1 large green bell pepper chopped
- 1 large red bell pepper chopped
- 2 jars Cost Cutter spaghetti sauce

Brown ground beef with onions, peppers and celery. Drain, add tomatoes and sauce. Simmer for 45 minutes. Cook spaghetti according to package directions.

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