



The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

President's Report

Giving thanks. It is something we think about in the fall. I would like to tell you about a Thanksgiving in June. Probably a year ago, under Sharon Priest's presidency, the board voted to do something to thank all Pulaski County Master Gardeners. During the beginnings of the pandemic, projects had to adapt.

There was more paperwork with contact tracing and keeping members safe and healthy. Some projects could not work so their members were welcomed on other projects to obtain work hours. The BRI project even adapted and started a flower bed so members could work outside and get their hours. It was a struggle to keep Master Gardeners engaged during this time but projects and committees stuck together and found a way. We all learned to get our education hours online and became proficient at zoom meetings.

To celebrate in thanksgiving the Social Committee has planned an event for June 16th from 9:30 until 12:00 at St. Joseph's in North Little Rock. There will be tours of the gardens (education time) and a free lunch. Please register to attend by going to our www.armgs.org web site under the calendar tab before June 12th. Thanks to Paul Nolte for setting this up on our web site. Here is where I say well done and thanks. **Pulaski County Master Gardeners are the BEST.**

Go forth and Garden,

CINDY STRAUSS
MG PRESIDENT

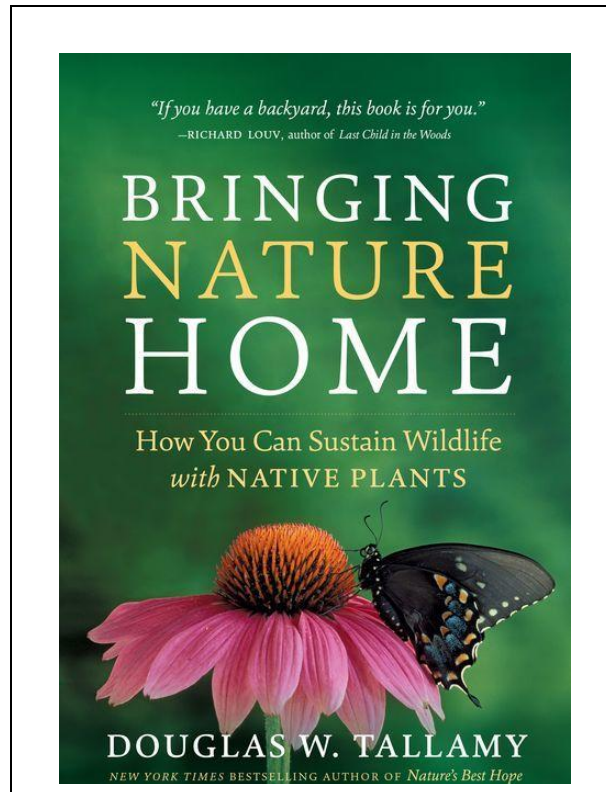
June 2022

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St. Joseph's in NLR





Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants

Author: Douglas W Tallamy

Book Review By: Debra Redding

As development and habitat destruction accelerate, there are increasing pressures on wildlife populations. In **Bringing Nature Home**, Douglas W. Tallamy reveals the unbreakable link between native plant species and native wildlife—native insects cannot, or will not, eat alien plants. When native plants disappear, the insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals.

But there is an important and simple step we can all take to help reverse this alarming trend: everyone with access to a patch of earth can make a significant contribution toward sustaining biodiversity by simply choosing native plants. By acting on Douglas Tallamy's practical and achievable recommendations, we can all make a difference.

Delivers an important message for all gardeners: Choosing native plants fortifies birds and other wildlife and protects them from extinction.

A fascinating read!

GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR JUNE

By Carol Randle

PREVENTION

Mulch plants to keep moisture constant and protect against weeds and soil borne diseases. Watch out 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, coated 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, 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 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. (Continued on page 10).



MG Bios By Jane Gulley

Remember this site - armgs.org - use the information that you normally use to log in your hours to visit this site. You will find a complete PCMG Directory plus a list of PCMG projects, committees, by-laws and past newsletters including the old Master Minutes. The Master Minutes are from 1990 through 2014 before our newsletter became the Magnolia Chronicle and can be found under **ABOUT** on the title bar. Scroll down to **About Pulaski County Master Gardeners**. They are a little hard to find but worth the search. You can get an education hour for your time. Now you can also find all the recipes that have been included in the PCMG newsletters over the years. You can get another MG hour that counts toward education by trying a recipe! You can find the recipes under PCMG information on the title bar. Scroll down to PCMG cookbook. To continue our History Moments we are interviewing PCMG members this year. In our past Master Minutes, the early PCMG newsletter, we interviewed members, and it was a fun way to get to know each other. Since we have not been able to meet in person because of COVID we thought this year we would use some of the questions from the past historic interviews and get to know more about our members. Last month March, I randomly passed out sheets of paper asking people if they would agree to be interviewed and if a “yes” to please come see me after the monthly meeting. I was pleased with the participation and the number of willing responses matched our number of meetings!

This month we are interviewing a “seasoned” PCMG, Cindy Franklin. Cindy is half of a mother daughter duo. Her daughter, Lizzie, is a new PCMG and will be featured this month as well. Cindy and Lizzie are not the only mother daughter duo in our membership, plus we have had a mother and son, sisters including twins, a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, aunt and niece, and of course husbands and wives. We also have a grandparent and grandchild this year.

This month is special because we are not only getting to meet Cindy we are getting a wonderful gardening tip that I know works. First let’s meet Cindy.

If you want to give your age: Cindy Franklin--old enough to know better

1. A brief history of your life that might include how long you have lived in Little Rock, family, education, work history, where you garden now/yard-community garden-shade, sun, wet, dry/irrigated. Just some basics

Born on a dairy farm in northeastern Pennsylvania. The hubs and I have lived in Little Rock 44 years. We have a son and a daughter who live in central Arkansas and one granddaughter who is 8. The hubs and I both were employed at the VA Hospital here in the Little Rock area. Both of us are retired although Bill continues to work on a day to day basis for the VA's Primary Care Clinic filling where he is needed. The hubs and I have a strong history of bird watching throughout the years. I grew up gardening and have continued gardening as a hobby. The lot has become sunnier over time as the redevelopment of the Heights continues unabated. The ground when we moved here was compacted from the previous owners. I have built up the soil over time by adding composted leaves and grass clippings. The lot drains from the northeast to southwest, but there is usually only some standing water out by the road. It is a clay soil full of tree roots from the oak forest that covered this area. As a result I have pursued container and raised bed gardening with a drip irrigation system and an in ground sprinkler system.

2. Who got you interested in gardening? My parents. They grew a large vegetable garden and spent many hours processing the collected food to feed the family. Mom also liked her flowers. She had daffodils, a rose bush, a lilac bush, irises, daylilies and lots of zinnias and marigolds.

3. Your favorite garden plant- why. The plant I have stuck with longest is *E. purpura*, or the common purple coneflower. It is a tough customer and grows well in the clay soil in sun and in partial shade. I do not remember where I got my original plants. They have looked after themselves over the years. I am also partial to daffodils and have many varieties planted in the yard.

4. Your favorite garden tool- why. Favorite tools: 1. Hand digger with a blade on one end and 3 small tines on the other end. An all purpose tool for chopping weeds and tree seedlings, hoeing, and planting. 2. Fiskar 15 inch Anvil Lopper for most heavier pruning jobs. It is light weight and is my go to lopper for most cutting and pruning chores. 3. My A.M. Leonard soil knife for general purpose digging, planting, and opening bags of garden soil. 4. My no-name blue hand pruners for light cutting. 5. My mini sharpening steel tool when the blades of whatever I am using need a quick edge.

5. Your most memorable plant success or failure. Rigging up a heated cold frame around my furnace exhaust to over winter Zone 8b and 9 plants outside. I also keep some of my summer salvias in there to get a jump on the new season. Also setting up drip irrigation system for all my container plants. There are very few plants you cannot grow in a container.

6. Do you have a gardening goal or fun gardening plant or activity you want to try this year? Growing native plants for plant sales and being an ambassador for easy to grow native plants. I collect their seed and hand it out to folks.

7. Your favorite gardening book or website.

Missouri Botanical Gardens <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org>

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center www.wildflower.org

Biota of North America Program www.bonap.net

Craig Frazier's Index of Vascular Flora of Arkansas

http://www.pbase.com/cmf46/index_of_arkansas_native_wildflowers

Prairie Moon Nursery <https://www.prairiemoon.com/> for how to grow native plants from seeds

8. Do you grow any plants that you consider, “out of the ordinary?” no

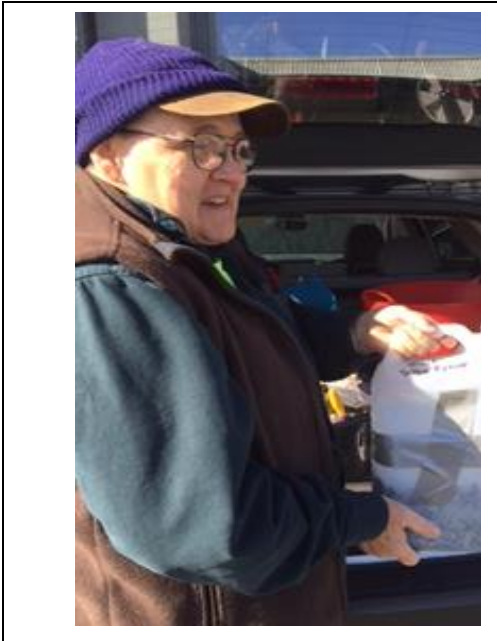
9. What would you grow if you could that does not grow in Arkansas! Lilacs from the north. More agastaches, sages, and penstemons from the west.

10. What gardening advice would you give a new gardener? Know before you grow. Read up on the plants you are considering and try to understand what that plant needs to be successful. Accept you are going to kill lots of plants in your lifetime, and some of the casualties may not be your fault. Chat up neighbors who like to garden to see what they are doing. Join a gardening club or organization to expand your circle of experts.

11. What is your favorite hobby when not gardening? Birdwatching, cooking, genealogy.

12. Which PCMG sanctioned project are you on now? Pinnacle, the Demo garden, & I go by the greenhouse every so often to see what they are doing, and if they need any native plant seeds.

I promised the gardening tip and here it is with pictures included. When you want to start seeds that need stratification you can use Cindy's proven technique. She cut a plastic cat litter jug almost in half, made holes in the bottom, added potting soil, and planted her seeds. She used duct tape to tape her cat litter jug mini greenhouse back together and covered the screw on top opening with netting to keep debris and critters from entering her greenhouse. She set her mini greenhouses outside and let nature take over. She had tremendous success, plus you can cut the sides when you are ready to remove your plants and you do not have to dislodge their root systems. Genius! Here are the pictures.



Side and bottom of plastic container.



Seedlings and Cindy's labeling system. Netting on top keeps away debris and critters.

Interview questions from Lizzie Burnham

1. A brief history of your life that might include how long you have lived in Little Rock, family, education, work history, where you garden now/yard-community garden-shade, sun, wet, dry/irrigated. Just some basics

I have always been a creative person. I was born, raised, and recently bought a property in Little Rock. I went to undergraduate for studio art. I eventually went back to school and got my Master's of Social Work. I have worked in several different jobs within mental health, private practice, and am currently a medical social worker at a local hospital.

I bought my house in 2020. The yard was very neglected, and over time with the help of my mom and others, it is coming back to life. It is dry in some spots, gets full sun in others, and drains fairly well. I don't have any irrigation system in place at the moment. I have enjoyed growing some plants that yield food (yard long beans, purple hull peas, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers) and a slew of flowering plants for bees, wasps, and hummingbirds.

2. Who got you interested in gardening?

Mom did. She's always been in the garden. Over time, I just kept asking, "what is this, what is that?" I'm still learning!

3. Your favorite garden plant- why

It's a toss up between violas because they're cheerful and hearty and Mexican Sunflowers for how large and inviting they are to butterflies.

4. Your favorite garden tool- why

I have a 3-pronged, handheld digger with a flat blade on the other side. It's versatile and makes quick work of weeds.

5. Your most memorable plant success or failure.

I tried to grow yellow wax beans last summer. The plants did well until they didn't. They were apparently pole beans (the packaging didn't say!), and they ended up crowding themselves out and dying.

6. Do you have a gardening goal or fun gardening plant or activity you want to try this year?

I'd like to transplant more native flowers in to my beds and possibly try my hand at growing some soy beans.

7. Your favorite gardening book or website.

The Southeast Native Plant Primer – It has good information and great photos for folks who like plants.

8. Do you grow any plants that you consider, "out of the ordinary?"

I don't believe I do.

9. What would you grow if you could that does not grow in Arkansas!

Perhaps some type of apple tree.

10. What gardening advice would you give a new gardener?

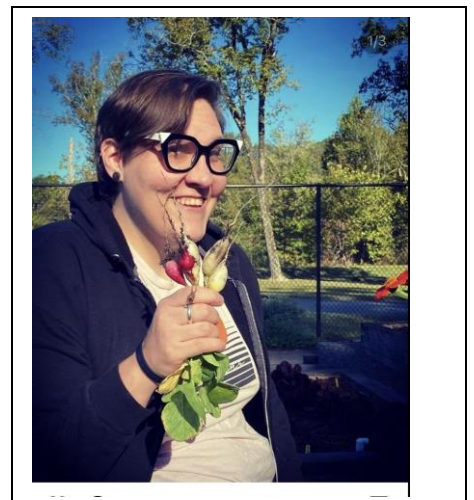
You won't learn everything overnight, and there will always be weeds to tend to.

11. What is your favorite hobby when not gardening?

Essentially any creative project. I'm always making something.

12. Which PCMG sanctioned project are you on now?

I'm on the 4-H Demonstration Garden.





ARKANSAS FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

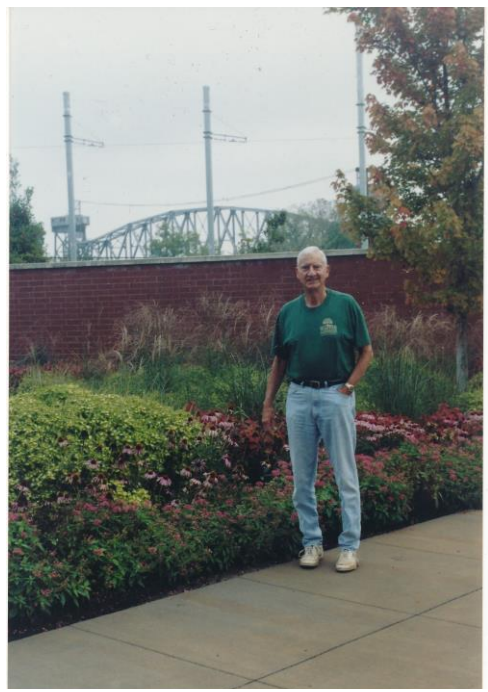
By: Mary Russell- Evans

So, in this series I have already owned up to or confessed to several of my “great ideas.” This time I want to feature one of Janet’s (Carson) “Greatest hits.” In an effort to curb the rising costs of the convention center, Janet came up with the idea of us exchanging a landscaping project for a discount (aka sponsorship) on the facility rental. Along with her fantasy that other MGs from surrounding counties would/could (should?) come help. The convention center went for it, but the MGs from other counties... not so much. Raymon Caple, Saline County MG- who was also a board member, helped on several workdays.

I protested the idea profusely, then somehow found myself as co-chair with Ray Sarmiento. We spent a lot of time scratching our heads as to how we ended up there. I did the design, got some plants donated, then we installed it. It was a very large area, mostly viewed from above, so it needed extra impact. It turned out very nice. I was not a fan of the rubber mulch that Janet got donated. I don’t recommend it in beds, ever! It should definitely stay in the playgrounds. The initial cleanup for it included Bermuda grass, dead Foster hollies + more wonderful (ugly) stuff. Some of it was downright nasty... condoms, syringes, dirty diapers- all manner of nasty litter tossed from the bridge... as well as potty visits by the homeless population. This is why we love working on public gardens, right? I think we did it for two (?) growing seasons before the taekwondo people took it over. They created a nice Asian garden in the area, including nice statuary of famous taekwondo notables. They also created the very large, ornate gate at the corner of the atrium. Little Rock is World Headquarters for the taekwondo people, bringing in attendees from around the world.



Mary and unknown people in the Statehouse Convention Center Garden - 2004



Ray Sarmiento at the Statehouse Convention Center Garden



Above – All this was torn out to build the current Asian garden behind the ornate gate at the corner of the atrium.

Right – Raymon Caple and Ray Sarmiento assessing the garden.



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. 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. A trip to the nursery is so much fun. Seeing all the different and new plants is educational. 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.

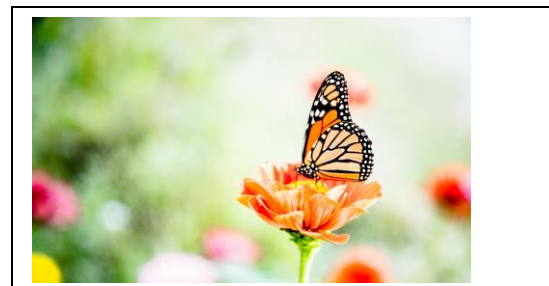
COMPOST

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 rotating 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.

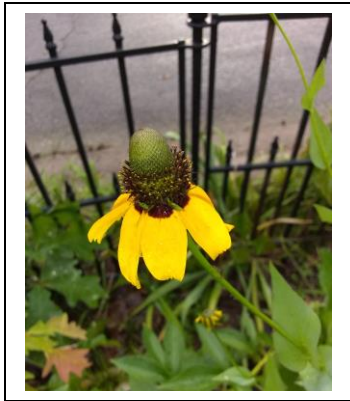
HAPPY GARDENING!



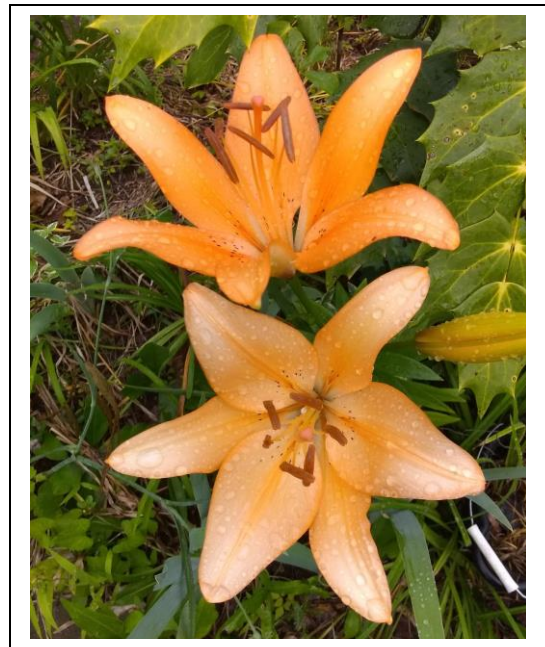
News from the editor

Just wanted to remind all our PCMG that they are more than welcome to submit a news article, pictures, and items for sale/trade to the newsletter. In the upcoming months Betty Deere will be showcasing our PCMG projects. We are looking forward to seeing and hearing more about our group and their projects.

Here are a few pictures taken in my garden this afternoon after the rain.



Left – Mexican hat – native to Arkansas
Below left – “Whopper Flopper” spider daylily
Below right – Orange Asiatic lilies



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