



The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

President's Report

Gardening and pests go together. Each morning and then again in the evening I walk my yard in search of pests. I have a couple of heirloom roses in pots in my back yard that the Japanese Beetles love. I drop the beetles in a bucket of soapy water to take care of them. I also have a bit of a rabbit problem but they are so cute I just let them roam and munch. We think of pests as bad things but there is one pest that I enjoy. I have been on the PEST (Project Evaluation Support Team) Committee for three and a half years. Getting to visit projects and meet with the chair, co-chair and sometimes project members is delightful. This is a time for the projects to show how wonderful they are and perhaps get help resolving any issues. I always look forward to these project visits. We have thirty beautiful projects/gardens and I hope you will take time to visit others beside your own project this summer. You will enjoy the beauty, get some ideas and meet fellow Master Gardeners you did not know. A win, win, win in my book.

Gardeners are the BEST.

Go forth and Garden,

CINDY STRAUSS
MG PRESIDENT

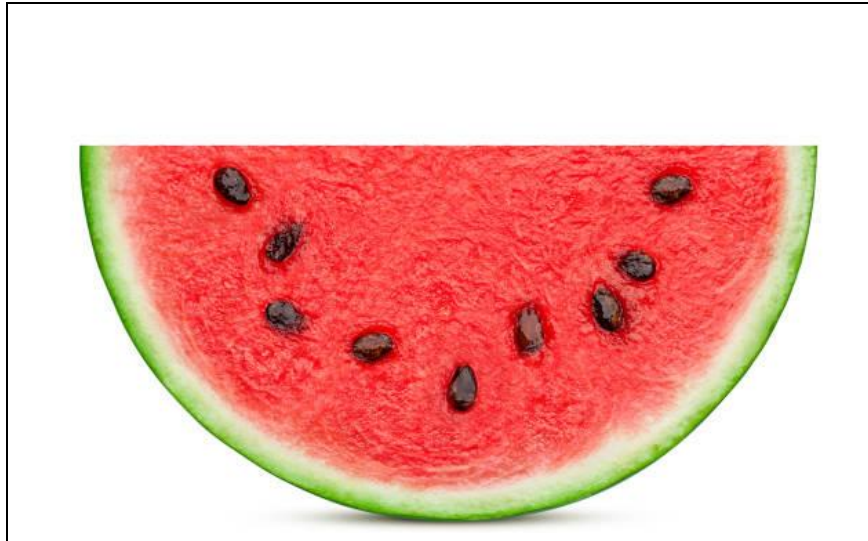
July 2022

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Rabbits discussing which plants to munch for dinner.





WATERMELON PUNCH

By Debra Redding

Our Watermelon Punch is a delicious, refreshing addition to any cookout, BBQ, or get-together.

If you wish, use the watermelon rind as a creative bowl! To make a watermelon serving bowl, cut the top of the watermelon off about 1/8 of the way down. Cut the bottom end enough to make sure the watermelon will stand on it's own. Scoop out flesh.

INGREDIENTS:

6 cups watermelon juice (see note)
2 cups pineapple juice
1 can (12 ounces) frozen raspberry juice blend
1 small can (6 ounces) frozen orange juice concentrate
¼ cup lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS:

Just combine all ingredients in a large jar or pitcher and serve chilled over crushed ice.

NOTE: To make watermelon juice, pick up one 10-pound oblong watermelon. Process small chunks of watermelon, with seeds removed, in a blender or food processor until they turn to liquid. Make more than you need for this punch, freeze the extra in ice-cube trays, and use the watermelon cubes to chill the punch. (You can also use watermelon juice instead of water when preparing frozen lemonade or limeade.)

GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR JULY

By Carol Randle

I was reading Janet Carson's column called "Ground" in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* newspaper (digital version). I always enjoy her columns. She said that June was already way too hot and dry for her tastes, who knows what July will bring.

As always, watering is of the greatest importance during this hot weather. Water is the most important factor for plant success, especially to trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, fruits and vegetables. Janet says that mulching the ground around the plants will aid in moisture retention, but slow and steady watering allows for good soil saturation. Janet recommends drip irrigation as the most efficient way to water and early morning is the preferable time, since water can easily enter the ground and not be lost to evaporation as quickly as it would late in the day. If watering late in the day is the only time you can water, don't fret. Try to avoid watering in the late evening as it can make plants more susceptible to diseases.

How much to water depends on the plants you are growing, the amount of sun or shade, the soil type and the slope of your yard. Plants in containers need even more water.

SHRUBS AND TREES

Spring blooming trees and shrubs are setting their flower buds now for next year's blooms. Don't let them get too dry now, or it could impact your flowers next spring. To have great blooms next year, do not prune on these plants any more this season. For most trees and shrubs, all you should be doing now is making sure they have water when dry. Fertilization should have occurred in the spring and we are good to go until next spring. If your gardenias and hydrangeas need pruning because they are big and overgrown, now is the time to do it as they finish blooming. They set buds in the fall. Shear back gardenias by selectively thinning branches and growth. Hydrangeas need older canes to be removed down to the ground line. Lightly fertilize after pruning. If your garden needs some color, consider shrubs and perennials that bloom now. Crape myrtles are a standard bearer for summer color and they come in all sizes.

FLOWERS

Perennials and annuals give us an abundance of color. Deadheading, removing the spent flowers after they bloom, pruning back leggy plants, fertilizing and watering can keep these plants lush and full of flowers. Keep flower beds well weeded. Remove faded blooms. Make sure you keep the soil moist, but not soggy around ferns. They may become dormant if they get too dry. Salt deposits can build up in the soil of container plants and this will cause the foliage to burn. Flush out these deposits with water at least once during the summer. If you are growing flowers in containers, they need even more fertilizer than if planted in the ground, because you water more. You can use either a water-soluble or granular fertilizer, but make sure that the plants aren't water stressed before applying. Summer annuals need regular fertilizer to keep blooming all season. If you have annuals that have stopped blooming, a little extra care now can give them renewed life and keep them going through fall.

VEGETABLES

Janet says some vegetable gardens got off to a slow start with late rains and cool weather this spring, but they are catching up now. Tomatoes and peppers are producing nicely, and we are harvesting onions and potatoes. Replant in areas that you harvest from. Okra and Southern peas love the warm weather and warm soils and will grow quickly. This is a great time to plant pumpkins for a fall harvest. You can also replant summer squash and continue planting winter squash.

There are tomato, pepper, eggplant and other vegetable transplants, also herbs available at local nurseries, so if you haven't planted, or you have holes in your garden, there is still time to plant. The key will be to keep the ground watered to get the plants up and growing. Mulching can also help prevent weeds from competing.

Scout all your gardens regularly for problems. Janet says there have been many reports of Japanese beetles and they keep moving in a southerly direction. They can wreak havoc quickly. Tomato hornworms and fruit worms are also rearing their ugly heads, so catch them quickly. Aphids and spider mites build up quickly when temperatures go up and we don't get much rain. The sooner you can spot a problem and properly identify it, the quicker you can resolve issues.

TROPICAL FLOWERS

Tropical flowers love the hot, humid months and can be a quick way to add a splash of color in the garden. From tropical hibiscus in vibrant shades of pink, yellow, orange and red to a variety of pink and red mandevilla, to the deep purple of tibouchina and large, luscious leaves on bananas and elephant ears, there are plenty of ways to add color that can take the heat. New shipments keep appearing at local nurseries, so stop in to see what is available.

LAWNS

The main thing we are concerned with, in our lawns, now, is mowing and watering. While we may all want a lush, bright green lawn, lawn grasses can get a bit dry in between watering and still survive. Deep water lawns, trees and shrubs to encourage deep rooting and to 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. Longer grass will shade the roots from heat. If you want to control any weeds, now is the time to do it before they get too large. You will find that some weeds are easier to kill than others. Nut sedge is tough. A sledgehammer is probably your best bet, in this case! Always read and follow label directions. If you want one final application of fertilizer, mid to late August is the time to do it. Pay attention to the weather conditions.

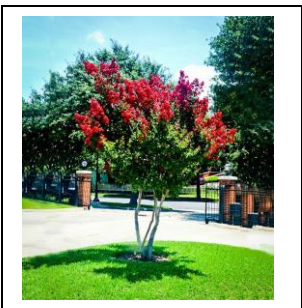
HAPPY GARDENING



Above – Miss Frances
Right – Coral Magic



Above – Natchez
Left - Dynamite



BIOS BY JANE GULLEY

Pam Abrams



I had a wonderful time interviewing Pam Abrams. I knew she was serving on the PCMG Executive Board but did not know she has had two professional lives! These were her answers to the interview questions. I appreciated her taking the time to answer-she was one of the random people that I asked to help with the interviews and she graciously accepted. I do not think it is included in the interview questions, but Pam and Jan Brandenburg get our speakers for PCMG meetings. We can give them an enthusiastic thank you when we see them at the meeting

Your name -age if you want to include it: Pamela Abrams (64)

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 and raised in LR by my parents and three other siblings in the Central High neighborhood where my mom continues to reside. Retired from the VA Medical Center after 30 years. Went to law school after retirement and I have been a licensed attorney for five years.

2. Who got you interested in gardening? What is interesting is that I grew up in the inner city and my parents did not even own a green plant nor engage in gardening. I was naturally curious about plants and my first plant was when I was about nine years old. I planted a lone watermelon seed in the mud behind my house. It grew skinny and tall and died.

3. Your favorite garden plant- why? I am infatuated with the Christmas cactus because it is so beautiful and unpredictable and hard to kill. I love propagating this plant because it is so easy.

4. Your favorite garden tool- why? Any type of shovel from hand to heavy duty. You can do so much with a shovel.

5. Your most memorable plant success or failure. My trumpet lilies were a roaring success the first year and a miserable failure the next year.

6. Do you have a gardening goal or fun gardening plant or activity you want to try this year? Kill all of my weeds in a safe and environment friendly manner.

7. Your favorite gardening book or website? I could watch P. Allen Smith all day every day.

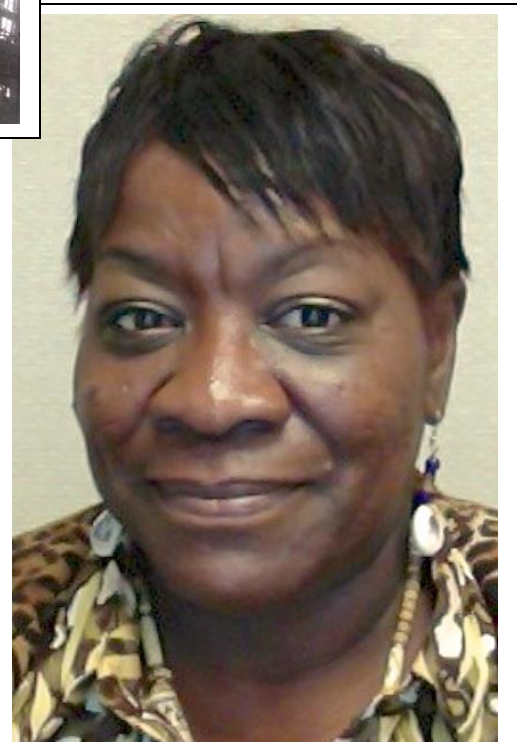
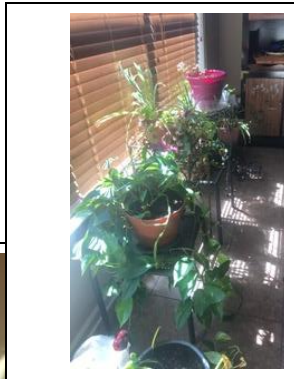
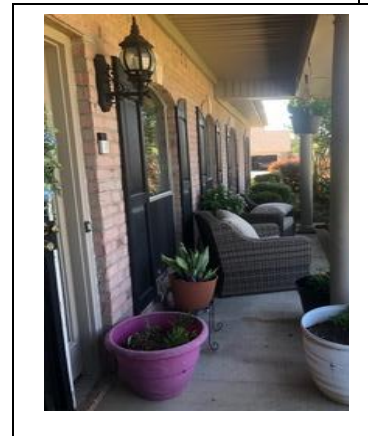
8. Do you grow any plants that you consider, “out of the ordinary?” Not really

9. What would you grow if you could that does not grow in Arkansas? Palm trees and every fruit tree imaginable.

10. What gardening advice would you give a new gardener? Spend frugally on plants and learn from your mistakes because there will be many. Tell your friend you are not their personal landscaper. Lastly, I tell everyone I am in the Master Gardeners but not a master gardener.

11. What is your favorite hobby when not gardening? Reading

12. Which PCMG sanctioned project are you on now? BRI and Executive Board



PROJECT PROFILE

Governor's Mansion Vegetable Garden Nancy Sheehan, Project Chair w/Co Chair Lee Ann Thomas

By Betty Deere

This project is not for sissies! These workers start in cold February, through the hot summer, and finish up after October freeze date. They start work at 8:00 am every Monday morning except holidays. Chair Nancy Sheehan sends out a Sunday email to all workers, outlining the work plan for the next morning and what's to be cleaned up, mulched, weeded, etc. They have a definitive planting guide for the entire season. Nancy's coordinating email keeps everyone in the loop as to what's next; also sending copious fun pictures to show everyone their work in progress. This is a big serious project and requires planning, coordination, know-how and lots of hard workers (luckily it has lots of enthusiastic workers!). This is how it all gets organized. The chairs meet with the mansion chefs and Holly Wyman way early in the year to choose what varieties of vegetables to be planted; and Holly orders the seeds. They develop a definitive planting guide for the entire season (use the Master Gardener handbook to decide what to plan/when). The planting schedule is developed by having a specific list of desired vegetables and knowing how long each takes before harvesting. They started with potatoes (which need 100 days) broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage; planting has continued on with carrots, assorted lettuce and mustard, kale, beet, turnips, sugar snap peas, spinach and radishes. As stated above, this project requires planning and know-how. Although a serious project, there's fun involved too. The big new greenhouse that Holly uses to start some of the plants also doubled in the cold weather for warming up with a nice hot cup of hot chocolate or tea. And chit-chats. In the heat of summer Nancy brings water and the mansion provides ice – so everyone can cool off a bit. And chit-chat. This group truly enjoys working together; they take phone pictures and plan to turn them into a finished scrapbook to document their year of work and fun and accomplishment! The refreshments are welcoming, as the group is working a large garden. (See pictures.) I'm guessing 16 rows about 12ft long; each row has a soaking hose running alongside. This irrigation system is set to run every other day, and closely monitored this hot dry Arkansas summer! They also use water hoses by hand when planting. The garden is doing very well this year in spite of the late freeze and hot dry weather. Al White took soil samples last year; the mansion bought the needed amendments; they were added in cold January, and the garden has flourished this year from the soil amendments it needed. Right now they are transitioning from cool weather crops to warm season. Currently they have tomatoes, peppers, purple hull peas, okra, cucumber, beans, eggplant, winter squash, and sweet potatoes in the ground. They've had some beautiful and colorful vegetables this year: four colors of potatoes, white turnips, bright red turnips, gold beets, rainbow colors of carrots, and large green cabbages. This project not only flourishes with soil nourishment, it clearly flourishes from people-nourishment; and their joy of planting and working together.





Themes: The Soul of Every Show

By: Mary Russell- Evans

You could not have a show without a theme. Actually, you can't have any kind of event without a theme. The theme sets the mood for the entire event. Each year the theme was a "process" for discussion. We have had some good and some not so good themes. The theme was supposed to be easy for everyone to adapt to, however, a few were extremely hard to work with. Lots of years the flower show would have to deviate from our theme, some being not adaptable to tabletops, etc. Everyone used the theme- the gardens, the florists, the flower show, the vendors... everyone! Ex: when we did the butterfly houses- everyone was selling butterflies. Carousel of Gardens – it was horses. Floral Notes was fun- lots of musical interpretations, etc. It was a great privilege for me to be in charge of the "show" garden from 1997-2020, from conception to fruition. Our mission was to interpret the theme and establish contact, create a mood- before entry- for the entire show. Sometimes our display was outside the entrance, sometimes inside. Maybe multiple locations. For several years we used a stage at the base of the escalator. We always used the trademark azaleas. We also decorated the Q & A Café/How To Stage. Props included mostly things borrowed from our own gardens. Sometimes we would purchase things to use ourselves, then take it home after. One year a "helper" brought three red wagons. After the show was over, I called her to pick them up. She didn't want them. Where are they? You guessed it, couldn't just toss them. My place is like an archaeological dig for the AF&GS. I even inherited some of Judy's archaeology. We stored leftovers at home & re-used some things for years. Other items were sponsored or borrowed. Shults Greenhouse in Hot Springs was a big sponsor on flowers, Spanish moss, etc. Judy's daughter, Becky Pruitt painted a giant world on a huge double-canvas (she already had) for the 2010 show, "A World of Gardening." It was amazing and very prominent on the stage at the base of the escalator. We spent very little money on the show. (The last train garden cost \$17 for dinosaurs and martians.) An amazing, long- standing, team was always ready to boldly go.... with whatever insane idea I came up with. We all put our heads together to figure out how to make it happen. Then there was the annual quest into the jungle to harvest bamboo poles for stanchion poles for the train. Crew- MGs- Judy Bradsher, Jan King, Sharon Mayes, Chris Kotoun, Danny Murdaugh and Bryon Russell. Non- MGs- David Russell and Tim Hansen. Others were: Dana Downs, Peri Doubleday, Frank & Joan Howard. Saline County- Margaret Regnier, Bertie Monson and Carolyn Medlock. Editor Susan Rose joined us after she retired for the last couple shows. The show mission was education and beautification. I believe we did our part. I know that my crew (and myself) learned ALOT! Sadly, I have very few pictures of it. (Too busy.) If anyone has pictures of these projects to share, I would sure love to have them. I have already featured the various train gardens.

The following is a list of all the themes I have from my files. And an attempt to share here some of my favorite themes... each with it's own unique story or challenges.

GARDEN THEMES – ARKANSAS FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

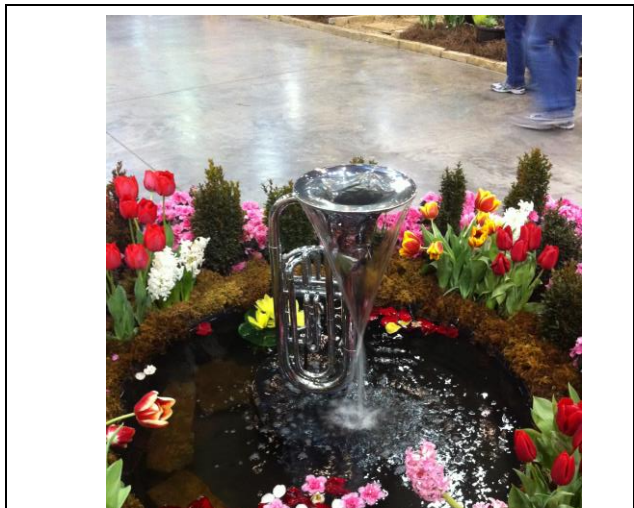
- 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 not known.
- 1996 Beyond the Garden Gate
- 1997 Spring Splendor
- 1998 Accents of Spring
- 1999 Visions of Gardening- Yesterday & Tomorrow
- 2000 In Flying Color (butterfly house #1)
- 2001 The Nature of Things (butterfly house #2)
- 2002 Gardens & Beyond
- 2003 America’s Backyard (trains, BBQ, cooking class)
- 2004 Gardens as Art (Artists set up)
- 2005 Springtime in Arkansas
- 2006 Come to a Garden Party
- 2007 Carousel of Gardens (carousel horses)**
- 2008 Gardening is Healthy
- 2009 Dream Gardens**
- 2010 A World of Gardening (giant painted world)
- 2011 Gardening Through the years (20 year anniversary- parade- cake float)
- 2012 Floral Notes (musical interpretations)**
- 2013 Homegrown Goodness
- 2014 Gardening: That’s Entertainment! (Little Shop of Horrors)**
- 2015 I Dig Arkansas (pallet fence)**
- 2016 Silver Celebrations: 25 Years of Gardening in Arkansas (Anniversary)
- 2017 Local Roots (Roots, local AR grown crops)**
- 2018 Imagine the Possibilities
- 2019 Living Color
- 2020 2020: A Garden Odyssey (train garden, dinosaurs, flying saucers)



2007 – see below



“2009 Dream Gardens. This year the crew learned how to make a quilt out of multicolored lettuce.” Photo by Darrell Leonhardt.

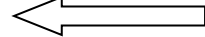


“2012 Floral Notes: One of the simplest projects we ever did; one of my favorites ever. Ordered the tuba on Ebay for \$30. It is in my pond with my two trombones.” Photo by Julianne Bitely.

“2007 Carousel of Gardens was fun! We built two giant carousel horses out of chicken wire & moss as focal points. We built them in Judy Bradsher’s garage. She couldn’t use her garage for a month. Assistants were Judy, Jan King & Sharon Mayes.” Seems everyone got onto the horse idea. There were every manner of carousel horses- none as large as ours!). My favorite was a mosaic of broken China dishes by Candy Jones.” First picture – photo by Darrell Leonhardt.



“2014 Gardening That’s Entertainment - was really fun. We created a 1950s(?) flower shop in total disarray- “The Little Shop of Horrors.” People kept trying to straighten up our mess! Photo by Becky Pruitt.

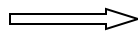


NOTE: Mary will provide more information in the future about the “backstage” and how these themes were constructed.



“2015 – I Dig Arkansas. Fully completed project. We stayed very late planting all those pallets. We threw in a bottle tree plus our trademark Christmas lights.” (Gerald Klingaman always joked/loved all my junk).

Right – working on the pallets.



**Additional information and pictures from the Governor's Mansion Vegetable Garden
By Betty Deere**

The vegetable garden consists of 7 beds totaling approximately 1700 square feet. Nancy Sheehan feels fortunate that she received her first MG choice to work at the Governor's Mansion Vegetable Garden. She wanted to learn how to grow vegetables. She learned so much from then chair Elizabeth Dillard and also from Al White. This is her first year as Chairperson. She is very good at this! She also works at the Woodruff Community Garden.



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