

The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

President's Report

Counting, we all do it in many areas of our lives. Each February there is a Backyard Bird Count (see web site www.birdcount.org). What fun activity, being out of doors counting beautiful birds. We count days until an important event such as Christmas (as I write this on September 2, there are 114 days until Christmas). When my quilting friends and I are planning a trip or retreat we count sleeps until the big day. There are songs and literature about counting. One of my favorite hymns is "Count your blessings, name them one by one". A much loved and quoted poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning begins, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." An important count that you as Master Gardeners need to be doing now is counting your work and education hours. Many projects wind down for the year soon so you need to count your hours to make sure you have your hour commitment met or if you need to step up your efforts. Remember you need 20 work hours and 20 education hours unless you are a first year Master Gardener then you need 40 work hours and 20 education hours. If you need more hours than you can get on your own project, feel free to reach out to one of chairs of other projects to see if they need help. You can access the chair/co-chair information on our web site, www.armgs.org.

I am counting on each of you to complete your hours this year and, please, please enter on the web site www.uaex.uada.edu. I am working a few extra hours on my own project because I want to get my Busy Bee for this year. You can get a Busy Bee for working double the required hours on your project in a calendar year. For me that is 40 hours, a labor of love for my project Mt. Holly.

GO FORTH AND COUNT!

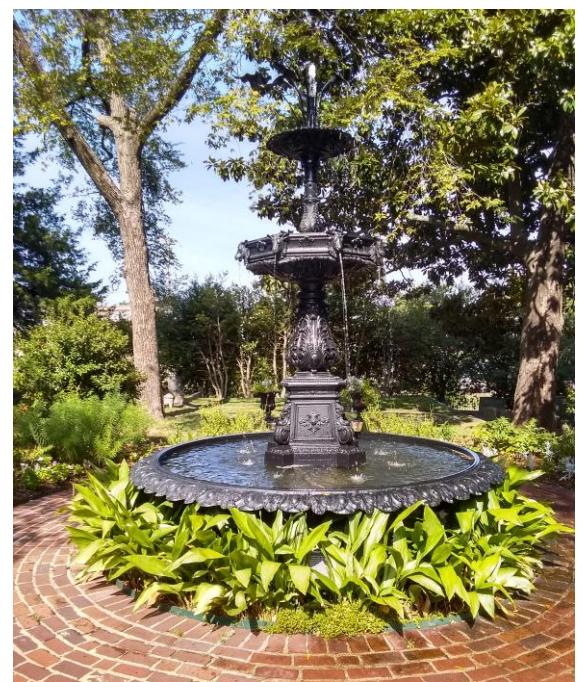
CINDY STRAUSS
MG PRESIDENT

Sept-Oct. 2022

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Mt. Holly fountain – the center point of the PCMG project.





Pallet Wood Projects For Outdoor Spaces: 35 Contemporary Projects For Garden Furniture & Accessories

Author: Hester Van Overbeek

Book Review: Debra Redding

Follow Hester van Overbeek's tutorials to make a huge variety of innovative items for the backyard. There are stylish and functional benches and tables, shelving units for plants, side tables, a work bench for a shed, storage ideas, and much more. Make a beautiful porch awning hung with fairy lights, on-trend hanging succulent holders, and an outdoor kitchen unit so you can prep food outside—it even has a built-in barbecue! You will learn to develop useful DIY skills including sawing, sanding, drilling, and various techniques for treating wood, so even complete beginners will soon become confident wielding tools! Whether your backyard is tiny and in the city or a homely cottage garden, there is something for everyone here, and you'll soon be hunting for pallets wherever you go.

Fall Fun for the DIY Folks in our group.
Cool Ideas with great instructions and photos....Enjoy!

GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

By Carol Randle

SEPTEMBER CHECKLIST

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 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 thrive 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. Water is a vital component for survival, and mulch is always a plus.

FLOWERS

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.

Summer annuals that get regular applications 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.

LAWNS

You can apply one last application of fertilizer until mid-month, then no more until next spring. If you want to use a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent winter weeds, now would be a good time to apply. Continue to mow and water as needed.

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.

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 summer 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, don't forget to fertilize, also.

SHRUBS

Shrubs that are blooming now include butterfly bush (*Buddleia spa.*), crape myrtles (if deadheaded, not "crape-murdered"), althea and caryopteris -with lovely purple flowers. Summer spirea 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.

OCTOBER CHECKLIST

Fall is a great time to garden in Arkansas, with plenty of things to do. This is the time to make sure your garden is healthy. Cleaning up our beds is very important. Pay attention to moisture levels, especially prior to a hard freeze. Healthy plants should bounce back more easily than those that are stressed. October is harvest season. October and pumpkins go hand in hand. Look for pumpkins with a smooth outer rind, free of blemishes and with a stem attached. From miniatures to giants, they come in a wide array of colors, shades of orange, red, white, green striped and speckled. Throw in some gourds, a few mums and you have instant landscape pizzazz. Leaves are beginning to fall, so it is also the perfect time to replenish your compost pile.

Many perennials benefit from fall division. You can also plant your winter seasonal color. Grab your shovel and your work gloves and start gardening.

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.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

Starting in October, you can plant and transplant perennials. Enrich your beds with organic soil amendments. Lift 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 the 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, then plant immediately. Water well to encourage root development and cover with plenty of mulch.

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 the 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.

COLOR IN THE GARDEN

If you need color in the garden, besides the seasonal pumpkins, there are shrubs and perennials that provide color every fall. Beautyberry provides gorgeous purple or white berries. Japanese anemones have pink or white flowers; toad lilies in the shade; the fragrant white flowers of sweet autumn clematis; and the blue flowers of the blue mist plant. Itea has outstanding fall foliage and great summer blooms as does oakleaf hydrangea. Ginkgo gives us golden yellow; crape myrtles have gorgeous fall color, as well as beautiful blooms in the summer and pretty bark in the winter.

HAPPY FALL GARDENING!



Left-toad lily

Above-Japanese anemone



ARKANSAS FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

Garden Show “Odds ‘n ENDS...”

By: Mary Russell- Evans

It has sure been sad these past months writing about the garden show in the “past tense.” In the Jan/Feb issue was a letter from our president, Cindy Strauss. She spoke fondly about a little tree they bought at a “home show” (bet it was the garden show) when her thirty-year-old son was a babe. Both he and the tree are all grown up. Just a few weeks ago someone called me looking for the big metal vendor that used to come to the show.... aw. This again illustrates how much the garden show meant to so many. Everywhere I go, I continue to see folks who remind me of just that.

From random notes for this project, for this issue, it’s odds ‘n ends.....

One of my favorite speakers ever was Pearl Fryar. He is the chain saw guy. I first saw him on Erica Glasener’s show, “A Gardener’s Diary” on HGTV (back when HGTV had gardening shows). I had the great pleasure of spending time with him beforehand. I couldn’t wait to see what he was gonna do on stage- he wouldn’t tell me. Pearl is a master topiary artist. He lives in Bishopville, S.C. He has an amazing topiary garden that he totally shares with the world. My favorites are the “fishbone” designs. Most of them he had done with a chainsaw. He is also very interested in youth. Well, Pearl got up on the stage and talked about how he goes to the box stores and buys the clearance junipers/ conifers, often saving them from the dumpster. He takes them home and makes works of art out of them. He showed pictures of his extensive topiary garden. On the stage is an about 6’ tall blue juniper of some variety and he turns it around to demonstrate how pitiful it is. Big dead spots, flat spots, broken limbs and the like- you’ve seen those. Then he turned and picked up his chainsaw. YES! I almost jumped out of my chair! Never before had we had such a dramatic live demonstration! He proceeded to carve on that pitiful little tree and created a work of art out of it. There was a collective gasp from the audience when he fired up that saw. I loved it- (of course!) When finished, he had created a masterpiece, followed by a standing ovation. Everyone loved Pearl. He is like a rock star. That is the thing with Pearl. Everyone LOVES him. He is magic! Maybe he should have his own action figure or bobble-head. Check out this documentary done about Pearl...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIHhjUa9Qio> Gosh, I love gardeners!

Another favorite was Billy Goodnick who brought along his book, “Yards.” He talked about “Crimes Against Horticulture.” Right up my alley! I even answered one of his questions and won a roll of yellow crime scene tape, that reads “Crimes Against Horticulture.” It sits on my desk here by my computer. I plan to make a slide show out of such a topic and use his crime scene tape on plants to stress my points. Should be hysterical....

I may have already mentioned the initial tour of the Arts and Crafts Building while the Big Buck Classic was going on. The “main attraction” being set up on the stage was a very large collection of rattlesnakes. They were all housed in plastic crates. I was so excited when I saw the stage, I busted right through to get to the stage. I think Phyllis Byrum was with me. After talking to the owner of said snakes, I finally noticed we were surrounded by rattlesnakes. It was like a flash-back to an old Indiana Jones movie. I asked if he knew how many there are and does he “count” them when it was time to go? We were there for our show shortly after that. I didn’t tell anyone about all those snakes till it was over. I took a (physical) beating over that one.

The last year at Barton Coliseum, Tanarah of Tanarah’s Luxe Florals was convinced to be a sponsor and decorate a big balloon basket up in the ceiling. (A balloon basket from a hot air balloon). I participated in that a little bit and she told me she was re-using the materials for a big event right after show... sounded awesome. Low and behold someone threw away ALL the materials she had brought. She nearly had a stroke when she came to pick it up and it was all gone. Ooops. Have no idea how that went down or what she did for materials for her event.

At the early shows we had live tigers walking around, not what one would expect strolling through a garden show. The Arkansas Game & Fish also brought their giant fish tank/trailer on wheels! It was awesome. Kids of all ages liked it. Another popular, though short-lived event were the tea parties. Mothers and daughters dressed up fine and enjoyed a “fancy tea” overlooking the Arkansas River from the north concourse. Of course, that was all decorated up as well. It was fun seeing them together. Wine gardens were a great addition. Everyone went back for seconds, or thirds, etc. Like the wine people didn’t “notice?” I went for the honey shakes the beekeepers made every year. I maintained a “honey high” for the duration of the shows.

One year Gerald Klingaman came through and was inspecting everything before opening. He arrived just as everything was “finished.” He stopped at our Q & A Café and said “Whose is/who does all this “junk” belong to?” “That’s my “junk” thank you very much!” To which he replied, “But I love your junk!” (gotta love Gerald!) I think lots of folks loved our “junk” whether it would work at their house or not.

Favorite vendor? I think everyone would vote for the birdhouse man from Sulphur Rock. His houses were in such high demand, he often sold out by Saturday morning. No one could compete with him. Everyone knew to go there first if you wanted anything from his booth. Everything was of outstanding quality and easily recognizable in gardens everywhere. He also made tin door daisies. I have seen them all over town on doors, gates, fences, porches. They always make me smile.

Last month: I was asked about the secrecy of the judges from the last issue. No one knew who the judges were. Everyone was forbidden access to the hall while the judging was in progress. We also went through to make sure there was not any signage, etc. to indicate “who” the garden belonged to. Signs in the garden would disqualify the creator. Now, the secrecy of the judges is a moot point. They deserve some recognition for their years of service.....finally.

Some MGs learned things they would never have learned otherwise.... Susan included the finished pallet fence pictures last month. We had to modify the pallets a little. Since the top and bottom boards never line up, we had to move them to match up- essentially creating little planter boxes. We then lined them with landscape fabric to contain the soil. (I have yet to find any other good use for landscape fabric.) Then we painted them with some fun colors. We left one pallet open/empty to demonstrate drip irrigation. The crew also learned about drip irrigation.

One of my favorite examples of this was during setup for the 25th Anniversary. We were building two giant columns at the entrance, with a big “25” on each. Basically, styrofoam squares with picked hydrangeas inserted. I showed Chris Kotoun how to insert them. (I think Danny Murdaugh helped- I don’t have a picture of him in action.) Chris did a great job. He had Judy (Bradsher) take his picture doing it. He said, “Otherwise my wife will never believe I did this.” Such fond memories. We sure had a lot of fun! So “odd to END.”

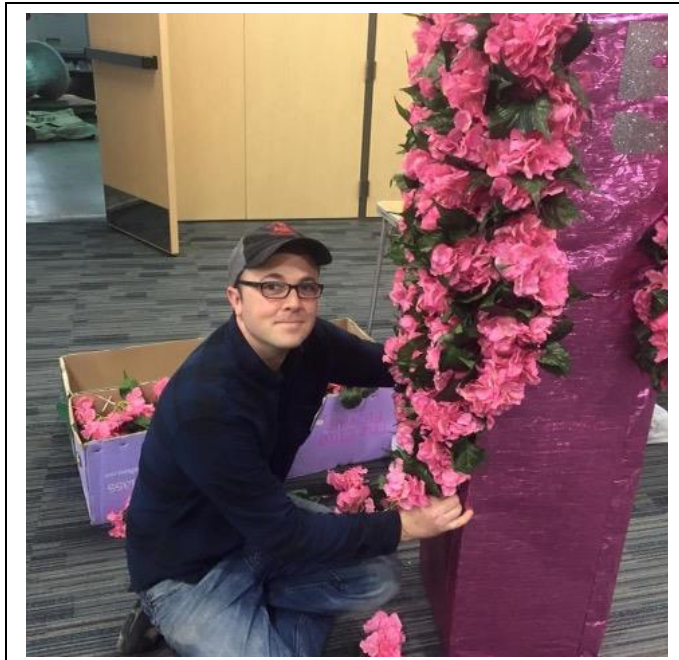


ARKANSAS FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW



Left - Making modifications to the pallets. Pallet builders: l-r Danny Murdaugh, Chris Kotoun, Mary Evans, David Russell. Photo by Byron Russell.

Above - Drip Irrigation demo



Chris Kotoun's "25" columns (I helped.)
Photos this page – Mary Evans.



Everyone's favorite vendor- "the birdhouse man" from Sulphur Rock. Often, he would be sold out by late morning on Saturday. Better get 'em early.



Working in gardens all over central Arkansas & being in neighborhoods, I would see these door daisies everywhere. They always make me smile, "They went to the garden show." This is my own door daisy (Mary Evans).

Photos from Mary Evans.

CHILDRENS SEED-PLANTING CONTEST FINALE AT THE RIVER MARKET (Judge Randy brought his little lamb to help him pick a winner!)

By Betty Deere

August 20 marked end date of the River Market (RM) Children's Seed Planting contest. I wrote about this event in our last newsletter, but might perhaps need to refresh your memories. Just sayin'.

The RM volunteers (of which I am one) started a Children's Education Series on July 16, recruiting children from the crowd (not hard!). Each child was guided to choose which flower they wanted to grow, from the colorful seed packets on display (a choice they pondered very seriously). Then they were gently assisted to plant their chosen flower seeds in the soil of a small black container (they enjoyed dumping the soil); and lastly, to water their little seeds (with the elephant water jug). Thirty-one children gleefully participated in this venture!

Their final instructions then were to take their seeds home, place the container in a sunny window, and keep it watered and well loved. Lastly, they were encouraged to return August 20 with their seed-flowering results and a Best Gardener Winner would win a prize. Judge Randy Forst would be on hand to pick winners and award prizes.

Seven children returned with their little seedlings, proudly showing their small containers with visible green growth. ... zinnias, nasturtiums and marigolds seemed to be favorites. To everyone's delight, Randy showed up to judge with his little lamb, Elsa! And since each returnee had nurtured their seeds so well, all were beautiful; so each young gardener won a gift bag of prizes. (See pictures.) But the grand prize for everyone was Elsa! Randy allowed her to walk around and be held and even fed with a bottle of his Jersey cow's milk!

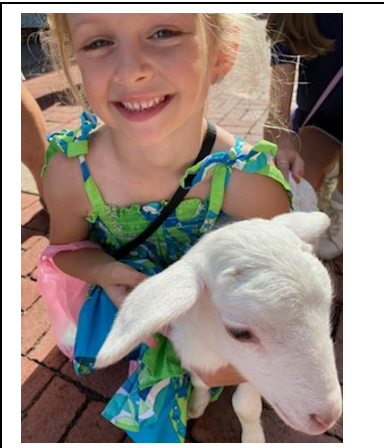
Needless to say, it was a riotously good time; many other River Market goers stopped by and enjoyed the occasion too. In fact, the next Saturday more than a few people came to our booth just to see what we were doing; as one guy laughingly said: "You guys were the big attraction last week! You Master Gardeners really have it going!"

Most who came by picked up a Master Gardener Yearly calendar and chatted about what projects Master Gardeners do. This event accomplished (at the least) three of our goals:

1. Educate children on the joy of gardening.
2. Interest/educate more adults in the Master Gardener program and the varied Master Gardener projects.
3. Share the joy of growing green things and gardening.

But Randy and little Elsa stole the show! See pictures.





Fun at the River Market Project. Betty Deere (in pink blouse) and others enjoy sharing the results of planting the special flower seeds supplied at the MG project earlier that year. Photos courtesy of Betty Deere, Jan Butenshoen and Katie Mann.

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