



The Dirt

MARCH, 2008

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR CARROLL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

In This Issue:

- From the President
- From the Editor
- Meet Mary Knight
- Calendar
- About Fritatta

PLEASE TURN IN WORK
HOURS TO NETA OR
LAVONNA

A report on Carroll County Fresh!

A Sustainable Ag Initiative's first meeting.

On February 16th, fifty Carroll County residents, including Leon and many of our master gardeners, gathered at the Berryville Community Center for the first meeting of Carroll County Fresh! A Community Sustainable Agriculture Initiative. The initiative received a boost from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in the form of an \$11,000 grant to facilitate a 10-month strategic plan. The plan's primary focus is to help the county's farmers' markets, increase family farm income, and promote food security. The meeting was attended by the Berryville Mayor, County Judge, founder and president of the county's farmers' markets, members of the Berryville Chamber of Commerce, small-scale farmers, journalists, a chef, educators, bakers, and consumers.

"Access to fresh, affordable local foods can make [lives] healthier," the initiative states. Its many worthwhile goals are aimed at the long-term health and food security of the residents of our county, including:

- educating the public about food security
- promoting a 'buy local' ethic
- bringing more human and product diversity into the local market
- increasing incomes for small-scale farmers and food sector entrepreneurs
- helping small-scale farmers to successfully engage in the growth of Carroll County
- starting and operating an economic development organization focused on agriculture

The Initiative was authored by the Berryville Farmer's Market Association (BFMA) Board of Directors who want to make a difference in the lives of Carroll County residents. Fulfillment of these goals will:

- provide all residents here, including WIC, Food Stamp, and Senior Coupon customers, with greater access to healthy, affordable foods grown locally
- increase farmers' incomes, providing economic and social empowerment through closer working relationships with their consumers
- encourage diversification of crops and livestock to make our county land safer and cleaner.

On this last point, the Initiative states, “the environment will be safeguarded as land use becomes more thoughtful, less extractive, and more consistent with sustainable agriculture practices.”

The all-day meeting yielded a great deal of enthusiasm from participants and BFMA alike. Everyone is looking forward to the implementation of the many creative ideas that were generated. Any CCMG who shares an interest in Food Security and Community Supported Agriculture or wants to know more about either is invited to attend the next meeting. I will notify all CCMGs of that date once known.

From the President's Desk

After a long winter's nap, Spring is set to "spring." Our monthly meeting in March is early in the month, so please take note and plan to attend. I would like all committee chairpersons to come with ideas for your projects, and then let's break into small groups after the meeting and plan our work schedules. We still have money from last year's budget unused (library landscape and books) that I would very much like to see brought to completion.

I continue to receive calls from folks wanting our assistance, so if you are looking for hours, please be there Saturday to discuss if we want to take on these projects and then commit yourself. Remember the "Fair on the Square" we discussed in February? Come with your ideas and let's get that planned. I understand the Chamber of Commerce is getting a lot of interest. Remember, we decided to go mainly with education, but anyone having garden-related items to sell we will have a table for that also.

I was pleased with the interest and the turnout we had Saturday for Patrice Gros' program on organic gardening. If you weren't there, you missed a lot of good info. Also, it sounds as if Neta Sue has a very interesting program lined up for Saturday. See you there.

Regards, Lavonna

From the Editor's Desk

- ❖ Although still cold outside, our hearts turn toward spring, new life and the discovery of what is hidden within. Who dwells within the heart of each Carroll County master gardener? This month The Dirt features Mary Knight.
- ❖ For those of you who missed our No-Till Organic gardening workshop last Saturday, I will be bringing a few CDs of Patrice's PowerPoint presentation to our March 8th meeting. An article will appear in the March 6th edition of The Patriots' Herald.

The workshop, attended by more than forty people, revealed the increasing numbers of people in our county who want to grow their own food in a way that supports the soil without the use of chemical pesticides or fertilizers. While not everyone attending signed in, the roster indicated about 60% of those who did were from the eastern half of the county, the remainder from the west. Big thanks to Lynn Reiss, Lavonna and Will, Mary and Richard, and Merrilee. Thanks, too, to all of you who attended and brought or sent friends.

Patrice spoke in depth about the benefits of No-Till organic gardening, even

on a five-acre farm. He really means “never till.” It is interesting to see how he does this. His soil tests and robust looking veggies prove it can be done without pesticides. “If you’re good to the soil, it will nourish you.” I think CCMG agree.

- ❖ Is there something you’d like to see included in The Dirt next month? Please send your submissions or suggestions by the third Monday of the month to me.

Best wishes, Sharon
dahl.sharon@gmail.com.

Meet Mary Knight

An interview by Sharon Dahl

It’s not surprising that Carroll County Master Gardener, Mary Knight, describes herself as “not a glass half-empty” person. Mary’s glass has always been half-full and after interviewing her I’d say her cup floweth over. Before moving to Carroll County in 2004, she and husband Richard wintered in the South and “traveled north to Canada as the weather warmed up.” The Table Rock Lake area became their home base. Their goal was to find a place where they’d like to retire, and they found it in Carroll County. “We fell in love with the people here—everyone is so warm and friendly.” They built their house on the rocks in Berryville, painted it bright yellow (“the color of hope”) and moved in August 12, 2004. Their labors to beautify, improve (as in hauling in dirt for the yard) and refine their “work in progress” have not ceased from that day to this.

Mary, an avid water colorist and acrylic painter, looks forward to getting “back to normal.” That means finishing the yard by 2010, so she can return to her painting and playing the piano. “Painting is cheaper than a psychiatrist,” she says. She adores classical music and reading and, in addition to adding whimsy to her yard, has time for both, one of the benefits she finds in not owning a television. She is a member of Silver Sneakers at a local gym, participating in aerobic classes three times a week. The other two weekdays she power-walks two miles at a stretch. Her commitment to daily exercise comes in part from the pleasures of being alive and in part from necessity—literally from having to get back on her feet. “Don’t ever have foot surgery,” she cautions, “you can recover faster if you get your head cut off.” At sixty-nine, Mary not only is “so grateful,” but her sense of humor undaunted.

Life before here, before the motor home was Dallas where, in addition to visiting museums and attending concerts, Mary worked as Director of Customer Service for ICI University, an international correspondence institute with a ministerial base specializing in distance learning. Her main job was “trying to keep people happy all over the world. I made a lot of friends.” That makes sense since Mary “always tries to find something good about people.” She is very much a people person and misses working with people and learning about other cultures and how they deal with problems.

Mary’s “faith is the most important thing. Serving the Lord. I love life. I love people and have a desire to help people. Sometimes just being a good listener and trying not to judge is the way to help them best. I try to encourage

people and lift them up. I have friends in a nursing home and try to bring them whatever they need. I try to fulfill whatever the need is.” It is hard not to feel that as more people share Mary’s attitude and spirit, peace will descend on earth. She continues, “I love gardening so much because I love beautiful things. I love color, design, and being outside. I hate housework and being confined and love sunshine. My favorite time of day is 5:30 in the morning, weather permitting, sitting outside in the quiet, listening to and watching the day begin.”

Mary has been married to Richard for nearly thirteen years. “I’m so grateful to the Lord for giving me a companion at this time of life.” She has two grown daughters, two grandkids, one great grandbaby and two granddogs. One of her daughters is a champion equestrian, fortunate in having a mother to support her horse passion. “From the time my daughter was eight, I never went anywhere without a horse trailer hooked onto me. I hauled four to six horses at a time. My daughter did barrel racing, jumping, cutting, dressage, and pleasure riding, all of which she competed in nationally. One year she won twelve saddles. I was a horse show mom. Now, she is a professional trainer. I never showed horses myself because I get too attached to them. I’ve been very blessed with both daughters. We are good friends and talk about anything and everything.

The other inhabitants of Mary and Richard’s home are Shimaly—an acronym for “see how much I love you”—a seven year old Shih Tzu, “who has trained us in proper care giving,” and Miss Kitty—“isn’t that original?”— an outdoor cat who adopted us. Where we live are a flock of wild turkeys, deer, and roadrunners all within five minutes from Wal-Mart.”

Mary agrees with Patrice, that “if you love the soil it will nourish you...so spend time cooking for your friends.” In spending time with Mary, you can’t help but feel your soul will be nourished as well.

All meetings and activities announced in this newsletter are open to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (large print, audiotapes, etc.) should notify the county Extension office as soon as possible prior to the activity.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any information contained within this newsletter, please feel free to call me at 870.423.2958.

Sincerely yours,

Leon Duncan
County Extension Agent-
Staff Chair

CCMG CALENDAR

CALENDAR

March Events

March 8, 2008

CCMG Meeting, Carroll Co Electric, 10 a.m. followed at 11 a.m. Presentation "Medicinal Herbs, how to grow, process and use them, and how to use herbs to advantage in the garden" by Terry Edwards

March 9, 2008

"A Walk on the Dry Side" by Janet Carson 2:00 pm, ASU Museum Garden Club, Agri Building, Room #203, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro. jsmith@uaex.edu

March 13, 2008

Meeting concerning the fair building

March 18, 2008

Azaleas, the "royalty of the garden," workshop 9:00 a.m., Hot Springs, AR
<http://www.garvangardens.org/> Register online
Or call 501-262-9300 or 1-800-366-4664.

April-June Events

April 5, 2008

Arkansas County Home & Garden Show, Arkansas County Fairgrounds Exhibit Building, DeWitt, AR - Beth, 870-946-3272

May 2 - 4

Orchid Show - Rogers, AR, Free.

Call 479-925-2228

May 3 - 4

Shreveport, Louisiana garden tour, 318-698-0018

May 29-31, 2008

State Master Gardeners Conf., Springdale, AR
Mary Anderson at (479)634-7451 Or e-mail to maryanderson31@hotmail.com

June 18-21, 2008

Southern Region Master Gardener Conference - A Garden of Dreams in Native America, Oklahoma City, OK. 12 wonderful tours planned. Check their website often:

<http://www.mastergardener2008.com>

The Recipe You Asked For: About Frittata

When you think frittata, think quiche without the crust. Or omelet. Don't think real men don't eat frittata. They do. The wonderful thing about frittata is that you can change the ingredients according to what is fresh from your garden, fresh locally or whatever you have a whim to try. Frittata is easy to make and lends itself well to combining vegetables in the same dish deliciously. Here's the basic recipe for my spinach frittata. Do experiment! Add leeks. Combine with sorrel. Make one from red bell peppers alone or asparagus. When summer arrives and your garden is bursting with squash, replace the spinach with zucchini. Enjoy!

Sharon's Spinach Frittata

2-3 bunches of fresh spinach (or 2 boxes chopped, frozen)
3 T. extra-virgin olive oil
6-8 eggs, lightly beaten
1 garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped
1 ½ T basil pesto*
1-2 T chopped Italian (flat leaf) parsley
4 T freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

**If you don't have fresh pesto or pesto frozen in your freezer from your summer garden, use a small handful of chopped fresh basil and increase recipe to two cloves of garlic. If you can't find fresh basil, you can use 1 t. dried. Or, substitute 1T fresh chopped mint.*

Wash spinach thoroughly. Shake off excess water and coarsely chop. Cook chopped spinach with water still clinging to it in large sauté pan over medium heat just until spinach is slightly wilted. Drain off liquid (especially important when using frozen spinach). Gently press out excess water. Place in a large bowl. Allow to cool.

In an 8–10 inch oven-friendly frying pan, sauté garlic, parsley and pesto (or mint) for a minute or two in 1 T olive oil until garlic turns golden. Remove from heat.

Mix into cooled spinach the beaten eggs, sautéed herbs, Parmesan, salt and black pepper.

Heat ovenproof skillet (cast iron works great) on medium heat. Add 2 T (more if needed) olive oil to coat skillet. When oil is hot, add egg/spinach mixture and cook until bottom is set. Transfer to 400° oven and cook until the frittata is cooked through—it shouldn't shake or be runny. Remove from oven and cool in pan.

Invert on serving plate. Cut and serve either hot or at room temperature.