



St. Francis County Master Gardener Thymes

Vol. 1, No. 7

FOURTH AND FINAL SPEAKER OF ST. FRANCIS COUNTY LECTURE SERIES

Larry P. Lowman is the Owner of Ridgcrest Gardens in Berryville and is known throughout Arkansas for his "*Native Success Stories by a Southern Nurseryman.*"

He has worked with several local residential properties and commercial businesses throughout Forrest City and the surrounding areas.

His presentation covered some of his favorite Native Plants useful for landscaping.

One of his favorites, which he calls 'Larry's Party Pink,' is the poinsettia tree, *Pinckneya pubens*. He stated that the unusual, open, coarse habit of growth and showy flowers make this a conversation piece in any yard. It can also be used as an accent in a sunny shrub border or near the patio or deck. This is certainly a tree to consider when planning a yard due to the small size and pest resistance.



Lowman drew a crowd for the event with approximately 41 people in attendance in spite of the rainy weather conditions. This was the highest record in attendance for any of the lecture series, therefore his reputation preceded him. We were honored to have him as one of our speakers.



St. Francis County

Cooperative Extension
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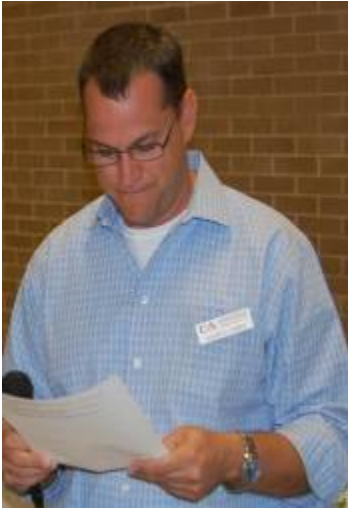
MONTHLY MEETINGS

3rd Tuesday of each
month @ 11:30 a.m.
St. Francis County
Museum

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LECTURE SERIES THIRD SPEAKER: RANDY FORST, ST. FRANCIS COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

BASIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND KITCHEN GARDENS



St. Francis County Extension Agent Randy Forst has a BS in Landscape Design and Horticulture as well as a Masters in Agriculture. He has worked for The Cooperative Extension Service since July.

Of course a County Extension Agent would not begin his presentation without talking about the importance of **SOIL TESTING**. It is critical that you know where you stand with existing nutrient levels and this is achieved by conducting a soil test, said Randy. (See your local extension service office for additional information on soil testing.)

Randy emphasized that landscape planning must include consideration of drainage, slope, hardscape (patios, sidewalks, arbors, etc.), sun and shade, screening of unwanted views and noise, high and low maintenance, and irrigation.

On a smaller scale, laying out a new bed that will succeed also requires that we plan ahead and know whether the bed will be in sun or shade, in dry or very moist soil, acid or alkaline, on a slope or on a flat surface, close to noisy neighbors or in a quiet area. Selecting your shrubs or trees would be based upon whether we are creating a view, enhancing an existing view, or screening out an undesirable view.



KITCHEN GARDENS

Randy's slides displayed raised bed gardens showing vegetables mixed with flowers and shrubbery to add interest. Since these small gardens are usually placed close to the back door in order to easily pick the tomatoes or herbs, adding architectural features such as urns, herb beds, trellis features and birdbaths adds interest to the back view.

One of the most interesting portions of the lecture was a series of tips, such as: aging chicken litter for at least six months before use; immediate use of sheep manure, which does not burn plants; and use of inexpensive cattle panels as arbor structures for tomatoes, peas, cucumbers and other trailing plants. The cattle panels are 15 feet long in a variety of widths and can be bent into arches by hand for a 6- to 7-foot tall arbor, or can be staked at each end of the 15-foot length to support shorter peas or determinate tomatoes.



LECTURE SERIES SECOND SPEAKER: JANET CARSON, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS EXTENSION HORTICULTURE SPECIALIST, "PERENNIALS IN THE ARKANSAS GARDEN"



Janet is well known throughout the Cooperative Extension Service and other local government for her series "Gardening with Janet Carson," which includes:

- [Ask Janet Carson](#)
- [Gardening Calendars](#)
- [Janet Carson's Arkansas Gardener Articles](#)
- KARK Channel 4 @ noon (arkansasmatters.com)
- KXJK Radio @ approximately 10:00 a.m. Saturdays

Janet focused on shade and sun perennials, specifically

SHADE PERENNIALS such as bleeding hearts (*Dicentra spectabilis*), which is a favorite perennial of the shady flower garden. Bleeding heart emerges early in the spring to produce fleshy 2- to 3-foot tall, ferny leaves that are individually divided into segments of three. The plant is moisture-loving and the foliage begins to wither away by midsummer during most years.



Of all the hardy orchids, the hardy Chinese ground orchid is the easiest to grow.

She talked about how orchids have a well deserved reputation for being finicky. Part of the allure of growing orchids by the thousands of enthusiasts is that not everyone can do it.

Most hardy orchids are just as demanding as their tropical cousins, but the hardy Chinese ground orchid (*Bletilla striata*) defies the norm and is so easy even novice gardeners can grow it.

Carson said, "Along a moist, shaded path in my garden grows the perennial fall-flowering hardy begonia. Freeze tolerance is a rare thing among begonias, but this East Asian native never got the memo."



The hardy begonia is a dependable fall-blooming perennial ideally suited for the Arkansas shade garden.

Hardy begonia, *Begonia grandis* subsp. *evansiana*, is a two-foot tall, cane-forming begonia that flowers from August until frost in Arkansas. It is winter-hardy statewide, surviving outdoors as far north as St. Louis and even further with some winter mulch.

SUN PERENNIALS

- PEONY
- ARKANSAS BLUE STAR
- LAMB'S EAR
- HOMESTEAD PURPLE VERBENA

For questions concerning shade or sun perennials, log on to the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Web site <http://www.arhomeandgarden.org> or [Ask Janet Carson](#)

**LECTURE SERIES KICKS OFF AT EAST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OPENING SPEAKER: WHITE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ANN WOODS, "WILD ABOUT WOODIES"**



"Wild About Woodies" covered underutilized woody plants such as the bottlebrush buckeye, spring-blooming magnolias, *Hydrangea aspera*, Chinese beautyberry, propagating beautyberry, white redbud and pink chimes, just to name a few. (Refer to Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 6 for full article.)

Lecture Series Coordinator Needie Rountree personally thanked Randy for being the structure for these lectures, getting there early for all the booth setup and the electronics. That's quite an undertaking for one person. She commended him for his faithfulness with his duties, and further went on to say that Randy has added a new dimension to the SFC chapter of the MGs.

SFC Master Gardeners also thanked County Extension Staff Chair Mitch Crow for taking on the additional workload of having a Master Gardener Volunteer Program, as some communities do not have this privilege.

Needie thanked Retha and Martha: always faithful, always early, and always eager to help and get things in proper order. She knew after the first lecture that she was blessed with their help with "no worries, mates!"

Thanks to all of the Master Gardeners, extension office personnel, and volunteers in all surrounding counties for your support.



The SFC Master Gardeners gave away two scholarships as door prizes and those were won by Andre Stephens and Joy Harrison. Anyone that registered to take the 2010 Master Gardeners class in Colt was eligible to win.

LECTURES SERIES SPONSORS



The Outlet
A **Different** Style of Home Décor
Angela R. Ryland

Times-Herald of Farrest City, Arkansas



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Cooperative Extension Service

Have You Been Gardening Lately?

Angela R. Ryland

SFC Master Gardener ☺