Next Meeting will be February 4
Social - 6:00 pm  Meeting 6:30
Program: Ann Fergeson - Overview of Projects

From the President
Ann Fergeson

The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size.

In case you haven’t noticed, February is with us. Being a girl raised in the South, it is not one of my favorite months. I personally feel that the only good things about February are Valentine’s Day and warm fires and good books. Valentine’s Day is special because it is a time to speak our feeling to those whom we love. Many times we keep these thoughts within us. Make it a point to let people know how we feel about them. It feels good when someone lets us know that we are special. It feels just as good for them to know that they are special to us. Pass these feeling around. They make us warm, even in February.

There is not much that I can say about warm fires and good books that hasn’t been said before. Just use as much February for that as you can. It will revive your spirit.

I am adding one more thing to the list. Start planning your garden. Decide what you want to do and when it should be done. Make your plans and set your goals. It won’t be very long until your garden will “call out” to you. Be ready. I am so ready for that day, in spirit. Maybe I should get busy preparing my mind and body.

February Checklist
Prune your roses on Valentine’s Day
Spread pre-emerge when Forsythia begins to bloom
Set your cold-weather vegetables
Transplant – my Mother said that you can transplant just about anything in February
Get started on your Plant Sale items
Enter your January hours
Getting the Most Out of Your Houseplants

By

Branon Thiesse BS, MS
County Extension Agent - Staff Chair

Houseplants can spruce up any interior by adding esthetics and beauty to a room. However, one of the most common calls to the office concern problems with houseplants.

Light seems to be one of the biggest contributors to houseplant problems. Most plants will flourish in low light conditions. However, under poorly lit conditions, they have problems. Peace Lilies are an excellent low light (not a no light) plant, such as the light received from a northern exposure. Adequate lighting is just the first step in growing houseplants.

Temperature also can cause issues with houseplants, especially in the winter. Plants near windows or doors are subject to cold drafts that will cause these plants to perform poorly. Plants in close proximity to heat registers can also have problems if not relocated.

Improper watering can contribute to houseplant demise. Over and under watering are equally disastrous. As a general rule, water houseplants when the top ½” of soil is slightly dry. Then water completely until water runs out the drain hole.

Nutrition is also very important in houseplant health. Regular feeding with a liquid, complete fertilizer containing micro nutrients is recommended. Slow release fertilizers should be used if you move the plant into an outdoor environment. These granules dissolve too slowly for them to benefit the plants much.

Finally, houseplants like a more humid environment than normally exists in our homes, especially in the winter. Misting the leaves or putting pots in a tray containing pebbles and water should provide the needed moisture that your plants need to flourish. Half-cover the pebbles with water so that the bottom of the pot does not come in contact with the water.

As always, if you are having problems with your houseplants, please call the office for assistance.
The January 7, 2016 meeting of the Craighead County Master Gardeners was called to order at 6:35 pm by President Ann Fergeson.

Program – Braun Campbell introduced the evening’s speaker, MG member, Edward Pruett. His presentation was “The Spirituality of Gardening.” There is no one definition of spirituality, but it implies a recognition of something greater than self: a sense of purpose. For example, the spirituality of nature means being aware of the natural world, its beauty and variety. The spirituality of gardening is about the gardener as much as the plants and the work of gardening. It has been said that you can tell a lot about the gardener by looking at the garden. The bottom line is, it does our soul and health good to get our hands dirty. Amen!

Minutes – the minutes of the November meeting were approved as stated in the December newsletter. No minutes were recorded for December.

Treasurer’s Report – The report was approved. Dues for 2016 must be paid by January 31.

Projects – Chair Jane Jamison announced that members will be able to sign up for one sanctioned garden project, as well as other one day projects next month.

New Business – Ralph Seay, chair for the FFA/CDE project said the date for that event will be March 9 at ASU. At least 30 volunteers will be needed. Sign-up sheets were available for the FFA/CDE project, as well as the children’s garden at HWES.

Mimi Cox recognized several groups of members: those who served over 100 hours in 2015; those who earned up to 90 hours of educational learning in 2015 (Peggy Lane was the leader in both groups;!) committee chairs, project chairs, officers and members of the class of 2015; and the new officers for 2016.

Announcements – the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show will be held February 26-28 in Little Rock at the State Convention Center. Learning hours may be earned by attending any educational session at the show. The new class of 2016 will begin January 23. Mentors are vital to the continued success of CCMG and the retention of new members. A sign-up sheet was provided for those willing to serve as mentors for the 2016 class.

January Birthdays – Members with a January birthday were recognized and given a plant.

Meeting adjourned 7:19 pm.
Volunteer Appreciation Gala!
Congratulations to CCMG!

Craighed County Master Gardeners had the honor of attending The City of Jonesboro’s "Passport to Paris" Volunteer Appreciation Gala. CCMG’s were recognized for over 7,000 volunteer hours!

From Jane Jamison:

Reminder: We will be signing up for project participation at the February meeting. Please review the projects listed in your red notebook before the meeting so that you’ll be ready to sign up. Every Master Gardener is asked to sign up for at least one "primary" project (ASU Display Garden, Native Plant Garden, Butterfly Garden, Courthouse/Ext.Office/Municipal Building, or Children’s Garden at HWES). In addition, you may sign up for any of the secondary projects, which are often of short duration or "as needed." If you won’t be at the February meeting, please email Jane Jamison (janemjamison@gmail.com) of your preferences so that you can be added to the appropriate list(s).

Reminders for February

Changes - If you have moved, changed your email or mailing address, or phone number, please let Mimi know so we can be sure our 2016 directory is accurate. We need to know how to reach you. There is a form for this purpose in the white pages of your red notebook or you can email Mimi.

Photos - Please take lots of fall/winter pictures to enter the 2017 statewide MG calendar contest. All MGs can submit four photos—one for each season. Fall and winter photographs are always in short supply, so grab your camera now and capture some of the last of the leaves, trees and shrubs! More on this later.

Plant Sale - Don’t forget to pot up those plants for our annual spring plant sale.
“Spring is the time of plans and projects.”
Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

I know it is not yet spring, but I’m already homesick for green plants emerging from their winter abode. In honor of that happy thought, I walked the stacks and selected books with green covers. Yes, there’s always a method to my madness!

"Green Grass Magic" by Jerry Baker is full of tips, tricks, and tonics for growing the best lawn around. Jerry makes me laugh, because he is not shy about telling you that he is the "foremost authority on lawn care in America." But the man does have some good ideas. Be sure and read the sections on "Bug, slug, and thug removal," and "Teaching an old lawn new tricks." 635.9 Ba17

The very green book, "Encyclopedia of Planting Combinations" by Tony Lord might have been just another book, had it not been for that word "Combinations." That conjured up memories of my son when he went through his gourmet cooking stage. You do NOT want to wake up smelling baked tuna and peanut butter biscuits. But this book makes fabulous combinations, and I especially enjoyed the color schemes. With over 4000 illustrations, you will get tons of great ideas from this volume. 635.9 Lord

Tara Weaver’s "Orchard House" was somewhat of a tear-jerker for me. It was reminiscent of time I spent gardening with my grandparents over 50 years ago. This is an enchanting story, and is as much about how a garden "grows a family" as it is about the family growing a garden. The book also reiterates what I’ve always said, "working with plants and digging in the dirt is therapeutic." 635 Weave

I can never imagine being brave enough to enact the methods that Lee Reich proposes in "The Pruning Book." To me, God sends the strong winds to do my pruning for me. Reich has other ideas, and is not afraid to chop away on even the most exotic of plants. The hand-drawn diagrams appealed to my no-nonsense-librarian-side, but the glorious photography whisked me away to that land of fairy tales. 635.9 Reich

Please visit your Public Library for all your information needs or check us out online www.libraryinjonesboro.org.
Mentoring New Class Members

From Peggy Lane:

To those of you who have already signed up to become mentors to the new Master Gardener class, THANK YOU! To those who meant to sign up but didn't, your help is still very much needed. It's a proven fact that having a mentoring process in place is an excellent way to retain members. Personally, I think one of the most important benefits of being a mentor is that you will make a new "BFF" who has something wonderful in common with you - a love of gardening! Members are needed NOW to be mentors for the new Master Gardener class that began on Saturday, January 23. You will be a mentor until the new MG feels "at home" and a part of the group, usually one year. MGs from our last class are perfect candidates to be mentors - you know how important it is to have support and encouragement from someone who has "been there, done that!"

To be a mentor for one of our new Master Gardeners, just contact me, Peggy Lane, at 935-7649 (h) or 219-4077 (c). Afterwards, you will need to contact your mentee by calling them to introduce yourself and give them your contact information.

I encourage you to attend any of the training sessions and visit with them as well, and all our mentors should come to the last session of the training class on Saturday, February 27, to have lunch and visit all the project locations with their mentee.

Mentor responsibilities are:
1. Meet the mentee during MG training, if possible for lunch and visit each garden project site on last day.
2. **Very important** - contact your mentee by phone or email AT LEAST ONCE EVERY MONTH!
3. Encourage the mentee to attend monthly meetings and introduce them to other members.
4. Keep them informed of time, date and location of gardening related seminars and events.
5. Assist them in selecting projects on which to work and, if possible, accompany them on the first project work day they attend.
6. Stress the importance of keeping and recording volunteer working and learning hours.
7. **Time spent in mentoring activities should be counted and turned in as work hours.**

New Training Class Begins

From Mimi Cox:

Members of the Master Gardener Class of 2016 were welcomed on January 23! There are 17 from Craighead County, 4 from Mississippi County and 2 from Greene County.

Craighead County Master Gardeners who are in the new class include:
- Laura Bettis
- Cathy Caldwell
- Lise Cater
- Pam Chafin
- Lisa Davis
- Barb Evans
- Lillie Fears
- Pat Finch
- Angela Gary
- Terri Inman
- Lyle Lattimore
- Sasha O'Rourke
- Angie Schmidt
- Paula Smith
- Steve Smith
- Ross Smith
- Gary Woodward

CCMG are always invited to attend the training classes to meet our new members and to earn learning hours.

County 76

The statewide Master Gardener advisory board is called County 76. It is open to all Master Gardeners who are in good standing in their local county program. We meet quarterly at the state extension office and are responsible for many great programs across the state: Advanced Training classes, PNG Leadership, awards, mentoring, MG annual calendar, scholarships, fundraising and more. The next meeting will be in April. If you would like to know more about County 76 or are interested in joining, please let Mimi know.
Upcoming Events

February

5 - 6 - Jefferson County Home & Garden Show - Pine Bluff Convention Center - Feb. 5th from 9 am - 5 pm and Feb. 6th from 9 am - 3 pm - Contact Linda Soffer at 573-253-9774 orlfsoffer@gmail.com

7 - ASU Museum Garden Club Seminar - 2:00 p.m - Janet Carson, speaker - topic ”Hot Stuff for Leap Year” - Free and open to everyone - ASU Agri Building - Jonesboro - Contact: Mimi Cox for more information.

26 - 28 – Little Rock - Arkansas Flower & Garden Show, 25th Anniversary - Statehouse Convention Center - 101 E Markham St, Little Rock. - The Arkansas Flower & Garden Show is the largest three day celebration of gardening in the state. The goal of the show is to cultivate interest in the Natural State through what is grown for beauty and sustenance. Visitors come to learn about gardening and shop for their homes and gardens. Friday: 10 am – 7 pm, Saturday: 10 am – 6 pm, Sunday: 10 am – 4 pm - for more information visit http://argardenshow.org

March

1 - 31 - Wye - 38th Annual Wye Mountain Daffodil Festival - For more information visit WyeMountain.org.

3 - 6 - Fayetteville - Orchid Show & Sale - Botanical Garden of the Ozarks - Visit BGOzarks.org for more information.

1 - 12 Camden - Camden Daffodil Festival - Visit CamdenDaffodilFestival.com for information.

7, 14, 21, 28 - Little Rock - Landscape Design I by Christy Marvel, Arkansas Extended Learning Center - Contact Mary Evans for more information. argardengoddess@att.net


17 - Paragould - Garden Explosion V - Paragould Community Center - Greene County Master Gardens for Garden Explosion V. The theme this year is “Garden Lore: Old Farmers Tales.” There will be several speakers (including Janet Carson) vendors, door prizes, refreshments and nurseries showing their current wares and plants. 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Contact Donna Jones at naoues@hotmail.com for additional information.


19 - Fayetteville - Gardening with Essential Oils - Botanical Garden of the Ozarks - For more info contact: GOGzarks.org.

For list of Arkansas shows, meetings, etc. see statebystategardening.com/ar/calendar/
For Master Gardener events see http://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/events.aspx
For information on Memphis events see www.memphisareamastergardeners.org/events.htm
Craighead County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers working with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and Craighead County officials to provide beautification projects and horticultural information to the residents of the county. In 2015 Craighead County Master Gardeners reported more than 6914.25 hours of service and education to benefit Craighead County.

Branon Thiesse  
BS, MS  
County Extension Agent - Staff Chair

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Weeder's Digest is the official newsletter of the Craighead County AR Master Gardener Program.

Please contact the newsletter editor at dsandberg@suddenlink.net with your articles, ideas, photos and suggestions.

Newsletters are Adobe files and require the latest Adobe Reader to view. You may download the latest Adobe Reader at "http://get.adobe.com/reader/".