Last Chance to Pay Discount

The January 2nd meeting will be the last time to pay your 2014 membership dues at the bargain rate of $10. After that, dues will be $15. If you are unable to attend the January meeting you can mail your dues to Mike Thompson at 1517 S. Madison, Jonesboro AR 72401. The February 6th meeting will be your last chance to pay your dues if you want to continue your membership.

Master Gardener Classes Start

Classes will begin Saturday, January 18, 2014 for new Master Gardener students from Craighead, Greene and Mississippi counties and will continue each Saturday through February 15 at the Extension Office. On February 22, the new Master Gardeners from Craighead County will meet with their mentors, the officers and project chairs for a welcome lunch and county orientation.

Speakers include Janet Carson, horticulture specialist along with the other specialists in the Extension program. Dr. Kim Pittcock, the county agents, guest speakers and Master Gardeners complete the schedule of excellent training in the core curriculum and electives.

Next Meeting will be January 2nd
Social - 6:00 pm & Meeting/Program - 6:30 pm.
Program: Jane Jamison on the MG Alaska Trip

Don’t forget your canned or non-perishable food OR $10 cash for the Helping Neighbors Food Pantry.

January Birthdays

5th - Erlene Wise
7th - Donna Bachman
11th - Lana Keyes
12th - Jerry Beal
13th - Glenda Drace
13th - Cindy Morris
14th - Betty Nichols
19th - Sharron Schelin
19th - Billy Woodruff
22nd - Jan Dupwe
Does it seem to you that we have already gone through our entire winter season, even though the first day of winter was only about a week ago? Actually, that's one of the things I love about where we live - just like a box of chocolates, we never know what we're going to get!

Sadly, one of my neighbors fell on the ice and broke his leg, but he has a great attitude and says he's thankful it didn't happen in the spring when he has so much gardening to do. And just think, Spring is only about 80 days away!

Don't forget to feed our feathered friends on these cold days, and …..

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we move through the winter months, gardeners need to be thinking about plant nutrition in existing beds or gardens, as well as for any new ones. The first step in any successful gardening project starts with soil sampling.

Soil samples for new or existing beds can be the difference between success and failure. Samples should be taken from 4-6" deep in several locations in the bed or garden and placed in a bucket. If soil is wet, let air dry on newspapers. Never dry in an oven or microwave. Stir soil and remove a composite sample of about a pint and bring to the County Extension Office.

We will ask some simple questions about your garden such as how large is the area, location in the county, has any lime been applied to the garden in the last 4 years, last crop and what plants will be grown this year.

Knowing the soil pH is very important based on what type of plants you will be planting. Acid loving plants such as azaleas have a hard time surviving in a pH of 7. Excessive applications of 13-13-13 can cause salt problems and plants will simply wither and die. Fertilizer and lime should never be applied without doing a soil sample.
Fairy Garden Help

Melinda Smith has a group of students doing a project on fairy gardens. They need containers large enough for teams of 4 students. Last year students used a metal wash tub, a wagon, and old guitar case. They could use items like these again because they would most likely be different. They could borrow items that would be returned at the end of February. Melinda has an old, interesting sink but it needs a frame of some sort to hold it upright.

Other items that that would work would be larger hypertufa containers, an old drawer.....the more creative the container the better.

Our goal is to start on the fairy gardens when we return from Christmas break. If you have something we can use or have, just let me know.

Fundraiser for Children’s Garden

Melinda Smith is asking for volunteers to sew a couple of these type of aprons. The Upcycled Jean Apron Fundraiser Project for the Children's Learning Gardens is trying to build a nice stock of these to sell at their student plant sale and Spring farmers market. If interested you can contact Melinda at melinda.smith@jonesboroschools.net

Wish List for Children’s Garden

The project at the HWES School Children’s Garden can use your help. Funds get tight for supplies for their gardening, cooking classes and other events. Please pick anything on the list and bring it to the monthly Master Gardener meeting. There will be a box for your donations. The wish list includes:

- Latex gloves – sizes small and medium
- Clorox wipes
- Baggies of all sizes
- Petco gift cards (amounts begin at $5) for food for the garden pets
- WalMart gifts cards (amounts begin at $5) for various supplies to cook with

Thanks for your support of the Children’s Garden. Please check out the HWES Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/HWESschoolgardens for pictures and information.

St. Louis Botanical Garden

Photos by Diane Sandberg
Did you ever try to recruit a friend to become a Craighead County Master Gardener and hear... “I just have a small yard”? Where did the idea that one has to have acres to be a Master Gardener originate? Let’s nip that misconception in the bud! Meet Sandra Arwood who didn’t let the lack of acreage stop her. Encouraged by a Master Gardener friend, she decided to become involved in what sounded like a great hobby. Sandra became a member in 2005 and has served as vice-president and social chairman.

In 2009 Sandra purchased her home which sits on just less than a quarter of an acre but did no gardening the first year. The second year she began to work on improving the soil, so planting was delayed for another year. Then the planting began. Most of the work has been limited to the flower beds in front of the house, but there are plans for expansion. In fact, the day I visited her garden there were a couple of plants still in pots looking for a place to put down roots. Pennie, her Dachshund, is always willing to lend a helping paw.

Favoring casual gardens, she doesn’t stick to a formal plan. Odd colors have a way of catching her eye and if Sandra sees something she likes she finds a place for it. She says, “There is no reason to my madness.” Her garden is accented with many plants in pretty pots and interspersed with a variety of garden art.

Her favorite part of gardening is that fresh pop of color when spring finally hits. Sandra says she has no favorite flower... “just any that will grow and bloom for me, I’m not too picky.” But she admits it is a challenge “being able to get the ideas out of my head and into the ground like I’ve imagined they would be.” To make it her dream garden she would add a brick wall with an elaborate garden gate entrance.
Master Gardeners Recertified for 2013

The following CCMG members have fulfilled the working and learning requirements for 2013 AND reported them online:

Eileen Adams
Donna Bachman
Donna Bandy
Mimi Cox
Ella Ellingson
Debbi Hall
LaVeta Howerton
Lana Keyes
Sarita McCarty
Cindy Morris
Shenia Mullins
Jessie Olsen
Reta Ragland
Ann Ross
Paul Schneider
Neva Shewmaker
Amanda Stoeppler
Debbie Tate
Donna Tolewitzke *
George Williams *
Billy Woodruff
Nick Wysocki *
Ginger Adams
Stan Bachman
Myra Jane Biggers
Glenda Drace
Brenda Ferralasco
Charlotta Hemphill
Amanda Hurdle
Brenda Lane
Katherine McCracken
Vickey Mullaly
Luci Murray
Becky Phillips
Carrie Ray
Diane Sandberg
Connie Seay
Melinda Smith
Judy Strange
Cleo Thomas *
Anna Warren *
Bobbie Wilson
Katie Wysocki *
Sandra Arwood
Evelyn Baker
Ethel Cole
Jan Dupwe
Brenda Gray
Mary Hosinski
Jane Jamison
Peggy Lane
Ditty Mitts
Jason Mullins
Betty Nichols
Lesia Pittman
Fran Robinson *
Sharron Schelin
Ralph Seay
Elizabeth Spencer *
Jack Sugg
Mike Thompson
Susan Westbrook
Erleene Wise
Marilyn Wysocki *

* Class of 2013

Congratulations to everyone who has recertified! Several are very close to recertifying, and some need to enter all hours for 2013. The deadline is December. We especially need hours from our Life and Sustainer members if you have worked on any of the projects or have learning hours. All hours are important for the Master Gardener program and Extension in reporting to the state. If you need help, please call Judy Strange or Mimi Cox. Thanks!

Ding Dong Cake
From Donna Tolewitzke

1 box Devil’s Food Cake mix
8 oz. Cream Cheese softened
3 cups powdered sugar
1 stick butter softened
8 oz. Cool Whip
1 tub Milk Chocolate Icing

Prepare and bake cake as directed on box. (2 round cake pans)

Filling: Mix and cream the butter and cream cheese. Add powdered sugar and fold in cool whip.

After cake is completely cooled split layers (TIP: you can place the uncut cakes on plates in a freezer for about 30 minutes to make a cleaner cut, then use unwaxed dental floss to pull through the layer and make a wonderful even cut.) and spread filling on each layer and stack, do not spread filling all the way to the edge of the cake, the weight of the cake will press it out to the edge once you are finished, this keeps the filling from mixing with the icing. Now, if you have any filling left over you can mix it with the icing. It’s what we do. Then ice the entire cake with the chocolate icing. You will be able to put a thick layer of filling between the layers.
Reminders

Renee Shepherd, owner of Renesegarden.com (Renee's Garden Seeds), has made an offer for HWES Elementary School. Go to her website, order seed, and use code FR821C and she will donate 50% of the price of the seed you order to the Garden Program.

Standing Committee Chairs

Projects
Myra Jane Biggers

Programs
Brenda Lane

Membership & Retention
LaVeta Howerton

Historian
Ann Dent

Social
Debbie Tate - Chair
Amanda Hurdle - Co-Chair

Parliamentarian
Mimi Cox

Executive Committee
The Officers

Newsletter Editor
Diane Sandberg

Photographer
Myra Jane Biggers

Upcoming Events

January

For list of Arkansas shows, meetings, etc. statebystategardening.com/ar/calendar/

For information on Memphis events see www.memphisareamastergardeners.org/events.htm

For Master Gardener events list see www.arhomeandgarden.org

Volunteers Needed for Arkansas Flower & Garden Show

The 2014 Arkansas Flower and Garden Show is right around the corner, February 21 - 23, 2014 at the Statehouse Convention Center.

Interested in volunteering to help make the show a success? Volunteers are needed to set-up on Thursday, Feb. 20th through take-down Sunday, Feb. 23rd,

If you have questions or need a volunteer form contact Steve Lopata, sllopata@yahoo.com or 223-8099 or Beth Phelps, bphelps@uaex.edu or 501 340-6650.

For more information go to http://www.argardenshow.org/. The website has the speaker schedule and schedule of show events. Please help share show information with friends and family. It would be great to have a record breaking crowd attend the 2014 Arkansas Flower and Garden Show.

On New Year's Eve,
wrap a large rock with some rope and hang it from a branch.
On New Year's Morning:

If the rock is dry, good weather will come to stay.
If the rock is wet, rain is on the way.
If the rock is moving, high winds will come at night.
If the rock is white, snow will fall tonight.
If the stone is gone, time for moving on.
Arkansas Gardener Magazine Articles
http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/News/Arkansas_gardener/default

Arkansas Master Gardener Program
http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/master_gardener.htm

Janet Carson’s Blog - In the Garden
http://uofacesmg.wordpress.com/

Jim Long’s Blog
http://jimlongsgarden.blogspot.com/

Public Horticulture Events
http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/mastergardener/upcoming_event:

University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Research & Exte
http://www.uaex.edu/

Garvan Gardens with Janet Carson

HWES School Gardens Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/HWESschoolgardens

CCMG Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Craighead-County-Master-Gardeners/629232630461141?ref=hl

The wise gardener anticipates June in January.
From The Emily Compost website

"January is the quietest month in the garden. But just because it looks quiet doesn't mean that nothing is happening. The soil, open to the sky, absorbs the pure rainfall while microorganisms convert tilled-under fodder into usable nutrients for the next crop of plants. The feasting earthworms tunnel along, aerating the soil and preparing it to welcome the seeds and bare roots to come."
Rosalie Muller Wright, Editor of Sunset Magazine, 1/99

Fun and Useful Links