Red Dirt Master Gardener News

December 2015

Merry Christmas to All!

A Newsletter for Red Dirt Master Gardeners

Join Us for Our Christmas Party

Sleigh bells and great Christmas smells for the December Master Gardener meeting. We are looking forward to a great Christmas party at our regular meeting on Thursday, December 10th. We will enjoy a great potluck dinner (everyone bring your favorite dish to share) and then we will enjoy a new tradition – our First Annual Silent Auction. Please bring a gift or craft for the members to bid on. These items are not terribly expensive and we have so many talented folks in our group. You will be able to pick up some great merchandise!

We will begin supper at 6:00 and then enjoy bidding. And if you are not sure what to bring – that is ok – just come and enjoy supper and bid!! We are looking forward to a great time & 100% of the proceeds will go to the Miller County Red Dirt MGs.

You are invited to bring a guest for our Christmas potluck.

We would like to see ALL the Master Gardeners on Thursday, December 10th at the REA; bring a potluck dish, some-thing to auction off and don’t forget your wallet.

Holiday Decorating

Janet Carson will be talking about decorating for the holidays. Come join us! It is FREE & open to all.

Dec. 7, 2015
6:30 p.m.
Benton Library, 1800 Smithers, Benton, AR (Saline Co.)
Contact Ron Matlock at 501-303-5672 for more information.

Congrats to Nominees

The nominees for the Arkansas Master Gardener Awards are:

Project of the Year – Gateway Farmers Market
Friend of MG (Individual) – John Turner
Friend of MG (Business) – REA
Miller County MG of the Year – Andrea Thomas
Miller County MG Rookie of the Year – Pam Rayburn

If you have any questions regarding anything in this newsletter, please feel free to call (870) 779-3609 or visit Room 215 in the Miller County Courthouse.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Caraway
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
JWC:jds
Volunteer Hours Deadline Dec. 31st

The deadline for your MG Online Reporting of Volunteer Hours is December 31, 2015!

Please everyone, report your hours online. These are the life line of the Master Gardener program and the Arkansas MG program counts on these hours when applying for grants and many other reasons. You have until December 31st to get your hours recorded for the year.

To recertify as a MG on January 1st, 2016, you must pay your dues and have your minimum number of hours recorded. If you need any assistance with this, Andrea Thomas is waiting by the phone to help - call her... if you are turning your hours in on paper, please turn them in to Andrea Thomas and she will enter your hours into the online reporting system. Please do not wait until the last minute deadline to give them your hours; they need time to place the hours in the system.

Remember, your volunteer hours are important and we want to count every hour.

Andrea’s Phone #903-832-8111 – Email: at7550@yahoo.com – Address: 16 Dunham Drive, Texarkana, TX 75503

Giant Mustard Greens at November Meeting

Submitted by Andrea Thomas

Chris brought in a mustard plant to show at the November meeting. He picked it at his neighbor’s home. It would only take a few leaves from this plant to have a whole mess of greens to cook. Take a look at one leaf from the plant and it is tender.

June 2-4, 2016

This all day tour will show you how to make lemonade when nature gives you lemons. Participants will see the diversity of design from man-made gardens to adding to & embellishing what is there and can’t be moved.

We will then join The Brothers and Sisters at Hermitage Monastery for lunch and a tour of their beautiful gardens featuring a rain garden designed to diminish run-off water.

Pre-Conference Tour
Dogwood Canyon and College of the Ozarks, June 1st at 10:00 a.m.

The Springs Tour
Members of the Parks and Recreation Springs Committee will be the guides for a morning and afternoon tour of each unique location.

The Garden Stroll

Front Porch Décor

The front porch is the first thing your guests see when they visit so make sure it offers a festive look this holiday. Here are a few ideas to add a little cheer to your entryway.

Gather pinecones, add a few plastic ornaments or red berries to make it really nice. You can even add red velvet bows or other decorations to make it unique.

Dress up a walkway with beautiful cranberry luminaries. All you need is glass or plastic vases and add cranberries and fake snow. Place a pillar candle and you have the perfect path to your front door. You can add fir bundles or pinecones if you want more decoration.

Use planters you already own and just add pinecones and other decorations to them. If you have larger planters, fill them with pinecones and then add ribbons, pine branches or red ornaments to make them really festive.

Real or fake poinsettias are the perfect addition to your outdoor display. Simply put them in outdoor planters and adorn with ornaments, ribbon or garland to get the look you want.
December Events

7th – Holiday Decorating with Janet Carson, 6:30-Benton
8th-9th – HIS Conference, Tulsa Community College, NE Campus, Tulsa, OK
10th – Master Gardener Meeting & Christmas Party – Potluck – 6:00 – REA – Left/Right Game
24th-Jan. 1st – Courthouse Closed
24th – Christmas Eve
25th – MERRY CHRISTMAS
31st – New Year’s Eve
31st – Deadline for Reporting On-Line Volunteer Hours

Decorating with Wooden Crates

Do you have wooden crates lying around that you would like to recycle into something amazing this holiday season? How about making one of these crates (or create your own design) this season.

For this piece, simply paint this wooden crate white & attach red gingham ribbons on the sides. It’s the perfect way to display paper-whites or poinsettias.

Or create your very own Christmas village display case by using wooden crates as the backdrops for individual scenes.

How to Plant Bare Root Roses

When you buy rose plants with bare roots, they come in a box without soil and with their root systems either wrapped in wet paper or in clear plastic bags with wet shredded paper to keep the roots wet during shipment.

After taking them out of their packing, place them in a 5-gallon bucket filled most of the way with water; it needs enough water to cover all the root system well and up onto the trunk of the rose bush a bit.

Add a tablespoon or 2 of a liquid concentrated growth enhancer to the water.

While the rose bushes are soaking for 24 hours, get their new homes ready.

Next, fill the new planting hole up about halfway with water and let it drain away.

Place the soil dug out into a wheelbarrow where it can be mixed with either compost or a good well-blended bagged garden soil. You can also mix 2 to 3 cups of alfalfa meal into the soil – not the rabbit food pellets but actual ground up alfalfa meal.

Once the roses have soaked for 24 hours, take the buckets of water and rose bushes to the new site.

Once we have things mounded in the center of the hole using some of the soil from the wheelbarrow.

Put in ¼ cup bone meal in with the soil in the bottom of the hole for big rose bushes and ¼ cup for the miniature rose bushes.

Place the bush into the hole and drape the roots carefully over the mound. Slowly add soils from the wheelbarrow while supporting the rose bush with one hand.

Tamp the soil lightly as the planting hole is filled to support the rose bush.

At about the half full mark of the planting hole, add ½ cup Epsom salts sprinkled all over the rose bush, working it lightly into the soil. Now fill the hole the rest of the way up, tamping lightly as we go, ending up by mounding the soil up onto the bush about 4 inches.

Take some of the amended soil and make a ring around the rose to help catch rainwater or other watering sources.

Wow, I cannot believe the Christmas season is here once again! They say the older you get, the quicker time flies by, and that is certainly correct. It seems like yesterday it was 100 degrees outside.

This is the last time this year I will worry you about recording your hours – because if you don’t do it by the end of this month, it will be too late. It is a shame to volunteer to help and then not receive credit for it. Remember, you must have your minimum hours recorded online and pay your 2016 dues to be recertified for the coming year. So please take a minute and get your hours recorded. If you need help, just let me know.

As we look forward to the Holiday Season, keep in mind the reason we celebrate this Holy Day, and also keep in mind how vital the Miller County Master Gardeners are to the community.

As I always say, there is something in Master Gardeners for everyone. Just find your passion and jump right in!

Wishing Everyone A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy Master Gardening!

Teresa Slack

Gardeners & Happy New Year
Call Meeting to Order: The November meeting of the Red Dirt Master Gardeners was called to order by President Teresa Slack at 6:15 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Cheryl Turner to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2015 meeting. Motion was seconded by Andrea Thomas and minutes were approved as printed.

Treasurer’s Report: The October 2015 Treasurer’s Report was approved as printed and will be submitted for audit.

On-Line Reporting: Andrea reminded everyone that time is getting short and to get your hours in. Rita Nichols will send out an email reminding everyone of the December 31, 2015 deadline. Call Andrea if you need to know how many hours you have.

Unfinished Business:

- Basic Training Committee – Teresa reported that Basic Training was a great success. Nine provisional members attended training.
- Four States Fair – Glenda Griffin spoke with the Director of the Four States Fair. There will be some new construction and landscaping at the fairgrounds and the Director would like to get input from the Master Gardeners.

New Business:

- Birthday Recognition – Gayle Renfro recognized the members who had birthdays in November. Gayle asked for help with recognizing birthdays next year and Scottie Burnett volunteered.
- Baby Shower for Jennifer Caraway – Master Gardeners brought gifts for Extension Agent Jennifer Caraway who is expecting a baby in January.
- Silent Auction Christmas Party – Nancy Biggar is coordinating this event. Those who have volunteered to help her need to be at the December meeting 30 minutes early.
- Volunteer Code of Conduct – Every Master Gardener must sign the code of conduct. Copies are in the back of the room.
- Election of Officers – The Nominating Committee presented the following slate of officers in October: President, Teresa Slack; Vice President, Rita Nichols; Treasurer, Robert High; and Secretary, Jan Lavender. There were no further nominations from the floor. Martha Bean made a motion for the nominations to cease and elect the slate of officers by acclamation. Motion passed.
- Sanctioned Projects – Teresa reported that the Executive Committee changed the parameters of one of the sanctioned projects. Talks at the Library will also include talks at Southwest Center and the Senior Citizens Center. Members were given a ballot to vote on current sanctioned projects. Results will be announced at the December meeting. For a project to become a sanctioned project, you must fill out a request form, receive approval from the Executive Committee, and then be voted on by the membership.
- MG Sign Up Sheet for Committee/Projects for 2016 – Teresa explained what each committee and project does. All members were given a sign-up sheet for the projects they are interested in working on in 2016.
- The next Master Gardener meeting is Thursday, December 12 at the REA Building.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Boyles, Secretary