Red Dirt Master Gardener News

December 2016

A Newsletter for Red Dirt Master Gardeners

Merry Christmas to All!

The Extension Office will be closed from Dec. 23rd thru Jan. 2nd to celebrate Christmas & New Year’s Day.

Next Meeting

December 8, 2016
6 PM ~ REA

You’re Invited To

What: Christmas Party
When: Dec. 8th, 2016
6:00 P.M.
Where: REA Building

Join Us for Our Christmas Party/Silent Auction

We are looking forward to a great Christmas party at our regular meeting on Thursday, December 8th. We will enjoy a great potluck dinner (everyone bring your favorite dish to share) and then we will enjoy our Second 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 with supper at 6:00 and then enjoy bidding on our items.

And if you are not sure what to bring – that is ok – just come and enjoy supper and bid on the items available!! We are looking forward to a great time & 100% of the proceeds will go to the Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners.

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

We would like to see ALL the Master Gardeners on Thursday, December 8th at the REA; bring a potluck dish, something to auction off and don’t forget your wallet.

The nominees for the AR Master Gardener Awards are:

Project – Miller County Courthouse Beds
Friend of MG (Individual) – Deonco Muldrew
Friend of MG (Business) – Golden Corral
MG of the Year – Robert High
MG Rookie of the Year – Scottie Burnett

Robert High & Scottie Burnett, nominees for MG & Rookie of the Year

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

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The deadline for your MG Online Reporting of Volunteer Hours is **December 31, 2016**!

Please everyone, report your hours online. These hours 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, 2016, to get your hours recorded.

**Sanctioned Hours**

If you are still in need of Sanctioned Hours, the MC Courthouse flower-beds are your best bet. You can contact Gayle and see what needs to be done or you may go and pull weeds.

Have you been planting, weeding, cleaning, etc. in the MC Courthouse beds; this is sanctioned hours.

**Non-Sanctioned**

Did you help out setting up, putting things up, snacks, meals, registration, etc. with the 3-day seminar on gardening or the 3 Monday nights on beekeeping? Count those under Other Activity – Volunteer.

Did you go to the monthly meeting? You may count 1 hour for the business part; report it under Monthly Meeting Business.

Did you bring one of the dishes we had? You get to count the time you were in the store picking up supplies to make that dish. How long did it take to prepare that dish? You also get to count that. Did you come early to help set up? Count that under Hospitality/Social.

**Education**

Did you go to Garvan Gardens to see the Christmas lights? Report that time under Garden Tours.

Did you stay for the monthly meeting program? That counts as 1 program? That will count as 1 hour education. Report it under monthly meeting program.

Have you been to any seminars on gardening? This is reported under Seminars. If you attended the beekeeping classes, this is where it is reported as education.

Have you been to a public garden? Report under Garden Tours.

Have you read any horticulture magazines or books? You can report 1 hour each month for this.

If you have watched a horticulture program on TV or listened on the radio, you can report 1 hour each month for this.

**Travel Time**

The rule is you cannot count travel time unless you are transporting items for a project (time spent loading, unloading, transporting items for a project). Transporting your personal items do not count.

Questions on reporting or password reset? Call me: 903-832-8111 or email at7550@yahoo.com.

**Volunteer Hours Deadline is Dec. 31st**

By Andrea Thomas

Folks, there is not much time left to report hours, so let’s get it done.

Go to [www.arkmg-dev.arkmg.org](http://www.arkmg-dev.arkmg.org) & logon.

Pansies in the Landscape

Pansies must have well-drained soils and cannot tolerate wet feet. Planting pansies on elevated beds, 6 to 10 inches above the existing grade, will assure good drainage and will also improve the visibility of the color display.

When preparing their bed, add organic materials to improve the soil’s water and nutrient holding ability, such as compost.

Fertilization requirements of pansies differ from other types of seasonal color. Avoid using fertilizers containing high amounts of slow-release ammoniacal nitrogen. These are commonly used on summer annuals but are not recommended for pansies. High amounts of ammoniacal nitrogen can cause pansy stems to stretch & become succulent during warm fall weather, which weakens plants and makes them susceptible to winter injury. It is also slow to be absorbed by the plants during the winter months when soil temperatures drop below 45°F. Pansies can literally starve during the winter months even though the soil contains high amounts of ammoniacal nitrogen.

Generally, a thorough drenching of the soil at transplant with 150 parts per million of a soluble greenhouse fertilizer, such as 15-2-20, will get the plants off to a good start. Avoid high rates of nitrogen during September and later in April and May, because the plants grow quickly and can stretch in warm weather under high nutrition.

Pansy plants are usually planted at spacing of 6, 8 or 10-inches between plants. Although 6-inch spacing makes the bed appear fuller, plants may become crowded & more susceptible to spider mites and diseases. A wider spacing allows better air circulation between plants and helps avoid these problems.
This is the last time I will be submitting a “President’s Corner” to the monthly newsletter. Boy, the past two years have just flown by. I would like to thank each of you for this opportunity to be your President. I have enjoyed getting to know each of you better, serving on committees with you, trying our best to make the Miller Co. Red Dirt Master Gardeners the best organization it can be. It has truly been an honor and I thank each one of you for your support. I look forward to our new President – James Lamb – taking over; and I ask each of you to support him as well as you have supported me. James will be an awesome President!

This is also the last time 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 do not receive credit for it. Remember you must have your minimum hours recorded online and pay your 2017 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 Co. Master Gardeners are to the community.

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

Wishing Everyone A VERY Happy Master Gardening!

Teresa Slack

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Welcome our new slate of officers and don’t forget to thank the outgoing officers for their hard work in helping the MC MG Program.

President James Lamb, Vice-President Chris Engledowl, Secretary Jan Lavender, and Treasurer Glenda Griffin

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Both Scottie & Elizabeth – trainees from the 2015 class – have already completed the hours needed to receive their certificates and are now officially Master Gardeners! Congratulations and well done!
The meeting was called by President Teresa Slack at 6:15PM. James Lamb motioned to approve the minutes as printed in the newsletter. Martha Bean seconded the motion which was approved by the membership. Robert High, Treasurer, presented a financial report and it will be placed for audit. Andrea Thomas reported on on-line reporting of volunteer hours. She clarified how to report attendance at the 3 day seminar which took place in October after the Basic Training was canceled. James Lamb reported on news from County 76. The date change for the on-line reporting deadline will be November 30, 2017 instead of December 31, 2017. Also James announced that our MCMG will have an opportunity to participate in Saturday Basic Training with several other counties jointly. This Basic Training will take place in June and July of 2017 for 8 Saturdays. No decision was made, and further discussion will take place at future meetings.

In Unfinished Business, committee reports were given. Gayle Renfro reported that the Miller County Courthouse flowerbeds were in good shape. Sharon Etheridge reported that the committee for the College Hill Middle School Gardening project was putting a flyer together announcing a Junior Master Gardener organization and that the committee is waiting for approval from administration.

In New Business, five new Master Gardeners were certified: Scottie Burnett, Elizabeth Johns, Jane Richards, Paula Warren, and Annette Lachowsky.

Next, Teresa gave an end-of-term speech—"2 years in review". She will be available to advise the new officers of 2017. The slate of officers was announced, and Martha Bean moved to close the nominations and accept the slate of officers. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the members present. The 2017 officers are President-James Lamb, Vice President-Chris Engledowl, Treasurer-Glenda Griffin, and Secretary-Jan Lavender.

Next, members voted on projects for 2017. Winners were: Rookie of the year-Scottie Burnett, MG of the year-Robert High, Project of the Year-Miller County Courthouse Beds, Friend of MG (Individual) of the year-Deonco Muldrew, and friend of MG (business) of the year-Golden Corral.

Jon Zawislak’s Bee Keeping classes are scheduled for November 7, 14, 21 at Beech Street Baptist Church. Members were encouraged to call the Extension Office to sign up for these classes.

The trip to Garvan Gardens to see the Christmas lights will be December 5, 2016. We will leave on the bus from the First Baptist Church parking lot at 3:30pm. We will stop in Fulton to pick up members. We will return about 10:30pm. Dinner will be at the Western Sizzler in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Check with Teresa for available seats.

The December meeting will be our Christmas Party and Silent Auction. Members are urged to bring an item for the auction and a dish of food for the potluck dinner. Set up will be at 5pm and the auction and dinner will start at 6pm.

The audit committee was announced: Martha Bean, Georgia McFaul, and Patsy Bass.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Teresa Slack, President.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Lavender, Secretary