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 Court-house, 400 Laurel.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Caraway
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
JWC:jds

February 2016

Red Dirt
Master Memos

Four States Agricultural Exposition & Conference

Both the Miller & Bowie County Extension Offices are counting on Red Dirt MGs to help with the Four-States Agri Exposition, held February 11th, beginning at 8:30 a.m., at the 4-States Fairground.

Help is needed with planning; setting up areas for speakers; displays, speaker introductions; registration; preparing, setting-up and clean-up after lunch for the nearly 300 people; and generally helping out wherever needed.

There are also workshops that you might be interested in attending:
- Warm Season Vegetable Production at 8:30
- Introduction to Aquaponics at 9:45
- Beekeeping at 11:00
- Management of Stressed Trees at 1:00

We will have a MG Display table set up and need volunteers to help set up the display and to man the table.

This is a great opportunity to pick up both education hours and community service hours for a day’s work.

There will also be a Private Pesticide Application Training, beginning at 2:00 PM. If you need to be certified or re-certified, you should make plans to attend this training. Each training is good for 5 years. Cost is $10 registration & a license fee of $10 per year or $45 for 5 years.

Dues Are Past Due

Please mail your dues – now $20 – to Robert High, 16021 Broadleaf, Texarkana, TX 75503

Seedlings: – you are paid for the 2016 year.

Per By-Laws: “Membership dues are to be paid by the first month of the calendar year (January). If dues are not paid by January 31st, they will increase by an additional $5 for Feb. ($20), and an additional $5 for March ($25). If dues are not paid by March 31st, membership will cease.”

Jennifer Caraway
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
JWC:jds

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. If you require a reasonable accommodation to participate or need materials in another format, please contact your County Extension office as soon as possible.

Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay.
Hello February! Do you have your onions and potatoes in the ground yet? I have a very good friend whose father, a Preacher and Farmer always said, “If you don’t have your onions and potatoes planted by Valentine’s Day, you are too late.” Well, we have a few days left to get that taken care of.

Lots coming up as we get closer and closer to spring. Please check your newsletter for opportunities to volunteer. The Agri Expo is February 11 – and always a lot of fun – and an opportunity for volunteer hours as well as education hours. Plus a great lunch will be provided. I hope everyone has the opportunity to go to the Agri Expo.

So as we kick off this spring season, we need to always 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.

Happy Master Gardening!

Teresa Slack
President

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**Presidential’s Corner**

**Calendar of Events**

- **5th** – Jefferson Co. Home & Garden Show, Pine Bluff
- **11th** – Four States Agri Expo, Four States Fairgrounds – 7:30 AM
- **11th** – MG Monthly Meeting – REA – 6:00 PM
- **14th** – Happy Valentine’s Day
- **15th** – Presidents’ Day. Miller County Courthouse Closed
- **18th** – Ogden Community Center Workday – 9AM (If bad weather, it will be moved to the 25th)
- **25th** – Pruning Demo Workshop at UofA Fruit Research Station in Clarksville, AR – 1:30-4:00
- **26th-28th** – AR Flower and Garden Show, Statehouse Convention Center, LR

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**Pruning Demonstration Workshop**

There will be a pruning workshop scheduled for Thursday, **February 25th, 2016**, at the University of AR Fruit Research Station in Clarksville. In this workshop, you will learn about the principles of pruning along with a hands-on demonstration for pruning apples, blueberries, blackberries, grapes, and peaches. Registration will begin at 1:00 with the workshop at 1:30-4:00. Cost is $5.

Email Khanshaw@uark.edu or call 479-754-2406 to pre-register.

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**Kick-Off Basic Training Preparation Underway for 2016**

Preparation is already underway for this year’s Basic Training. Teresa led the first meeting to get everything started and plans put in place.

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**Texarkana Community Downtown Garden**

The first meeting of the year on the Texarkana Community Downtown Garden was held January 23rd. We had 4 MGs in attendance. Remember, this is a sanctioned project.

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5 Rules of Thumb – Pruning Summer Blooming Shrubs

By Rita Nichols

Pruning is a source of confusion to many gardeners. How and when to prune are 2 of the most common questions asked of gardening experts. Luckily a few simple guidelines provide good advice for growing most types of flowering shrubs. Learn the general rules of thumb for pruning flowering shrubs.

Rule of Thumb #1: Don’t Prune ~ Many gardeners labor under the belief that they must prune regularly to keep their shrubs in good condition. Not true. Most shrubs need only one significant pruning session a year & many don’t even need that. Pruning common shrubs like lilacs, forsythia and burning bush into tight mounds is not only unnecessary but isn’t that great for the plants, either. Many flowering shrubs will look their best when allowed to grow in their natural form or habit. Frequent shearing encourages lots of surface branching, possibly resulting in an unhealthy structure and reduced flowering. If you really want a tightly sheared look in your garden, choose a plant that is suited to it, such as boxwood.

Rule of Thumb #2: Prune ~ Spring Flowering Shrubs After Flowering. Plants that bloom in early spring usually produce their flower buds the year before. The buds over-winter on the previous year’s growth and open in spring. If you prune these spring bloomers in fall or winter you’ll remove the flower buds and won’t have flowers that year. The plants will be ok, but you’ll miss a year of blooms. Most of these plants don’t need heavy pruning every year, just some selective thinning of branches to give them a nice shape.

Rule of Thumb #3: Prune Summer Flowering Shrubs ~ in late winter/early spring. Many summer flowering shrubs bloom on the current year’s growth. Pruning them back in late winter encourages them to produce lots of new growth that summer and will result in more flowers. DO NOT prune spring- or summer-flowering shrubs in late summer or early fall (after mid-August through leaf fall). This may lead to cold damage or winter. The EXCEPTION is dead, diseased, damaged or double-crossed limbs (the Four D’s) that should be pruned out at any time. The exception to this rule is also hydrangeas (see #4 for more on that).

Rule of Thumb #4: Hydrangeas. Hydrangeas. Hydrangeas. Hydrangeas alone account for at least half the pruning questions in gardening forums. Some bloom on ‘old wood’ (see #2) while others bloom on ‘new wood’ (#3). The first step is to determine the variety of your hydrangea and follow:

Continued on next page
Rule of Thumb #5: It’s OK to Trim Anytime ~ Really!
Gardeners are often confronted with stray shoots and branches in late summer & worry about removing them. Continued to the Right

January 14, 2016
REA BUILDING
The meeting was called to order by President, Teresa Slack. Ed Long moved that the minutes of the last meeting be approved as printed in the newsletter. Glenda Griffin seconded the motion. A unanimous vote was made to approve the minutes.
The treasurer’s report was made by Treasurer, Robert High. There was no discussion; the report will be filed for audit.
Andrea Thomas reported on the On-line reporting of volunteer hours. She encouraged members to record hours in a timely manner.
In unfinished business, Teresa explained that all members are required to sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct form provided by the State of AR Extension Office and each form kept on file.
In Old Business, Rita Nichols informed the membership that the 2 senior high school student scholarship recipients had not enrolled in any college; therefore the scholarships will be awarded in the spring, 2016 when new recipients are selected. These scholarships are in honor of John Turner, retired Miller County Extension Agent.
In New Business, Andrea Thomas was recognized as Master Gardener of the Year and Pam Rayburn was recognized as Rookie of the Year. Plaques will be given to Andrea and Pam at a later date.
Teresa announced that the Four States Agri-Expo on Thurs., Feb. 11 will take place at the Four States Fairgrounds & volunteers are needed. Credit for Volunteer Hours will be given for helping with this annual event. Sign-up sheets available at the meeting.
Charlotte Neaves announced that volunteers are needed February 18 at 9AM at the Ogden Community Center. The meeting will change to the following Thursday if weather prevents the meeting to take place.
Gail Renfro and Rita Nichols volunteered to Chair the committee for the Miller County Courthouse flowerbeds.

Tammy Drewery and Sheila Keever volunteered to “spearhead” Talks at the Library.
Lynn Willing-Bond announced a brunch on January 23 from 10-12 at the Ahern House and a meeting to plan the community garden. Sanctioned Volunteer Hours to be counted for attending this meeting.
The Audit Committee will report at the February meeting.
Rita Nichols announced that Debra Boding of Hope announced that the Farmers’ Market Vendor Training will take place January 26, 2016 in the Hempstead Hall in Hope, Arkansas. Members can sign up to help with local food tastings from 5-8PM. Members are allowed to count their hours at this event as education.
Belinda McCoy McLaughlin of Daingerfield, Texas, provided an informative program, “Hummingbirds: Creating Havens with Native Plants.”
The meeting adjourned.
Respectfully submitted,
Jan Lavender
Secretary

Go ahead & cut them back. The plant won’t be damaged by removing a branch or 2. **DO NOT** prune newly-planted shrubs unless limbs are damaged. Newly-planted shrubs need all the leaves possible to encourage root regeneration.

Your landscape plants don’t need as much pruning as you may think; the only potentially tricky part of pruning is determining when to trim a particular plant. For a quick review, prune summer bloomers in late winter and spring bloomers right after flowering. Stray or broken branches can be trimmed back any time. **If you do** make a mistake, plants are **very forgiving.** You may miss a season of flowers but the plant will recover for the next year.

*By: Proven Winners*