The 2017 Agricultural Expo & Conference will be held Thursday, February 9, from 8:30 to 3:15 at the Four States Fairgrounds Entertainment Center.

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:

- Beekeeping Pests at 8:30
- Managing Recreational Ponds or Key Hole and Raised Bed Garden Designs at 9:45.
- Tomato Production Pests and Their Management at 11:00
- Grape Establishment #1 or Diagnosing Plant Diseases at 1:00.
- Grape Establishment #2 at 2:15.
- 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.

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**2017 OFFICERS**

President: James Lamb ~ 870-896-2255
hivesandhoney4u@yahoo.com

Vice Pres.: Chris Engledowl ~ 870-853-3490
bengledowl@aol.com

Secretary: Jan Lavender ~ 903-838-7348
janetlavender@gmail.com

Treasurer: Glenda Griffin ~ 903-791-8863
G2the4@aol.com

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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 Co. Courthouse, 400 Laurel.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Caraway
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
JWC:jds

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**Thank you all for the wonderful gift card to Twitty Nursery. You can bet I will put it to good use as soon as I can!! I thank you also for these past two years and for all of you working so hard to make Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners such a vital and professional organization. I cannot wait for the coming season.**

Again, Thanks,

Teresa Lee Slack

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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.
MG Conference
Pre-Tours

TOUR 1 – The Ultimate Garden to Table

The tour begins with tours of the various kitchens at the Pulaski Technical College of Culinary Arts. Next will be a Mystery Basket Cooking Demo featuring local ingredients prepared by a culinary expert. She will use ingredients to demonstrate the versatility of locally grown and sustainable ingredients. During lunch, speakers will discuss the benefits of nutrition and healthy eating. There will be a safe canning techniques seminar. We will visit beehives, kitchen gardens & see the production of microgreens.

TOUR 2 – From Manicured to Mother Nature

P. Allen Smith’s, Garden Home Retreat, Moss Mountain Farm is an example of perfectly manicured gardens. The American Greek Revival style farmhouse sits atop a ridge with stunning views of the Arkansas River. The Terrace Gardens are filled with annuals, herbs, perennials, roses, shrubs, and ornamental grasses. Various outbuildings include a “Chicken Palace” which is filled with heritage breeds of poultry & is the center for the Heritage Poultry Conservancy.

The Pulaski Co. MG Project at Pinnacle Mountain State Park has evolved into six separate garden beds, totaling over 3,300 square feet. Plantings include approximately 100 species of native wildflowers, shrubs, & trees. The plants have come from the Pinnacle Mountain State Park itself, members of the AR Native Plant Society, & nurseries that specialize in native plants. Many were propagated or donated from MGs gardens. There will be a picnic at the Big Maumelle Pavilion in the park.

Registration is live online as of February 1, 2017!

President’s Corner

Well, I survived my first month as president but am missing a few more hairs. As we start our second month, I am seeing flowers blooming and trees starting to put buds out. As a beekeeper as well as a Master Gardener, I have stood out front of our hives and watched the bees come back in with several different types of pollen. This is slightly unusual but as we all know, “if you don’t like the weather in Arkansas, just wait; it will change quickly.”

The Red Dirt MGs helped out with the 1st Seed Swap done in Southwest Arkansas; and from what I saw, the members of the Red Dirt MG club did us proud. There were several varieties of seeds and since this was the first seed swap, it was more of a seed donation but Chair Pam Rayburn and the other Red Dirt members got some insight into how to run a Seed Swap. I have heard that there might be a Seed Swap in the near future so watch for details. I saw several Red Dirt members at the Growing Healthy Communities Summit, getting their education hours and also getting some very useful information. Remember, even if you think that you have been through this type of training, you can always learn something new & catch up on new ways of doing different horticulture projects.

We have the Ag Expo coming up and Chair Teresa Slack has that under control; but if you want to volunteer, please contact her. Remember, this is a Sanctioned project and is always an interesting project of the Red Dirt MGs. Our volunteer help is very useful for making this event a success.

So in closing, take a walk & see what flowers are blooming, see what trees might be budding in your yard or farm. You might be surprised. But whatever you find, have fun learning about your surroundings.

James Lamb
President
January 12, 2017
REA BUILDING

The meeting was called to order by President, James Lamb.

First item of business was to approve a vote to file the treasurer’s report for audit. Next, President Lamb reported that online reporting may be due by Nov. 30, 2017 instead of Dec. 31, 2017.

In unfinished business, Jane Richards was presented with a certification of completion as a Master Gardener. The certificate was dated November 8, 2016. A gift certificate to Twitty’s Nursery was presented to past president Teresa Slack.

Next item of business was announcement of committee chairs for 2017. Membership Chair—Scottie Burnett; Agri-Expo Chair & Basic Training Chair—Teresa Slack; Miller County Courthouse Beds—Gail Renfro & Rita Nichols; Nashville Demo Garden & Farmers Market—Debra Bolding; Gateway Farmers Market Education Activities—Carl Silliman; Ogden Community Center and Fire Station—Charlotte Neaves; MG Activities—Jan Lavender; Talks at the Library—Judith White and Sandra Bell; Hospitality/Social—Sheila Keever & Melanie Thornton; College Hill Middle School Student Gardens—Annette Lachowski.

The Agri-Expo will be held at the Four States Fairgrounds February 9. Contact Teresa Slack to sign up for helping with this event. This is a sanctioned project.

January 28-A seminar featuring Lela Scott Kelly will take place in Magnolia, AR. Cost is $10. Education hours can be earned. On January 31 the Growing Healthy Communities Seminar will take place in Hope, AR. The Seed Swap/Food Tasting will also take place that day. Education and non-sanctioned volunteer hours are available for attending & helping with the seed swap. Sanctioned hours can be earned by helping man the booth at the seed swap. Online registration will end January 28. On March 4, Paul James will be speaking in El Dorado, AR. February 21–Nevada County will host a seminar on butterflies at the Library in Prescott. February 24-26 –Flower and Garden Show in Little Rock, AR. Get non-sanctioned volunteer & education hours for attending this event.

Pres. Lamb explained the Saturdays Basic Training in Hope during July 2017 for 5 Saturdays. Our Miller County MGs will help with snacks only on one of the Saturdays. Participating counties: Miller, Nevada, Columbia, Union, Hempstead, and County 76. A motion was made by Rita Nichols that Miller Co. Red Dirt MGs will be a part of the County 76 Basic Training. Sheila Keever seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved by the members present.

In new business, Rita Nichols announced that extension agent Carla Hadley had suggested that the Miller County Red Dirt MGs purchase new information technology equipment such as a projector and laptop computer. Suzann Howell made a motion for the MG organization to purchase this equipment. The motion was seconded by Teresa Slack. The motion was approved with none opposing. Carl Silliman suggested that there be research as to brand and price of this equipment. President Lamb said that this will be researched & presented at the next meeting.

Treasurer Glenda Griffin announced that dues for 2017 can be paid now. Dues are $15.00. Membership cards are available from VP Chris Engledowl after dues are paid.

The business meeting was adjourned. A program on Food Preservation was presented by Cheryl Mapson of the Bowie County MGs.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Lavender
Secretary
Historic Washington State Park invites you to...  
**Gardening Basics for Spring**

There are many reasons to garden – some might garden for self-sufficiency while others garden for health reasons; some simply want to beautify their yard. Whatever your reason, join the Historic Washington State Park garden expert for a hands-on workshop about the basics of all types of gardening as we prepare for the warmer days of spring.

Join us Sat., **March 11th** from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at Historic Washington State Park. Admission is $25.

**49th Annual Jonquil Festival**

Create memories and celebrate a tradition at Historic Washington State Park for this three-day festival that heralds the arrival of spring in Southwest Arkansas! Thousands of jonquils welcome craftspeople, entertainers, & visitors to the town of Historic Washington. Unique crafts and delicious foods are just part of the attractions **March 17th-19th**, from 9:00-5:00 Fri. & Sat and then from 9:00-4:00 on Sun.

Tours of the park, historic homes, and museums are available at regular price. Call the park at 870-983-2684 for details.

The festival is free with $5 parking.

Email HistoricWashington@arkansas.com or www.HistoricWashingtonStatePark.com

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**Miller County Basic Training Committee** will meet on Friday, February 10th at 9:00 AM at the Miller County Courthouse Third Floor Conference Room. This will be our first meeting of the year and we have a lot to get started. If you would like to help with Basic Training, we need you at this meeting.

By Andrea Thomas

Folks, if you have any hours to report for this year, I wish you would start putting them into the system. Right now we have 69 members and only 27 are showing to be active. Until you put hours in for this year, you show to be inactive. I am sure that there are more than 27 members are already active. If you were to look at us in the online system right now, they would see that our January meeting only had 15 members in attendance. Now you know that isn’t right, but it is what the system shows. It really does help to keep your hours up to date and show state how much Miller County is accomplishing.


**Sanctioned Hours**

Did you help out with the Seed Swap at the Growing Healthy Community Summit in Hope? Report those hours under Nashville Farmers Market and Community Garden. Did you go to the Downtown Texarkana Community Garden meeting? Have you been working with the Ag Expo planning and are going to volunteer at the Ag Expo? Report under Agri Expo Volunteer. All of these are sanctioned hours.

**Non-Sanctioned Hours**

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

Did you bring a dish? You get to count the time in the store picking up items to make that dish as well as the time it took to prepare it. Did you come early & help set up for the meal? This all goes under Hospitality/Social.

Did you help out with the Growing Healthy Community Summit? This goes under Other Activity-Volunteer.

**Education**

Did you stay for the monthly meeting program? 1 hour education goes under monthly meeting program.

Have you been to any Seminars? You can report 1 hour each month for this activity. Have you watched a horticulture magazine or book? You can report 1 hour each month for this activity.

**Travel Time**

The rule is that you cannot count travel time unless you are transporting items for a project. Then you may count the time loading, unloading & transporting the items. Examples might be hauling compost for the Courthouse flowerbeds or downtown garden. Transporting your own personal gloves, hoe, shovel, pruners, etc. does not count.

If you have questions on reporting hours in the online system or need a password reset, call 903-832-8111 and I will do my best to help.
First Nashville Demonstration Organic Garden Seed Swap

NDOG’s first seed swap, held January 31, was a huge success – even if there was more sharing than swapping! The Seed Swap was held during the Growing Healthy Communities Summit at Hempstead Hall at the same time as the Local Foods Tasting. More than 250 attended the Summit and more than 100 participated in the local tasting & seed swap.

Because this was the first seed swap, it was not likely that many would have seeds to bring and trade. To be sure there would be seeds at the swap, MG’s Pamela Rayburn and Debra Bolding solicited donations from seed companies, local farmers’ cooperatives, and garden centers.

Pamela volunteered to head up the seed swap and recruited volunteers to help with filling about 2000 seed packets! To control the number of seeds each participant took (and to insure there would be enough seeds for the expected 100+ participants) imitation seed packets were printed to be used as “play packets” that could be swapped for real packets of seeds. In future events these play packets may still be used for those who have no seeds to swap, allowing them to “swap” with NDOG’s new seed bank. Those who show up with their own seeds will be able to swap with each other and negotiate their own deals! Hopefully, left over seeds will be donated to NDOG’s seed bank.

Pamela did an awesome job organizing the entire event and has agreed to chair NDOG’s Seed Swap Committee. She has put together a kit that is “ready to go” for future events and has started NDOG’s Seed Library that hopefully will grow with each seed swap.

NDOG is a Red Dirt Master Gardener Sanctioned Project.

NDOG volunteers will be meeting in Late February to finalize plans for this year’s workshops, of which this seed swap was the first. Plans are to include “seed saving” in this year’s workshops. Contact Pamela Rayburn at (903) 490-1080 for more information or if you have any seed to contribute!
Nashville Demonstration Organic Garden Planning Workshops for 2017

Nashville Demonstration Organic Garden (NDOG) conducted a workshop or demo each farmers’ market day May through September in 2016 and MG’s plan to do the same in 2017. May is “Vegetable Gardening Month” at NDOG, June is “Pollinator Month,” July “Herb Gardening Month”, August “Organic Gardening Month” and September is “Fall Gardening Month”. Typically each workshop includes “chats” and/or hands-on workshops from 7 am until 11 am and relevant handouts provided. Free plants and seeds are also provided as part of each workshop. **NDOG volunteers will be meeting in late February to plan this year's workshops, which will fall into five categories:**

1) **Workshops at NDOG** during farmers’ market hours each Friday, May – September. Weekly garden workdays to maintain garden during those same hours. Weekly greenhouse workdays as well. Contact Subcommittee Chairman Debra Bolding (870) 557-2352.

2) **Seed Swaps** at various events in Hope, Texarkana, Nashville and surrounding areas. Contact Subcommittee Chairman Pamela Rayburn (903) 490-1080

3) **Square-Foot-Garden (SFG) Workshops** beginning in mid-February in which participants, “SFG Interns”, who complete all training and prepare a dish from their SFG will earn a free square foot garden bed and all supplies needed for their own bed. Contact Debra Bolding for more information.

4) **Low Maintenance Drip Irrigation and Farmers’ Market Grower training** at various times throughout the year. Contact Debra Bolding for more information.