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

Volunteer Time – Other Activity

By Andrea Thomas

We have had some confusion about reporting Volunteer hours. All of your volunteer hours must be on approved projects. Everyone should have a list of approved projects, but the catch-all is the “OTHER ACTIVITY”.

“Other Activity” is for all the projects that happen during the year that are not on-going; that is they will not occur year after year. Of course there are always some exceptions, but normally the project is a one-time occurrence. Some examples: helping a school put in a raised bed or start a vegetable garden, speaking at a school, club, church, etc., or working on a community cleanup project. You cannot just decide to help out somewhere and count this as volunteer hours. It must be approved. As a Red Dirt Miller County Master Gardener, you are working as an arm of the Extension Office. You are representing the Extension Service and the University of Arkansas as a Master Gardener and therefore someone needs to know you are doing this – thus, approval.

How do you get a project approved? Talk to your MG President; they will let you know how to proceed. If our CEA, Jennifer, asks you...

Continued on Page 2
Finally … March. For some reason, that just sounds better to me. I am ready to get my tomatoes and peppers planted and fill my patio with hanging baskets. Although spring does not officially arrive for another week or two, you can already feel the warm weather in the air.

As spring approaches, the Master Gardeners get a lot of requests from the community to help with projects. You will be hearing more about these requests as the weather warms up. This gives us a great opportunity to make a presence in the community and to share our horticulture knowledge with others. It is never too early to start working on your volunteer hours for 2016 and pick up your education hours along the way.

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 you’re your passion and jump right in.

Happy Master Gardening!

Teresa Slack
President

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

Union County Master Gardeners present Dirt Friends Festival, featuring Felder Rushing, “Dirt Gardener” – Author – Radio Personality

March 19, 2016 from 9:00 – Noon
College Ave. Church of Christ, 1817 N. College Ave., El Dorado, AR
Refreshments – Door Prizes – Vendors - $10

Volunteer Time – Other Activity (Continued p1)

Volunteer hours for business meetings for these organizations. You may not count volunteer hours for work that you do for these organizations; the exception would be an approved joint project. Here is an example: If you are in both Miller and Bowie County Master Gardeners and have a lot of volunteer hours for Bowie and need more for Miller, and if you go and work at Trail Head Park (a Bowie County project), it is a community project, a public area, and you are doing garden-related work. You may not count the hours. Why?? It is not an approved Miller County project. We cannot just decide to count volunteer hours on anything we work on, no matter how worthy.

Is there something you would like to work on and make a project? Just get it approved. Yes, there are projects that get turned down. We simply do not have enough members to do every project presented. We are even having trouble with not enough members to work on some of our own projects.

More than 150 craft vendors from near & far make the pilgrimage yearly to display and sell their latest crafts in what has turned out to be one of the largest events in southwest Arkansas.
Janet Carson presents:

In The Garden: Basics

Thursday, March 10 from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Now is the time to start planning & preparing your garden! Join Arkansas State Horticulture Specialist Janet Carson, Mark Brown (Pulaski County water conservation agent) and friends as they present seasoned tips shared by local & regional Master Gardeners.

This “Gardening 101” style class is perfect for beginning gardeners!

9:00 – Check in/refreshments
9:30-10:30 – Planning the garden, what kind of garden will you have?
10:30-11:30 – Basics of soil, drainage, and fertilization
11:30 – Lunch (on your own)
12:15-12:45 – Basics of irrigation and water needs
12:45-1:45 – Basics of vegetable gardening
2:30-3:00 – Close & questions

Cost is $15 members/$30 non-members

Reservation required by calling 800-366-4664 or online at garvangardens.org

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Beekeeping Classes in Nashville and Texarkana

Learn everything you need to begin keeping honeybees safely & successfully at home! On March 7, 14 & 21 – 6:00-9:00 PM – Nashville Cossatot College and November 7, 14 & 21 – 4:00-7:00 PM – Texarkana – REA Building

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Let’s Report Our Volunteer Time

By Andrea Thomas

Let’s report our volunteer hours.

Did you go to the Agri Expo? Did you help set up, clean up, serve lunch, or introduce speakers? (A clarification on the introduction of speakers; if you were in a class to just introduce the speaker and help them, you have the option to count the time as all volunteer or volunteer and part education. Report that under Agri Expo – Volunteer.

Did you go to the Ogden Community Center workday? Report that time under Ogden Community Center; this is sanctioned hours.

Did you go check out the Miller County Courthouse Flowerbeds and go to the meeting? Report that time under Miller County Courthouse Beds; this is sanctioned hours.

Did you go to the Basic Training meeting? Be sure and report that time under Basic Training – Volunteer.

Did you go to the Texarkana Downtown Community Gardens workdays? Report that time under Texarkana Downtown Community Gardens. This is sanctioned hours.

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

Did you bring one of the wonderful dishes we had for the meal? You do know you get to count the time you were in the store picking up items to make that great dish. (Now you cannot count travel time to the store or the time spent visiting with your neighbors, relatives, or friends while in the store.) How long did it take you for you to prepare your dish? You get to count that time, also. Did you come early and help set up for the meal? You also count that time. All of this time will go under Hospitality/Social.

Education

Did you stay for the monthly meeting? You can report that time under Other Education – Horticulture Related.

Have you read Horticulture Magazines or Books? You can report one hour each month for this activity.

Have you watched a Horticulture program on TV or listened to a horticulture program on the radio? You can report one hour each month for this activity.

Have any questions on reporting your hours in the online system? Give me a call at 903-832-8111 or an email at at7550@yahoo.com and I will do my best to help.
Red Dirt Master Gardener Minutes

February 11, 2016

REA BUILDING

The meeting was called to order by President, Teresa Slack. Glenda Griffin motioned to approve the minutes of the January meeting as printed in the newsletter and the motion was seconded. The membership approved. The Treasurer’s report was presented with the agenda. There were no questions and the report will be filed for audit.

Andrea Thomas reported that our membership is at 34% participation in reporting volunteer hours. She encouraged members to enter hours monthly or quarterly. There was a lot of discussion about the need for approval from the Executive Committee for a member to do community gardening as a Master Gardener volunteer. Robert High made a motion to table the discussion and Rita Nichols gave a second. Membership approved.

Unfinished business- There is an Ogden Workday scheduled for Feb. 18, 2016 at 9AM. Gayle Renfro reported that the Miller County Courthouse Beds have been cleaned out by one or more people who are not Master Gardeners. Gayle will talk to the Judge who is in charge of facilities to determine if MG is to continue taking care of the flower beds or not. Next, Sheila Keever-Committee Chair of Talks at the Library and More- gave a report on dates of the planned sessions at the three locations and informed the membership that attendance at these Talks will be sanctioned hours (and will be inside!) Planning meeting for these Talks will be March 10 at 5PM.

Pam Rayburn announced a training session for Vendors of the Farmers Market on February 16, 5:30-8PM at the REA. Volunteers offered to help. Sanctioned hours will be given for helping with the training meeting.

No Old Business

New Business, Teresa presented plaques to Pamela Rayburn for Rookie of the Year and to Andrea Thomas for Master Gardener of the Year for 2015. Janet Lemley reported from the Audit Committee that the December audit was finished. The audit will be filed. The 2016 budget was reviewed by the membership and there were no questions or comments. James Lamb motioned to accept budget. Motion seconded & membership unanimously approved the budget.

Basic Training Committee will meet Friday, Feb. 12 at 9AM at the Miller Co. Courthouse.

Pam Williamson announced fundraising dinner by service club, Altrusa of Texarkana. Tickets are available from several of the Master Gardeners who are in the Altrusa club. The dinner will take place on March 8 at Williams Methodist Church.

Teresa thanked the members who helped with the Agri-Expo today at the Four States Fairgrounds.

Joyce Nantze, Texas Master Gardener in Bowie County, gave a program on “Antique Roses.” She has been collecting rose plants for over 30 years. Her presentation included many photos of her collection of antique roses.

The meeting was adjourned by President, Teresa Slack.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Lavender

Secretary

Courthouse Flowerbeds First Meeting Update

We had the first meeting of the year on the Miller County Courthouse Flowerbeds, Mon., Feb. 29. Gayle led the meeting. We had lots of discussion. Two workdays have been set to get things started. We had a great meeting and
Basic Training Meeting

We had another successful Basic Training meeting, Fri., Feb. 12th. We have dates set, most of the speakers in place (except for a couple to confirm), & our daily agendas are in place.

A lot of folks have stepped up to take care of all the things that must take place that happen in the background, such as snacks, lunches, goody bags, badges, meeters and greeters, mentors, etc. It is a long list. Thanks to all who are already helping out.

Texarkana Downtown Community Garden
Continued from Page 4

EHC – Growing Through Traditions

You are invited to join with Extension Homemaker Club members from across SW AR, Tuesday, April 5th, in Hope, AR, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Our first guest speakers will be The Springhill Quilt Club, who will present “The Underground Railroad,” using quilts to tell the story.

Our second guest speaker will be Janet Carson, who will present “Gardening in Anything.” You will receive one educational hour if you attend Janet’s presentation.

A $12.50 registration fee covers breaks and lunch. You must pre-register by calling our office at 870-779-3609 by Wednesday, March 23rd, to register and pay your registration fee. You may attend all or part of the day.
By Andrea Thomas

There was a huge turnout for the Ag Expo this year. The weather was the best I have seen since I have been going. Both the Bowie & Miller Co. Master Gardeners were there getting education & volunteer hours. Bowie MGs had a booth in the vendor area; Miller Co. MGs helped with speakers and serving lunch. There were vendor prize drawings, of which I won two, a coffee set and a hat, and Sue won 5 lbs. of pecans. Both said that they never win anything; now that is no longer true.

We even had some old friends who showed up to help out. Doug Petty cooked and served the meat & John Turner was a speaker. What do you think “Pecan John” was talking about?

There was an array of subjects to get education hours on and many MGs did just that. A great time was had by all.