Note from John Turner

Master Gardeners,
I have had a rewarding experience working with you. I have led you from the back because I know that you are capable of leading yourselves through experience.

I will continue to work with you as an unofficial extension agent. You have helped to make my programs even more successful through your volunteerism and your leadership abilities.

If you need me, don’t hesitate to call. I guarantee you that I will respond.

Goodbye for now.

Sincerely,
John L. Turner
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
JLT:jds

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.

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.
**New Year’s Greeting**

**Calendar of Events**

1st - 2nd – Extension Office Closed – **Happy New Year!**

5th – John’s last day/ Jennifer’s first day

8th – MG Monthly Meeting – REA- 6PM

16th-17th – Horticulture Industry Show (HIS), Ft. Smith, AR

19th – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Courthouse Closed

21st – Deadline for emailing Linda (lsoffer@gmail.com) if you will be attending County 76 General Membership Meeting-LRSO

28th – County 76 General Membership Meeting, Little Rock State Office – 10-3

31st – Garden Thyme, Magnolia, AR. Open to the Public

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**PRESIDENT’S CORNER**

On behalf of all the Officers elected to serve in 2015 – let me say we are all excited about the coming year!! A big THANK YOU to those who served last year. We understand that we have big gardening boots to fill….and we are ready to get the year started with a bang!

We have a lot of opportunities for community service coming up. I would like to encourage you to find your passion – and go with it!!! Remember—“Red Dirt Master Gardeners is NOT a spectator sport” …. There is something for everyone – so just be willing to “step outside your box” on occasion and try something new. You might be surprised!

A special THANK YOU to those who have already stepped up and taken on roles; your help is greatly appreciated. We have many ongoing projects and many projects coming up in the next few months. You will find information about all of this in the newsletter … so mark your calendars and let’s get going….

It takes all of us working together to make this organization work – so find your place and jump in!!

Happy Master Gardening!

Teresa Slack
President

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**...INTRODUCING OUR NEW AGENT**

We would like to welcome our new Ag Agent, Jennifer Caraway. She joins our team on January 5th, 2015. She comes to us as director of the Ag Learning Center at the Four States Fairgrounds. If you have been at the fairgrounds in the Ag Learning Center during the fair or for an activity, then you have seen Jennifer. We are so excited! Stop by the office to see her and say HI!!

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**Christmas Party**

We played the Left-Right Game at our Christmas party. It was lots of fun and we all ended up with a gift.
Red River Pecan Show and Judging Contest

by Robert High

The Miller County Extension Service sponsored the 2014 Red River Pecan Show and Contest using volunteers from the Red Dirt Master Gardeners. The volunteers met at the REA building at 8:00 a.m. on December 2nd to begin the judging.

Growers submitted 61 entries with 19 different varieties. All of the entries were placed into one of three divisions: Commercial, Classic, and Native. After the first-place winners were chosen from each variety, the judges selected Division Grand Champions.

The Commercial Division Grand Champion was the Caddo variety from Stover, Inc. The Classic Division Grand champion was the Mahan variety from Stover, Inc. The Native Division Grand Champion was Large Native variety from Steve Groves.

I’d like to thank the many volunteers that showed up to help with this year’s pecan judging. Approximately thirteen volunteers, under the guidance of our John Turner, made this year’s Pecan Show and Contest a success. They sorted, labeled, cracked, weighed, and judged the pecans. This was another successful Red Dirt Master Gardner volunteer event.

Cyclamen Plants

Cyclamen is a small but diverse genus of plants. Many species are hardy, generally in zones 7 and above. But Cyclamen persicum is often seen during the fall & winter, in less hardy zones, as a houseplant (C. persicum), aptly referred to as the Florist’s Cyclamen. Even its foliage is attractive, often with silver marbling on the top sides of the leaves. The entire plant, when in flower, reaches only about 8” high.

Florist cyclamen can be grown outside, but it may not survive if temps go below 50°F. When grown outside, expect it to bloom in late winter/early spring.

They do best planted in a soil-based potting mix, with the top of the tuber just slightly above the soil line.

Cyclamen do not like heat, but they are not frost hardy.

There are many cyclamen hybrids available and since they stay in bloom for a long period, you can choose them while the blossoms are open and know exactly what you are getting. Some notable varieties to look for are:

* **Sierra Series:** Larger flowers (2-3”) white, pink, salmon, scarlet, lilac and purple

**'Scentsation’** is open pollinated with a strong fragrance. Pinks and reds

**'Victoria’** is open pollinated and has ruffled white flowers with red mouths & margins.

http://gardening.about.com/od/houseplants/a/Cyclamen.htm
The annual 4-States Ag Expo will be held **Thur., Feb. 12, 2015**, at the 4-States Fairgrounds. The all-day event offers opportunities, both volunteer service & education hours. A variety of classes are offered and you may attend those in which you have an interest. Lunch is served and MGs earn volunteer hours by helping serve. And we get to eat! One suggestion: check the weather forecast. It gets cold in that big building!

**Volunteers Needed at Ag Expo**

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**December 11, 2014**

**REA BUILDING**

**Call Meeting to Order:**
The December meeting of the Red Dirt Master Gardeners was called to order by President Martha Bean at 6:50 p.m. A quorum was present. Martha Bean gave the invocation.

**Approval of Minutes:**
A motion was made by Lynn Willing-Bond to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2014 meeting. Motion seconded and passed.

**Treasurer’s Report:**
The treasurer’s report is on the back of the agenda. There being no questions, it will be filed for audit.

Dues for 2015 are due in January. Members can give their checks to Georgette Peckham until December 31 and to Robert High after January 1. New members do not have to pay 2015 dues. Their dues were included in their Basic Training fee.

**Presentation of 2013 Trainees’ Certificates:**
Certificates were presented to the following trainees who completed the required hours in 2013: Chuck Ainsworth, Sandra Bell, Gary Driver, Linda Emert, Glenda Griffin, Robert High, James Lamb, Janet Lemley, Mary K. Liverett, Anette Owen, Walter Owen, Liz Rowton, Carl Silliman, Melanie Thornton, Lynn Willing-Bond.

Martha also announced the members who have met the requirements for recertification. Members have until December 31 to enter their hours on the online system.

**On Line Reporting:**
Andrea Thomas reported that she is available to train members on the online system or to enter their hours. Contact her if you need assistance.

**Installation of Officers:**
John Turner installed the 2015 officers: President – Teresa Slack; Vice President – Rita Nichols; Secretary – Kathy Boyles; Treasurer – Robert High.

**Additional Business:**
Teresa Slack has

Master Gardener shirts for those who have not picked them up yet.

Rita Nichols has calendars for those who ordered them.

Pictures of John Turner’s retirement party will be in the January newsletter.

Master Gardeners will give a $500 scholarship in John’s name to a Miller County high school graduate who is interested in majoring in an agricultural-related field. The Master Gardeners also will have a bench installed at the Farmers Market with John’s name on it.

Martha presented a certificate and name badge to Carolyn Folse.

Newsletter items are due by December 15.

The next Master Gardener meeting is Thursday, January 8 at the REA Building.

A motion to adjourn the meeting for the program was made by Judith White. Motion seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Kathy Boyles
Secretary
John’s Retirement – “Reunion of Friends, Old & New

The Room

The cake was beautiful and delicious.

The Master Gardeners did a wonderful job setting everything up. It looked beautiful.

A few of John’s accomplishments were highlighted throughout the room.

The Guests Arrive

Guests arrived… from those he taught in Helena, AR to colleagues & co-workers to family & friends. They all wanted to honor a man who had helped them in some way.

Everyone wished him well on his retirement on “The Card”.

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Awards

“Doc” and his boys

BETH PHELPS, OUACHITA DISTRICT DIRECTOR, PRESENTED JOHN WITH A PRUNING SET IN AN ENGRAVED POUCH, FROM THE EXTENSION SERVICE.

ON BEHALF OF THE MASTER GARDENERS, PRESIDENT MARTHA BEAN, PRESENTS JOHN WITH A SCHOLARSHIP TO BE DONATED IN HIS NAME AND AN ENGRAVED BENCH AT THE GATEWAY FARMERS MARKET.

CARLA WAS MC
John’s retirement was a celebration of the accomplishments he has made over his career in education. He always says, “THERE’S NO PRICE ON EDUCATION” and that was made apparent from his former students. He called them “my boys” and they called him “Doc.” They spoke of experiences they had in his class, many of which involved paddlings. He showed these young men an entirely new world through education. While they started out as what could be termed “troubled”; of these three, one became the chief of police, another was a retired assistant police chief, and the third became an attorney. They attributed their success to “Doc.” Then we heard from Doug. He maintained his innocence in all that he was accused of (at his retirement), saying it was John’s fault too. He spoke of how much he enjoyed working with John these 26 years. ~ LaDarrius, his son, also spoke of how he asked John to be his dad and John made it happen by adopting him. He talked about not knowing where he would be if it weren’t for John.

Then John surprised his co-workers by calling us up one-by-one. I think we were all concerned about what he was going to say, since our office could be pretty informal. ~ Even though he was the one being honored at his retirement, he managed to still honor other people. As one of his former students said, “We’re still learning from you even today.”

We will miss John in our office. He was a definite asset in the community and his expertise will be greatly missed when he isn’t available to answer horticulture and pecan-related questions. We wish him well as he ventures into other areas in his life, no doubt still teaching.

Janet
Then a surprise from John