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

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Gateway Farmers’ Market Bench Dedication

By Andrea Thomas

The Grand Opening of the Gateway Farmers’ Market on June 13th was jumping with vendors and folks looking to buy fresh produce, herbs, flowers, crafts, and home baked goodies.

In conjunction with the Grand Opening, the Miller County Master Gardeners dedicated a bench in honor of John Turner for starting the MG program in Miller Co., for his many years as advisor to the MGs, and for his retirement as County Extension Agent.

THANKS, John!

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Want Great Compost?

By Carl W. Silliman

I think all gardeners, when asked, want great soil. Great soil equates to better production of vegetables, flower beds, and other crops. We depend on fertilizers & other manmade chemicals to help with giving our garden

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So it seems like we went from rainy and stormy weather to hot, hot days!!! Boy, what they say is true...’If you don’t like the weather in the South, just wait a bit....it will change!!”

Hopefully, this hot summer weather will not impact our Master Gardener projects too much. Perhaps the weeds will slow down at the Courthouse! I do thank Sue Briley and her crew for staying on top of that project. And hopefully, some of you have checked into our newest project, the Community Vegetable Garden across from the Courthouse—you can get in touch with Kathy Boyles for more information on that.

As I have mentioned before, it is very important to document your hours via our online system. The year is officially half over and I have counted 22 MG’s with no hours recorded. I know for a fact that some of you have worked—I have worked right alongside of you!! – so please take a moment and get your hours in....these hours are the lifeline of the Master Gardener system....

So before everyone starts complaining about the lack of rain, it is time for all of us to get going —and make a difference in our community. As I have said before, just find your passion and jump right in. There is some-thing in Master Gardeners for everyone.

Happy Master Gardening!

Teresa Slack

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**In the Spotlight**

Brenda Engledowl
Chris Engledowl
Charlotte Fuller
Pam Rayburn

They have ALREADY put in enough hours to meet our requirements for recertification for next year, making them the FIRST, this year, to be certified for 2015!

Way to go! These 4 trainees/seedlings from the 2014 class have completed the hour requirements and are now Certified Master Gardeners – and they are just now getting started!

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**Presidents’ Corner**

3rd Annual Agriculture and Horticulture Show

SAT., JULY 11th • Educational Presentations: Container Gardening (9:00); Build a Rain Barrel (10:00); and Concrete Leaf Casting (11:00)

At the Trailhead Park in New Boston, TX, Dogwood Garden club and Bowie County Master Gardeners are sponsoring this event. For a list of rules visit the New Boston Chamber of Commerce at [www.newbostontx.org](http://www.newbostontx.org). Registration begins at 8:30 with judging at 10:00. For more info, contact Teresa Slack at 903-831-7494.
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the essential ingredients that plants need to thrive. The problem with these types of fertilizers is that they can be over-applied to plants which results in burned roots and ends in the plants dying.

So what if I told you a natural and easy way to provide your plants with those essential natural chemicals. It is called Vermicomposting.

Most of you have heard of this term. Vermicomposting is basically using red wiggler worms along with micro-organisms which are the countless invisible organisms in worm bins that ironically, are actually the ones doing the vast majority of the work.

The main groups of micro-organisms are the bacteria, fungi and protozoans. The result of bacterial activity and the worms working together naturally to produce that wonderful rich, earthy smell we come to associate with finished compost and high quality organic soil.

Just so that you understand, you do need special worms. Red wigglers are epigeic worms; these worms live in habitats near the soil surface, or even above the soil in rich organic matter. As you can probably guess, these are the worms we are interested in. Unlike other worms, epigeic worms are well-adapted for life in transitional habitats. They are tolerant of a wide range of conditions; they can quickly take advantage of food resources while they are available, and can also quickly expand their population numbers. These

June 11, 2015
REA BUILDING

Call Meeting to Order:
The June meeting of the Red Dirt Master Gardeners was called to order by President Teresa Slack at 6:15 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Andrea Thomas to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2015 meeting. Motion seconded by Glenda Griffin and passed.

Treasurer’s Report:
May 2015 Treasurer’s Report was approved as printed and will be submitted for audit.

On-Line Reporting:
Andrea reminded everyone to use the on-line system to report their hours. Forms are available for those unable to use the on-line system. All hours must be reported by December 31, 2015.

Unfinished Business:
Farmers Market – Pam Rayburn reported that the Farmers Market Grand Opening is Saturday, June 13. The bench will be dedicated to John Turner at 9:30 a.m. All Master Gardeners are invited and reminded to wear their green shirts.

Miller County Courthouse Beds – Sue Briley reported that there will be a work day on Wed., June 24 at 7:00 a.m.

Downtown Community Garden will have a workday on Saturday, June 13 at 8:00 a.m. This is a new sanctioned project and Master Gardeners are needed to help weed, plant & pick vegetables, and clean up the garden. Tools are provided, but bring your own if you prefer.

Fund Raising Committee – This committee is in place and will meet soon. Thanks to Sue Ellen Lettermen who will chair the committee.

New Business:
Teresa presented certificates to four trainees who have completed their hours and are now certified. These members are Brenda Engledowl, Chris Engledowl, Charlotte Fuller and Pam Rayburn.

Birthday Recognition – Gayle Renfro recognized the members who had birthdays in June.

The third annual Agricultural & Horticultural Show will be in New Boston on Saturday, July 11. Master Gardeners are invited to attend.

4-H Day at the Fairground Ag Center – Volunteers are needed on Thursday, July 30 to help with registration, serve lunch and assist presenters in classes. A signup sheet will be available at the July meeting.

Judith White thanked Peggy Burson for presenting a program about the Master Gardeners to the Lions Club.

The Master Gardener Facebook page is now up to date. Janet Smallwood is doing it.

Gayle Renfro has irises and daylilies left over from the Miller County Courthouse beds if anyone is interested.

The next Master Gardener meeting is Thursday, July 9 at the REA Building.

After the meeting was adjourned, Larry Brown, Cass County Master Gardener, presented a program on “Attracting Native Pollinators”.

Respectfully submitted:
Kathy Boyles
Secretary

Fresh herbs get more popular in the garden each season. If you are growing basil, the key is to use it often or at least pinch it back frequently. If you allow it to grow and bloom, you will end up with scrawny plants. Pinching it (or harvesting) encourages the plants to grow bushier & more productive.

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In May, Howard Co. Farmers’ Market received a $4,000 Arkansas Rural Community Grant to supplement the $8,000 Weyerhaeuser grant received earlier to build a greenhouse adjacent to Nashville Demonstration Organic Garden. The additional funds were needed as a result of the greenhouse specifications developed by MGs Lanie Snow and Debra Bolding, so no work could proceed until the additional funds were in-hand.

Want Great Compost?

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Characteristics, combined with their voracious appetite for a variety of materials we tend to think of as “waste,” makes them ideally suited for use in our worm composting systems.

Basic DIY Plastic Worm Bins- are totes or storage containers. They are the most commonly used bin for new worm composting systems. Generally, this is some form of plastic tub that is modified and set up for worm composting. These types of bins represent a decent option for those new to worm composting.

Bedding- you can use several different materials for your bedding. Coir, which is the fibrous material from the husk of a coconut is viable bedding for worms. Shredded cardboard is my choice for bedding because it can be obtained from many sources and it is free.

Food-Any fruit and vegetable waste, coffee grounds and tea bags, and egg shells are some of the different types of waste that I use for their food. I normally feed the worms once a week. In the summer heat, I often use frozen watermelon rinds to help keep the bins cool. They love the rinds as they are very active in their feeding when the rinds are introduced to the bin.

In summary, vermicomposting is an easy & inexpensive way of producing that rich, organic compost to my plants. It helps to save the food waste and cardboard that would normally be introduced to our landfills. Worm casting is what the finished product is called. It is a highly rated, all natural organic soil that you can use for your plants, that can't be over-applied. It has a natural release of those vital natural chemicals for your plants to thrive. It is most importantly, an inexpensive, easy hobby that anyone can do. If you have an interest in vermicomposting, feel free to contact me to help get you started.

Garvan Woodland Gardens “Gardening with Heirlooms”

550 Arkridge Road, Hot Springs National Park, AR 71913 • 800-366-4664
MONDAY, JULY 13TH • 9:30-2:00 • Magnolia Room • Reservations Required • $45 Members/$60 Non-Members

Relive memories of grandmother’s garden or just come find out how to create your own great garden with tough, dependable, old-fashioned plants. Popular for generations because they’re locally adapted and require little extra care, historic varieties of everything from vegetables to favorite flowers are here to stay. Let Arkansas gardening expert Janet Carson help you create your best garden ever with Southern heirlooms.
Lanie Snow contemplating pruning one of the crepe myrtles at Howard Co. Farmers’ Market with Gary Driver providing oversight!

The crepe myrtles were planted several years ago as part of Glenda Rice’s plans for a shaded trail connecting the Farmers’ Market and NDOG.

Market customer Andrea Rhodes with herbs she harvested at NDOG. MGs conduct an educational activity each market day. Visitors to the garden may harvest herbs for free and pick up recipes for using them. WIC recipients and seniors may harvest other produce for free.

Howard County inmates with volunteer Margaret Villas at NDOG’s workday in June. The inmates are a tremendous help at NDOG and HCFM, helping with big jobs that require a lot of strength. The guys spread a load of clay sand over all the paths at NDOG – a big, hot job! The inmates have their own garden, which MGs in Nashville have assisted with by providing bedding plants and drip irrigation…

July Calendar of Events

9th – Talks at the Library
9th – MG Monthly meeting – 6:00 PM- REA
11th – Third Annual Agriculture and Horticulture Show, Trailhead Park, New Boston, TX
13th – Heirloom Plants, GWG, 9:30-2:00
15th – Advanced MG Class – Bees – 8:30 – Little Rock State Office
16th – Peach Field Day – 2:00-7:30 PM – UA Fruit Research Station, Clarksville, AR - $20 fee. Contact Katie Hanshaw at khanshaw@uark.edu or 479-754-2406
21st – Conway 76 General Membership Meeting, LRSO, 10:00-3:00
31st – Last Day for Early Registration at PNG Leadership Conference ($55 per MG - includes $30 subsidy from Co. 76). After this date, cost goes up to $85 (no subsidy) until full or closing date.
The Grand Opening of the Gateway Farmers’ Market on June 13th was jumping with vendors and folks looking to buy fresh produce, herbs, flowers, crafts, and home baked goodies.

There were a lot of different fruits and vegetables, along with a few novelty items. Master Gardeners were on hand to help, passing out food samples and tickets for prize drawings.

The highlight was the dedication of a bench from the Master Gardeners in honor of retired Agriculture Agent, John Turner.
For the inaugural debut of the Arkansas Diamonds Program, the summer annuals chosen are: red dragonwing begonia, purple angelonia, Cora Cascade polka dot vinca, Redhead Coleus, blue scaevola & gold/yellow lantana.

Red dragonwing begonia produces large glossy-green leaves and drooping clusters of red flowers. Because the hybrid is sterile, it just keeps blooming from spring till frost. It does best in fertile, well-drained soil.

Angelonia or summer snapdragon is another performer in full sun to partial shade. These spike forming blooms will continue all summer provided they get regular fertilization. It is heat & drought tolerant, but will bloom best if given supplemental irrigation in dry weather.

Cora Cascade polka dot vinca is an annual periwinkle. While it only grows 6-8" high, Cascade™ spreads 32-36" wide, flowering from frost to frost. The blooms are evenly distributed, eliminating "bald spots" that plague some Vinca.

Redhead Coleus is one of the deepest red of any of the coleus plants. Although it will grow in full sun, it would benefit from a bit of shade in the hottest part of the day unless you can keep it well watered. It can also do well in partial shade.

Blue scaevola or fanflower is another full sun bedding plant, which will tolerate partial shade. The fan shaped flowers are produced all season long on low spreading plants.

To help you find Arkansas Diamonds at your local independent garden centers, here is a list of retailers who are participating in the program: www.argia.org/?page=ARDiamondsPartners! Look for the AR Diamonds logo and feel confident that you are both supporting local businesses AND purchasing a plant that will be successful in your garden. Visit https://argia.sitemym.com/?ARDiamonds
Glenda Rice
June 25, 1947 – June 18, 2015

Glenda joined the Master Gardener program in 2006, shortly before retiring from the US Postal Service where she had worked for 25 years as a carrier.

Glenda was always proud of being a Master Gardener and went to as many workshops and events as she could manage with her busy “grandmother” schedule. As a Master Gardener, Glenda was involved with Nashville’s farmers’ market from the beginning. Because of her connections in the community, she was a big part of pulling it all together and making it happen and was the market Co-Manager until Mary Hartness took over during Glenda’s illness. Even then Glenda continued to help out with Master Gardener projects whenever she could. When Master Gardeners from all over Arkansas visited Nashville’s market last May, Glenda was intimately involved with organizing and pulling off that event.

Glenda was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2012, and fought the disease with unbelievable courage and optimism, always smiling and positive. Glenda literally woke from her brain surgery with a smile, and the day following her surgery could be found in the hospital’s garden pulling weeds. She had the same fearless optimism for almost 3 more years. Glenda died June 25 at home with her family. We will all very much miss Glenda.