From Your President
by Gloria McIntosh

Spring is in the air! The last couple of days have been gorgeous. With bits of green peaking through ground, it is an exciting time for gardeners. Now we can see just what survived the winter and envision what plants we want to add to our gardens this year. If you haven't started already, soon you will be out digging, dividing and moving plants from one place to another. If you have left over or pass along plants, this will be a good time to stick them in a pot and set them aside to bring to our Annual Plant Exchange in May.

One of the best things about warm days for me is getting out of my heavy shoes and socks and into my sandals. I can remember as a little kid, we didn't have "summer shoes" so we went barefoot all summer long. We had a gravel road in front of the house and would run down that gravel road to grandmother's house jumping up and down to keep the rocks from burning our feet and sometimes "stumping" a toe in the process. As I was writing this I wondered: Is the proper phrase "stump my toe" or "stub my toe"? According to Yahoo answers, it depends on where you're from. The words "stub" and "stump" have almost exactly the same etymology, and in fact "stub" is a synonym for "stump" in reference to the remnant of a tree trunk. It appears that "stump" was the more common usage relating to smacking one's toe during the 17th and 18th centuries. It might be that "stub" is more of an Americanism that has become the norm, at least in North America. If this is correct, I guess I am either older than I thought or really "country."

Sometimes in the early spring, maybe during a full moon or how the planets are aligned, I get this overwhelming feeling that I need something different in my life. On such a day, not long ago after a trip to my hairdresser, I came home with red hair. What do you think?

APRIL FOOLS!
MINUTES OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS
General Business Meeting
March 5, 2013
Patsy Louk, Secretary

PRESENT: 79 Members

President, Gloria McIntosh, called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. Motions were made and seconded to approve the Minutes of the February Meeting as printed in the March Garden Thyme.

OLD BUSINESS:
None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
Gloria went over the announcements that had been rolling on the front screen since 6:00 PM.

The Master Gardener meeting starts at 6:30 PM. The doors are open by 6:00 PM and the announcements start by 6:00 PM. Sign-up sheets, information sheets, etc., are on the tables in the lobby by 6:00 PM. Social time is from 6:00 to 6:30. Come early to do your lobby business.

Finding Your Special Projects:
What if I sign up for a project & no one ever contacts me?
Contact the project chair, then Berni Kurz, Joyce Mendenhall or Gloria McIntosh.

Once I sign up for a project, am I married to that project?
No, you can quit working on a project at any time. Be considerate and let the project chair know that you will no longer be working on that project.

How can I switch projects in the middle of the year?
Contact the project chair to see when they meet and start attending their meetings.

Can I work on more than one project at a time?
Yes, you can work on as many projects at a time as you choose to.

2012 WCMG Awards:
2012 MG of the Year
2012 Rookie of the Year
2012 Project of the Year
2012 Friend of Master Gardener (Individual)
2012 Friend of Master Gardener (Business/Organization)

“Yes I Can” Award
2012 Mentor of the Year (New Award)
Deadline for nominations is 03/11/13. Contact Joyce Mendenhall at 444-1755 or jmendenhall@uaex.edu for forms or more information.

Joyce went over the awards. She needs nominations ASAP. She brought extra nomination forms to the meeting if anyone needs them. Awards will be presented at the April meeting.

Farm Friends is Thursday, April 25th, 2013 at the Pauline Whitaker Horse Arena. It is open to kids from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM; the public from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Two thousand Preschoolers, Kindergarteners and 1st Graders will attend. There will be beekeeping, worm composting & herbs to smell & touch, etc. Beans & Cornbread dinner is served to everyone. Please sign up to work a 2-hour shift or bake a batch of cornbread. Contact Lisa Purkayastha at 479-409-9762 or lisapurkayastha@gmail.com.

Lisa went over the announcement and passed around sign-up sheets to work and/or bake cornbread.

BGO Announcements:
Saturday, March 9th, 10:00-11:00 Arranging Bundles of Flowers with Julie. $25/$30 Register & pay in advance at www.bgozarks.org.

Saturday, March 30th, 9:00-11:00 Bird walk with Joe Neal. Free. Walk will be on Lake Fayetteville and in the garden.

Gardens now in full force - Volunteer work days begin this Wednesday from 9:00 - 11:00 (weather permitting-outside work only)
For additional information call 750-2620 or email Judy Smith at jsmith@bgozarks.org.

Jacobsen Tours presents Missouri Botanical Gardens, April 26-28, 2013. $399 p/p double occupancy ($499 single). Price includes cancellation insurance, 6 meals, transportation, lodging, baggage handling, attractions (baseball extra). Contact Tom or Jean Jacobsen at 479-251-7002 or jacobsentours@hotmail.com.

Arkansas State Master Gardener Conference early registration deadline is March 15. After March 15th the registration fee will go up. Conference is sponsored by Benton County Master Gardeners and is May 16-18, 2013. Theme is Bridging Trails to Arkansas & Nature. Go to www.arhomeandgarden.org/mastergardener/mastergardener/courses/retreats/state_conference/default.htm to register.

User Name: mastergardener Password: compost

International MG Conference is an Alaskan Cruise on September 7-14, 2013 and is hosted by Arkansas. There are still a few spots open.

WCMG Organization is now on Facebook. Go to: https://www.facebook.com/ArkansasWCMG and “like” our page to get announcements and gardening news.

Dian Holmes announced the Extension Office Breakfast is tomorrow at 8:00 AM. They will work after breakfast.

John Gilbreath announced that the loblolly pines he had to give away are gone. They come from the Arkansas Forestry Commission. He suggested that next year the MG’s get together as a group and order trees from the Commission. Gloria asked him to head that up.
Mary Crumley announced that the Fair Workday has been rescheduled for Saturday, March 23rd. An announcement will go out through “wimoflar”.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jan Lefler was to make a presentation on Garden Thyme but she is ill and will present next month.

Mary Crumley spoke about Jr. Master Gardeners. Anyone that volunteers to work with them will have to have a background check. They have about 30 kids from ages 5 - 19. They have a business meeting and then an activity. They grow their own vegetables for their snacks. They are working on getting the Jr. MG’s certified and it takes about 8 months to do that. They are also a 4-H Club. There will be a 4-H fundraiser “Shooting for Scholars” on 04/20/13 at the Washington County Sheriff’s Complex in Fayetteville. They are looking for lots of volunteers. An announcement with all the details will be sent out through “wimoflar”.

Vice-President, Dolores Stamps, thanked everyone for wearing their name badge. She had the drawing for the prizes for wearing your name badge. She then introduced our speaker, Don Hurlbut. He presented his program on water features and plants in a water feature.

Prior to adjourning the meeting, Gloria had one more announcement. WCMG, Ruth Cohoon, has been nominated for the Women of History award.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

Master Gardeners and County Agents:
I wanted to share some exciting news. On Tuesday evening the Arkansas Master Gardeners were awarded Outstanding Volunteer Service Award at the Henry Awards during the Governor’s Conference on Tourism. This award goes to you all! Job well done.

I always knew we had the best volunteers in our program, but it is nice to be recognized by those outside our organization. I will bring the trophy to the State MG conference in Rogers, so you can all enjoy it. Don’t forget to register for the state conference. If you have lost the link, it is on the MG only site. Deadline for Conference Registration is Tuesday, April 16th.

Janet B. Carson
Extension Horticulture Specialist
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Little Rock, AR 72204
501-671-2174/ Fax 501-671-2303
jcarson@uaex.edu
As a little child we wander
Learning as we go
That things are big and tall and shiny
About them all we want to know

We crawl, toddle, and finally walk
Toward the places that are bright
We need to know what they are made of
And handle everything in sight

Ahead we spy a picket fence
Behind the gate we have to see
What is beckoning us to come and view
There's a lock, but where's the key?

One eye peeks between the slats
Amazed at what's within
The colors and scents are so enchanting
Opening wide we breathe it in

Though the garden is delightful
There must be a reason why
The gate is locked to keep us out
And the fence, it is so high

Back in the days of our fearless youth
We would find a way inside
Climbing or jumping over the top
But now, do we run and hide?

Life can be just like that garden
With its beauty hidden away
Thinking that the fence is the reason,
When it really just needs us to say

The magic words to open the gate
And embrace sweet joy to find
Quit holding back from happiness
Fearing fences and locks in our minds
Berni’s Hilltop Gardening Tips

April 2013

Inspect your pear and apple trees for fireblight. If you had problems with fireblight last year, you will need to spray 3 times during bloom with Agrimycin. Apply product as soon as 1/3 of flowers are open, and again at full bloom, and the last application is made at the first signs of flower petal drop. The best defense to fireblight is select varieties which are fireblight tolerant or resistant.

Yes, you can plant your Easter lilies outdoors. Fertilize with a soluble houseplant fertilizer when the flowers fade and then transplant them into your garden. They will bloom in June next year and thereafter.

Because of a later spring, you can still dig, divide, and transplant summer and fall blooming perennials.

When selecting summer annuals, look for short, bushy plants with green leaves, well-developed root systems and more buds than flowers. Wait until after danger of frost (approximately April 15) before planting summer annuals in the garden.

Deadhead the blooms of spring blooming bulbs, but wait to clean up the foliage until after it has turned brown. Don’t cut the green leaves since these provide food for next year’s blooms. Fertilize with bone meal after the bulbs have finished blooming.

This is a great time to add a layer of compost or cow manure to the area around your plants to promote better plant health.

Last call to plant potatoes, onion sets, kale, leaf lettuce, radishes, sugar snaps, broccoli and similar members of the cabbage family. These vegetables can withstand a light frost without damage. Vary your planting dates of radishes, lettuce, spinach, and broccoli by a week or two with the last planting made the end of this month. This will ensure that you will have a harvest season of these vegetables over a longer period of time.

You can direct seed sweet corn, pole beans, lima and snap beans, cantaloupe, cucumbers, summer squash and watermelons after April 15. Wait until the end of April to early May to set out peppers and eggplant transplants.

Watch for cutworms and aphids in the garden. Cutworms seem to find transplants within 24 hours of planting. Aphids population can explode fast when we have a dry warm spring.

Berni Kurz
County Extension Agent
Staff Chair

West Fork Library Project had their yearly pot luck planning meeting in March at the home of Jan Hays. The hit of the meal was a pineapple casserole brought by Jane Bryant. Jane had tried this for lunch at a restaurant in Mississippi and brought home the recipe. As promised, I copied it and am sharing it below. By the way, have you noticed; Master Gardeners are such great cooks. **Contributed by Gloria McIntosh**

**Porches Hot Pineapple Casserole**

60 ounces Pineapple chunks
⅔ cup sugar
½ cup All Purpose flour
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 sleeve Ritz crackers
3 Tablespoons melted butter

Servings: 12
Preheat oven to 350°

**Drain pineapple and reserve juice.**
Combine pineapple, cheese, flour and sugar.
Mix well.

**Adjust mixture with reserved pineapple juice if needed.**
Pour into a greased Pyrex dish.
Crush crackers and spread on top.
Evenly pour melted butter over crackers.
Bake for 25 minutes or golden brown and slightly bubbly.
‘Digging’ for Those Perfect Projects
by Kitty Sanders

Master Gardeners,
Be on the lookout for presentations from various sanctioned projects at each of the upcoming Master Gardener meetings this year. Representatives from each sanctioned project will be telling us about the fun and fellowship available along with their group’s hard work to educate and beautify each site!

It is important to know that:
1) You can switch projects in the middle of the season. You aren’t married to a project when you sign up to help. Sometimes you may find that a project has plenty of help and you might be needed somewhere else more. Of course, it might be advantageous to discuss your move with the project chair(s).
2) You can work on several projects simultaneously. Many gardeners enjoy being involved in different kinds of activities; i.e., working at the Prairie Grove Gardens and helping with the Junior Master Gardeners’ program.
3) Getting involved in various projects offers you the chance to increase a variety of skills and allows you to meet all kinds of people.
4) Committee work is an important part of the Master Gardener program. Hours spent on committee work fulfill your hourly obligations, too!

Some folks feel that they are not needed if someone hasn’t contacted them — NOT SO! If you haven’t heard from someone about a project that interests you, find the leaders in your volunteer workbook and call or email them! (There’s nothing to prevent you from just showing up for the workdays, either. These are often announced at Master Gardener meetings.)

Spring fever! Some members of the compost group met in February in the Skattebo home to swap seeds, look at seed catalogs, and make plans for the gardening season.

Students who completed the Master Composter training in March pictured left to right: Johnny Southerland, Elaine Wade, Carolyn Miller, Elaine Blowers, Judie Branson, Linda Auman, Nina Prater (Energy Corps), Anita Engert (Carroll Co.), Jean Erickson (Carroll Co.), and Steven Skattebo (Compost Chair). Not pictured: Ben Maddox (Energy Corps), Lois Archer.

New students making new compost piles.

Link to Compost Video:
http://youtu.be/tPsomdPX9cQ

Karen Studdard, Jodie Standrod, Jacqueline King and Martha Ward at Wilson Park
COMMUNITY OUTREACH GARDENS IN THE PARK
by Barbara Hubbard

Barbara Hubbard & Sara Fixmer with Community Gardeners

Lisa Netherland, City of Fayetteville Parks Coordinator, scheduled registration for the Community Gardens in the Parks on March 2nd at the Fayetteville Senior activity and Wellness Center. Lisa enlisted help from Master Gardeners Martha Ward and Betty Swope who volunteer at Wilson Park. Martha contacted Barbara Hubbard who is a Master Gardener and also has a plot at the Walker Park Community Garden.

Martha, Betty and Barbara met with Lisa and other volunteers to help plan and organize the registration event. Also working on March 2nd were Sara Fixmer and Tamara Gilmour who served snacks, Betty Swope who answered questions of new gardeners, Gloria McIntosh, and Judie Branson, Publicity Committee.

The Community Gardens in the Park are located at Walker Park (adjacent to the Senior Center) and at the Jefferson Community Center on S. College Avenue. City resources of water, compost, tools, and mulch are provided and the reward is home grown produce for the gardeners! Master Gardeners will continue to be involved as one of the Educational Outreach projects this year. Community gardeners will be made aware of resources available such as Ask a Master, local speaker events, and other educational information. WCMGs may also coordinate speakers on organic methods of soil supplementation and pest control, as well as composting at the community garden sites.

Betty Swope with interested gardeners

LLAMA BEANS (Manure)

Odorless bean shaped food for your garden, houseplants and compost piles.
Will not burn plants.
Use fresh compost or make llama tea.
Excellent results!
Feed my llamas, they'll feed your plants.
For prices or more information call: Ginger Candrilli at 479-665-2566 (early morning or early evening).
"Man vs. Nature" is often viewed as a contest. Despite our tendency to think in these terms, I hope you will take a more harmonious approach to gardening. Think in terms of knowing how things in Nature operate, and as best you can, follow practices that are in coherence. If you cannot envision Nature doing it, look for another practice. Remember the IPM model of using the least invasive practices first.

**Become a Better Observer.** Following the Laws of Nature forces us to understand the natural activities that are going on in the garden. That understanding comes best by being in the garden often and being a careful observer. As you observe, write it down. Keep track of your soil mineral content progression through your soil reports. Keep track of what you add to the soil, and what and when you plant. When you see something unusual, write it down, in detail. This is all very useful information as I try to help others in gardening.

**Protect that Soil.** Wendell Berry said, "What we do to our soil, we do to ourselves." Many of you know I advocate always keeping a cover on your soil. I like to say, "what you can't see is the most important part of my garden....the soil." That cover can be a vegetable crop, a cover crop for soil building, or mulch. It is a way of Nature, promoting a healthy, full-of-life, sweet smelling soil.

Do weeds count in this regard? Yes, they do, but you will have an easier life if you stick to other crops that you can more easily plan and manage.

**Soil Erosion.** You may not notice it, some folks adamantly deny it, and most are completely unaware that soil erosion is a very serious U.S. and world-wide problem. The problem stems primarily from tilling practices on our farm lands.

Anything that contributes to break down of soil structure, like chemicals and salt fertilizers also contributes to the problem. The problem is huge. On a world-wide basis twenty-four billion tons of soil is lost annually. Each year that equates to several tons per person on the planet. New soil formation is estimated at about a billion tons per year.

If you are interested in this topic, see the book, *Dirt -- the Erosion of Civilizations*, by David R. Montgomery. Also look up David Montgomery on TED talks. It is a great way to get educated quickly on this. The book offers a clear perspective on why many civilizations have become extinct -- the abuse of the soil until it no longer sustained itself or the people. We have recognized the soil erosion problem in the U.S. for hundreds of years, but have failed to correct it. Thomas Jefferson called the failure of farmers to care for their land the curse of American agriculture. Thinking short term, the early farmers favored buying new land over restoring and maintaining what they already owned. As our soil diminishes, we need to pay attention and support practices that restore.

**Can gardeners help?** Yes, indeed. We can easily grow more of our own food and promote healthy (non-chemical) practices. I suspect there are hundreds of acres within our city limits and surrounding areas that could grow fruit and vegetable crops and help to reduce the need for food imports. Please join in the movement to convert lawns and shrubs to fruits and vegetables. What if we had a goal for producing 50% of our own food locally? We and all the world would be healthier for it. If we don’t solve the soil erosion problem, our civilization like many others, will likely fail. That's a sobering idea, and a legacy worth worrying about.
Who’s Who in Master Gardeners
by Terry Smyers

Vande and Johnny Southerland
at Shiloh Museum Gardens

Your place of birth: Johnny and I were both born in Memphis, TN, where he grew up and finished college. I grew up in Mobile, AL, and Atlanta, GA, eventually moving to Memphis and finished college.

Why and when you became Master Gardeners? Many of my friends were MGs. I belonged to The Arkansas Unit of the Herb Society of America, The Central Arkansas Horticulture Society and served on The Herb Committee for the Ozark Folk Center Committee of 100, becoming a MG in 1999. Johnny followed in 2009, when he retired from Roche Laboratories after 44 years. He wanted to become brains not just brawn.

What is your gardening style? Our gardening skills are casual. Having mostly shade in Little Rock, we had many varieties of Azaleas, Sweet Olives, Louisiana Iris, deciduous azaleas from Larry Lowman, named after Confederate generals, and herbs. Johnny follows my lead, but loves roses and tomatoes. We have only dabbled with ‘New Dawn’, Rose ‘Zephirine Drouhin’ and a couple of shrubs.

Favorite things to do in the garden: Pruning and raking leaves at twilight are my favorite chores. Johnny likes to work with vegetables having volunteered at the MG Vegetable Garden Project at the Governor’s Mansion in Little Rock.

Favorite gardens you have visited: The Rose Garden at Balboa Park, in San Diego is Johnny’s favorite garden and I love the patios of the French Quarter and homes in Natchez. All gardens are beautiful.

The best gardening advice you ever received: My mother always told me, “don’t start a garden unless you have time to care for it”.

A chore we do not like: Weeding is the most detestable of chores. Hire someone. My worst garden mistake is pulling the Bloodroot out of the Historic Arkansas Museum herb garden. Mary Worthen checked all my weeds after that. Know your weeds.

An aspect of gardening you like to encourage: Everyone should learn about rain gardening. It is wonderful. We had one in Little Rock trying to deal with the neighbors’ run off from up the hill. My irises and bog plants were happy there. Now living above Lake Fayetteville, we have become conscious that rain gardening is a civic responsibility, with part of our property draining a great deal of Lakeview Drive.

Gardening has taught us: Life is change. You cannot have it all; and you do not have to prove anything with a garden. Don’t be afraid to pull it out. Find something that works. Do not fight your environment; live with your zone. Love the natives. We have had several big bumps in our road since moving to NW Arkansas. Our garden/landscape is someone else’s. It is yellow with forsythia, irises and daffodils in spring, with some beautiful red Azaleas on the drive. We have “maintained” and been unsuccessful at trying to enhance it. It is working for us in our “present moment.” As I like to say, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”.

A project we are planning: We hope to add a moon watching patio this summer with swing and vine laden pergola. We will never have a New Orleans patio, my heritage, or formal landscaped back. We will have lots and lots of pots of herbs, a butterfly garden in a pot and tomatoes in bags. We will defy the rocky hill and beat the wind. We might try some natives after all.

What has being a Master Gardener meant to you? Johnny is in compost heaven and has bloomed with the MG program. He also joined me in the Master Naturalist program since moving here. He is now a Master Composter and says to love your worms!

Knowledge is power; so ask everyone about gardening skills and for their point of view. Read everything you can. Do not frustrate yourself by trying to grow things not for your zone. Most of all, as you grow older realize you cannot do it all. Pass it along. “Bloom where you are planted” and “blessed are the flexible for they shall not be bent out of shape”. The education we get from our classes, seminars and projects keeps our minds alive and challenged. What a place to be able to pay it forward; see our tax dollars at work and have so much fun! Gardeners never meet a stranger, and in the garden, you are never alone.
DATES TO REMEMBER

**April**
- **Tue., April 2 @ 6:30 p.m.** WCMG Mtg. – 2012 WCMG Awards Celebration
- Tues. – April 16th – Deadline for State MG Conference Registration
- Thurs. – April 18th @ 9 a.m. – Devil’s Den Workday
- Sat. – April 20th @ 9:30a.m. – FGNS Mtg. – Two talks “The Joy of Gardening” at 10 a.m. and “Designing a Garden for Year Around Pleasure” at 2 p.m. by Erica Glasener, Horticulturist and Author – Springdale
- Mon. – April 22nd – Earth Day
- **Tue. – April 23 @ 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** County 76 General Membership Meeting – Little Rock
- Thurs. – April 25th – Farm Friends @ 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Schools and @ 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Public – Fayetteville

**May**
- **Tue., May 7 @ 6:30 p.m.** WCMG Mtg. – Spring Plant & Seed Exchange
- **Thur.-Fri.-Sat. – May 16-18th - 2013 Arkansas Master Gardener Conference**
  - “Bridging Trails to Art and Nature” – John Q. Hammonds Convention Center – Bentonville
- Sat. – May 18th @ 9:30a.m. – FGNS Mtg. – “Everything You Wanted to Know About Herbs But Were Afraid to Ask” by the Herbal Adventurers, Sheila Deal & Meghan Messler – Springdale

**June**
- **Tue., June 4 @ 6:30 p.m.** WCMG Mtg. – “Sticks, Pods, Twigs” Floral Designs – Country Garden
- Sat.- June 1st – Annual “Through the Garden Gate Tour” at selected NWA gardens - FGNS Annual fundraiser.