

2021 Officers

President: Nicholas Auck
Vice-President – James Lamb
Secretary – Gayle Renfro
Treasurer – Charlotte Fuller



Master Gardener Meeting at Teresa Slack's home.

August 2021

MasterMemos

A Newsletter for Red Dirt Master Gardeners

If you have any questions about anything in this newsletter, please call me at 870-779-3609, email jcaraway@uada.edu or visit our office, now located at 1007 Jefferson Ave., Texarkana, AR.

Sincerely,

*County Extension Agent
Staff Chair/Agriculture*

JC:jds

Right: Christy Worsham and Gloria Taylor at the Farmers Market



**MG Monthly Meeting –
Tuesday, August 12 6:00 PM
–REA, Hwy 82 E, TXK AR**

**Our T-shirts are in!!!
If you ordered a t-shirt, Teresa Slack will have them for you at the MCMG Monthly August meeting. Be sure and see her and get your t-shirt!!!**

PRESIDENTS CORNER

Welcome to August! It's been getting warmer and dryer, but the year hasn't been too bad. The same could be said for life with Covid. With the current increase of infections, we will all need to be a little more safe than before. If you feel ill, please stay home and know you are missed!

Continued on next page.

*A Zoom MG Basic Training is being offered again this fall. Deadline to apply is **AUGUST 27, 2021**, with classes conducted September 22, 29, October 6, 20, & 27, from 8:00 AM-4:30 PM.*



ATTENTION ALL MASTER GARDENERS:

September 20-21

Ferndale –C. A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center

Chairs: Gail McClure, Linda Soffer & Rose Ann Houston

For more info: (501) 348-4774 (Gail)

Save the dates of September 20-21 for our next PLANT, NURTURE, GROW Leadership Conference (PNG) in Ferndale!!

- Enjoy fellowship and fun while you improve your skills.
- Improve your personal understanding of the Master Gardener program
- Gain skills applicable to everyday life and activities.
- Earn Educational hours in a relaxed setting.

Teresa Lee Slack stands in front of some of her muscadine vines as she hosts a tour of the 140-acre Ponderosa on July 10. Several fellow Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners attended the tour and monthly meeting.



Photo, “Even young Kyler stopped to check out the garden.” (photo used with parental permission)

PRESIDENTS CORNER, cont.

At next weeks meeting, you are encouraged to wear a mask even if you have been fully vaccinated. While those of us vaccinated may not get sick, we can still spread the virus which has a greater impact on our friends who are unvaccinated. And as our constitution says, “We the people... to ensure domestic peace, provide for mutual defense...”. So it’s our duty and just makes sense.

We had a great meeting in July and a special thanks to Ms. Teresa Slack for providing her gardens and Wo-Man Cave! Everyone enjoyed themselves, the educational presentations, but especially the fellowship and burgers. A second Special thanks to James Lamb and Chad Blue for cooking our burgers and hot dogs; Charlotte Fuller and Annette Lachowsky for chopping the veggies and rounding up supplies. This months speaker will be on fire ants.

Plans are moving ahead for our Plant Swap at the October meeting, to be held at the Four States Fairgrounds Ag Center on our usual second Thursday meeting night. This will be an opportunity for master Gardeners’ to bring plants they no longer want and swap them with other Master Gardeners. Plants, trees, bulbs, seeds or cuttings are welcome.

We also have new details of our Christmas Party at the December meeting to discuss. For those who have items for the silent auction, James Lamb is heading it this year and will have details at future meetings.

Hope to see you all soon.

Nick

Master
Gardener
Keyhole
Garden Goes
Tropical at the
Farmers
Market with a
little pineapple.
There is one
more picture
that goes with
this one on the
banana tree
growing.

*Thanks to Clyde
Davis for these
photos.*

TROPICAL KEYHOLE GARDEN



The keyhole garden was developed in sub-Saharan Africa to help people grow food in hot, dry conditions – much like we have here in Arkansas and Texas during the Summer months. It is very efficient at holding moisture and retaining nutrients.

The keyhole garden is essentially a round raised bed garden built on a compost pile with a central compost basket. The keyhole is a small aisle on one side of the circular garden that enables the gardener to reach the compost basket to add to it or turn it. It also brings the gardener closer to the center of the bed to reach plants more easily.

Keyhole gardens get their name from the appearance of the garden as viewed from above.



By: Christy Worsham

Teresa Lee Slack's family roots run deep on her 140-acre Ponderosa homestead just west of Texarkana off U.S. Highway 67.

Teresa welcomed her fellow Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners to The Ponderosa on July 10 for a tour of the property, the monthly business meeting and a wonderful lunch in the spacious lodge.

The property was certified a National Wildlife Habitat Federation site about 10 years ago, thanks to the efforts of Teresa and her late husband, Ron Slack.

Teresa's father, Bill Lee, a highway contractor, bought the property in the late 70s or early 80s and raised Tennessee Walking Horses there. Teresa has lived on the property for 20 years.

In addition to her home and the lodge, there's a recently rebuilt barn that was originally constructed in 1981, a greenhouse, an arbor and several ponds. She grows muscadines, grapes, azaleas, blackberries, strawberries, blueberries and several varieties of flowers.

The Ponderosa's beautiful lake, visible from the home's backyard and the arbor, is a former gravel pit. It now serves as a landing area for Canada Geese each evening about 20 minutes before sunset.

Teresa started growing muscadines in 2015 -- the luxuriant vines snake across a single wire stretched between sturdy posts standing at the ends of each of three rows. Irrigation tubing runs along the bottom of each row.

She orders her muscadine plants from Ison Nursery & Vineyard in Georgia. Varieties grown on The Ponderosa include Noble, Red Bronze and Carlos. Teresa plotted their layout on her computer and fertilizes weekly in April, May and June as recommended by Ison. One week she uses a 10-10-10 fertilizer and the next week she fertilizes with calcium nitrate.

Teresa says the muscadines are easy to propagate and are pollinated by bees about two to two and a half miles away. It takes about two to three years to have enough muscadines to make jelly, she said.

Teresa has six thornless blackberry bushes: three on the side of the greenhouse and three in her yard. She plans to use the muscadines and blackberries to make sangria.

She also has blueberry bushes she purchased from a Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners plant sale.

Teresa has refashioned the back of her mother's deck into a grape arbor that also features strawberry hanging baskets and some cannas purchased at the Miller County plant sale in years past. The arbor area has a drip irrigation system that her husband Ron installed using plastic tubing and a rain barrel fashioned from a trash can.

Teresa Slack...cont.

All her plants except for the Indian Hawthorns survived the record snowfall the area received in mid-February. The blanket of snow was actually beneficial, acting as insulation between the plants and unusually low freezing temperatures. It was also responsible for the profusion of wildflowers this year. Many of the plants she grows hold special significance for Teresa, stirring memories of people. For instance, she and her best friend Brenda Perkins attended a home and garden show about 15 years ago and bought Encore Azaleas for \$5 a bucket and planted them in their yards. Brenda, an administrative assistant for Texarkana Independent School District's superintendent, died about three years ago.

Seeing the azaleas and caring for them reminds Teresa of her friend.

Teresa's mother, the late Kayron Levetta Lee, was a life member of the National, Texas State and Wake Village Garden clubs. Kayron held several statewide leadership positions in the garden club association. She loved hydrangeas, which Teresa grows on the property in remembrance of her. Despite holding such high positions in the national, state and local garden clubs, Kayron was not a Master Gardener.

Teresa became a member of Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners in 2012 and Bowie County Master Gardeners in 2013. She is currently the president of Bowie County Master Gardeners.

Most of all, she enjoys meeting people and sharing her gardening knowledge with them.



Photos from July Red Dirt Master Gardener meeting at the home of Teresa Slack.



VOLUNTEER TIME

Here is an update of how we are doing right now. Current membership is 83, of that 11 are Lifetimers, 51 regular members, and 21 Trainees. We are up to 80% of our membership as active. There are 17 of you who have not placed any hours in yet.

So far this year 1904 sanctioned hours, 40.5 non sanctioned hours and 1090.3 education hours have been placed into the on line system. This is great.

When I checked hours for August, I noticed that we have one member who is only 7.5 hours away from having 200 volunteer hours. I am sure in next month's newsletter I will be letting you know who it is.

We will be adding three more trainees shortly who completed the on line course as of June 2021. Be sure and welcome Debbie Crouch, Bethany Daughtery, and Kasey Merriman.

Remember that until you put that first hour into the on line system for the year you show as inactive (17 of you). Now you know that I want each of you to show as active, so let's start placing in those hours. Also State checks hours monthly for reports, so please place your hours in monthly and not wait till the end of the year. I really appreciate all of you who place hours in as fast as you can, it makes us look good in the monthly reports. Your hours are really needed this year, since we are still dealing with the effects of Covid.

Everyone but Lifetimers are required 20 hours of education. There are many ways to get your education hours: books, magazines, TV, radio, you tube, on line courses, MG Mondays, and one of my favorites the zoom seminars (watch your emails from State for the registration links.) The Brown Bag Lectures Series and Grow Your Own Groceries have started back up. If you miss or cannot watch the live zoom presentation, they send out a recorded form of the presentation, but you must register. There have already been presentations on Rain Barrels, Bird Friendly Yard, Trees/Shrubs, and Spring Peas.

Caution, Caution, Caution

Do not be too quick for the On Line system. This occurs when you pick the Project to place your hours against. If you move to fast, instead of the Project you want the system will revert back to Advanced Training – Education (the first project listed) and you will have time posted against it instead. Please make sure the project you want goes in the box.

Remember All of your hours are important and needed to keep MG programs going, so please report all hours. To Report Hours: Go to the UofA site: www.uaex.uada.edu , then Yard & Garden, click on Master Gardener Program, then click on Enter Volunteer Hours here and logon. This is the best way to make sure you are at the current or newest version of the On Line Reporting System.

If you have any questions, need help reporting your hours or need a password reset for the on line system, please give me a call 903-832-8111 or send me an email at at7550@yahoo.com and I will do my best to help. Please contact me first for help and not State.

I know my home phone has been acting up, so here is my cell phone number 972.322-9866. If you call my home phone and I do not answer and it does not go to the answering machine, it is not working. It seems to have a mind on it's own.

Keep placing those hours in.

Andrea