

2024 Officers

President: Rita Lamb

Vice-President: Ralph Robertson

Treasurer: Delita Lusk

Secretary: Sondra Bedwell



February 2024

Master Memos

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, located at 1007 Jefferson Avenue, Texarkana, Arkansas.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Caraway
Jennifer Caraway

County Extension Agent
Agriculture/Staff Chair

JAC:jds

Photo Above: Washing sterilized pots at the greenhouse to get ready for potting plants in preparation of the Plant Sale March 16th.

Right: The Spirit Pole construction/design has begun. Pam, Robin, Gayle, Ralph, Samuel, Judith & Chelsea chose their design, and the work began.



4-States Ag Expo Volunteer Opportunities

Lots of Volunteer and Education hours are available at the Four States Ag Expo on Thursday, February 8th at the Four States Fairgrounds Entertainment Center.

Once again, the Master Gardeners will be helping the Extension Office with registration, assisting speakers, serving lunch, and anything else that comes up. The hours are from 7:00 a.m. with registration until the last class is over at 3:15 p.m.

Come for all day or part of the day – whatever works for you. You can get SANCTIONED Volunteer hours, or you can attend classes to receive Education hours or a combination of both. If you would like to help with this, please contact Teresa Slack.

A few of the educational classes you might be interested in include Native Plants for Pollinators, Growing Cucurbit Crops Successfully, Greenhouse Management, and Mushrooms in the Wild.

MONTHLY MEETING

**Thurs., Feb. 8 –
6:00 PM – REA**

**The County Extension
Office will be closed
February 19 in honor of
Presidents' Day! Have a
Happy Valentine's Day!**



President's Corner

By Rita Lamb

Hello there Master Gardeners. I hope you are looking forward to working with the Extension office at the 2024 Ag Expo coming February 8th. I am! And I am also looking forward to seeing all y'all hard at work. Remember that we will have our own Master Gardener meeting that night at 6:00 pm.

After the Expo, we will get to rest for a short time before getting ready for our own 2024 Miller County Plant Sale. I do know Tuesdays and Fridays will be our "Greenhouse Workdays". Let's get our gardening gloves and our plant knowledge ready. Remember we are having fun for a good cause. I look forward to working in the greenhouse and plant sale with each of you.

2024 is going to be a learning and fun time being a Master Gardener.

Until next month, let's be safe and have fun...and show being a Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardener is an awesome thing.

Membership Update

*By Pam Rayburn,
Membership Project Committee Co-Chair*

I want to take this opportunity to welcome each of our new members.

As an on-line manager this year, if you have any questions on entering your hours, feel free to call or email David or me:

Pamela Rayburn 903.490.1080
pkrayburn@gmail.com

David Waldroup 903-334-9451
dwaldroup@txk.net

I want to thank each member that has signed up for a project. We currently have 91 active members. 85 members have signed up for one or more projects. You can always volunteer on any other project that you haven't signed up on.

If you have any questions about a project, or how to sign up, you can call me, and I can give you the information about who to contact.

We want to give every member the opportunity to get the required hours to continue being a Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardener.

Dues are Due

If you haven't paid your annual dues, the cost is \$20. You can give it to Delita or bring to the Extension Office.

A Book Review Series on Joel Salatin's "Homestead Tsunami" Preface Part 1

By Sheryl Grieve

About a year ago I started hearing about this very interesting fella named Joel Salatin. First, as I googled the name, I read the title, "Lunatic Farmer". Wow I thought, what's that all about?

As I began checking out the resources of his various books, podcast, and YouTube videos, I certainly was impressed. The reason for the title, "Lunatic Farmer" was Joel took it from the media that calls him such.

You see, I was not raised on a farm and had little knowledge of butchering and my life consisted of store-bought foods such as big box store meats, etc. I didn't have any reason to think outside the box!!

However, many, according to this book, and including myself, were looking for alternatives to processed food and meats. We took interest in reading labels, and many times could not pronounce the ingredients.

So, this book piqued my interest as I determined to unplug from what I used to do and build my "Scratch Pantry". I was distressed as I researched and heard about "Crickets" in foods or "Fake Meats grown in Petri dishes" at the stores I used to frequent. I was so excited to learn about a company that ships grass-fed and grass-finished meats right to your door, kept frozen with dry ice.

As I research more, I have found more desirable resources, and it does my heart glad of the America pride found in the way "It used to be and still can be" or "What's not broken no need to fix."

The Texas Redheaded Centipede

By Andrea Thomas



I was scrolling thru Facebook and found this interesting. I have never seen one, probably because they are nocturnal. During the day they are usually hiding out in a leaf pile, under rocks, or decaying logs. Should you uncover one, you might want to be careful because they are venomous and known for being confrontational. The sting will hurt for an hour or so and is comparable to a bee sting. There are no deaths recorded for anyone that has been stung.

They are common across Texas and can also be found in parts of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, and Missouri.

They are good to have around because they like to eat. Known to have a huge appetite, they eat all types of insects and have been known to feed

on lizards, toads, snakes, and even rodents.

They are the largest centipede in North America. They average about 6.5 inches long but can get as large as 9 to 12 inches long. They have 21 or 23 pairs of legs.

The mothers are fiercely protective of their babies. Once she lays a clutch of eggs, the mother will curl around them. Probably to help keep them clean from mold, fungus, or anything that could damage the eggs. Once they hatch, the mother stays close by until the little centipedes crawl off. Their life span isn't well-studied, but estimates range from five to ten years.



Felder Rushing at Friends & Flowers Garden Club Presentation

By Christy Worsham, Edited by Judy Morgan

Felder Rushing blended folksy ways and fun to encourage area gardeners to follow their bliss during his speaking event in Magnolia, Arkansas on Saturday, Jan. 27, hosted by the Magnolia, AR-based Friends and Flowers Garden Club.

Nine Miller County Red Dirt Master Gardeners attended the internationally acclaimed horticulturist, author, and Mississippi Public Radio host's presentation. He also has The Gestalt Gardener blog/website and podcast.

Felder told the crowd the word "garden" comes from a root word meaning a guarded place. It's a place special to a gardener for his/her labors of love & nurturing of beauty, plants and tranquility. A primary element in Felder's Mississippi garden is a "big, thick, hairy rope you have to touch" to get to his backyard cabin. Upon arriving at his

garden, he fist bumps the rope as a signal he is home and in the special space he created.

He spends about half his time in Jackson, MS & the other half in England, from which he had returned just days before the speaking event in Magnolia.

Gardening is about cultivating and selecting plants, but also about collecting special treasures and items to place in the garden, he said.

One of his prized possessions is Granny's concrete chicken. His maternal grandmother's husband gave it to her as an anniversary gift. Felder has fond memories of Granny and her zinnias and all she taught him about gardening. The chicken accompanies Felder on the speaking circuit & appears in photos he takes with fans.

Continued on page 5

The Evolution of a Garden: Sun to Shade

By Annette Lachowsky

When we first bought our home in Texarkana about seven years ago, the previous owners had done a little landscaping in the front of the house. They had planted two crape myrtles right up under the eave of the house on each corner. I didn't know which variety they were, but I could tell they were not going to be dwarf since they were already about five feet tall.

We created our first flower bed in a corner of the back yard and dug up the crape myrtles and moved them in to their new home. The previous owners also had planted daylilies all across the front of the house. We dug those up and moved them between the crape myrtles in the new bed.

For the first three or four years the daylilies filled the bed with beautiful orange flowers. However, the crape myrtles turned out to probably be the 'Natchez' variety and are now at least twelve feet tall. They have beautiful trunks and arching branches and meet in the middle of the bed. 'Natchez' can grow over twenty feet tall.

Needless to say, the daylilies which prefer full sun are not so vigorous anymore. I have been digging them up and washing the native soil off and plan to pot them up for the plant sale. Now, I am in the market for some azaleas and perhaps some hostas and am quite excited to have a shade garden.

A lot of gardening mistakes can be rectified with a sharp shovel and a willing back!

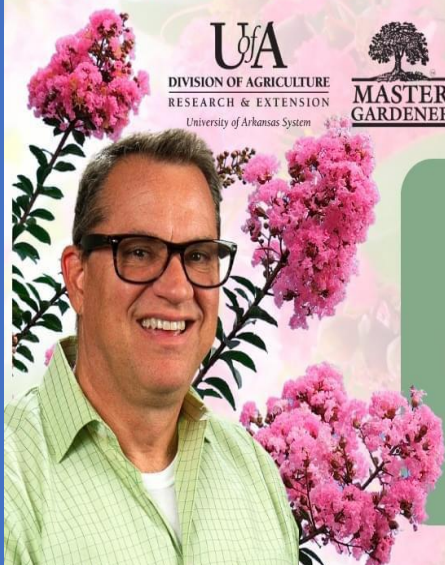


Working at the Greenhouse: Annette, Pam, Paul & Chead standing next to Pam's homemade compost sifter made from an old clothes dryer. It made the work go much quicker and easier. Renovation and innovation is at work.

CAPE MYRTLE CARE & PRUNING WORKSHOP

led by Randy Forst, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist

February 27th
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



U of A
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

MASTER
GARDENER

presented by the Hempstead Co.
Master Gardeners at the
Hempstead Co. Extension Office:
1800 E. 3rd. St., Hope

\$10 PER PERSON
includes lunch!

Pre-register and pay by 2/22 to
reserve your spot. For info call 870-
777-5771.

Will be classroom and hands-on
learning so dress accordingly!

Felder Rushing Continued

Felder is also widely recognized for his truck bed garden consisting of tomato and pepper plants, among others. Felder said it took trial and error to determine which plants would survive 81 mph winds. The truck bed garden is complete with signs and decorations.

A recurring theme in Felder's gardenscapes are bottle trees. He has several in his garden and has written a book about them.

These examples show the world of gardening is a big tent and Felder pitched ideas for attendees to think about how they might create a personalized look in their gardens.

"It is about finding your gardening bliss," he told the crowd.

According to Felder, about 90% of the native plants in Arkansas, Louisiana & Mississippi can also be grown in England, where plants that are taken for granted here are considered fine garden specimens.

He pointed out the USDA Hardiness Zone Map, which was recently updated, is a concept that isn't too helpful as it only considers low temps. It does not however consider drought, heat, or humidity.

Some plants for our area that he is fond of include:

--Larkspur, which his grandmother grew, and it looks like a rabbit from a particular vantage point

--Asters and Goldenrod, which are top pollinators during an Arkansas fall.

--Calloway crabapple

--Coreopsis

--Crinum, or the Milk and Wine Lily

Others he mentioned as favorites are:

--Amsonia, also known as Blue Star, which is native to Arkansas;

--Garden Chrysanthemums;

--Peggy Martin Rose;

--Butterfly Rose

He also discussed Passalong Plants, which is the title of a book he co-authored several years ago. Passalong plants are those that are commonly grown but will not be found for sale in garden centers. They are passed along among friends and neighbors through cuttings and seeds with the understanding that verbally thanking a fellow gardener for such a gift is bad luck.

Some Southern passalong plants include:

--Four o' Clocks

--Wild Agerarum

--Tawny Daylily

--Angel's Trumpet

--Castor Bean

In closing, he urged those in attendance to just say no to grass. Gardens can be at their peak in January and February if we look for plants that do well in our climate during that time.

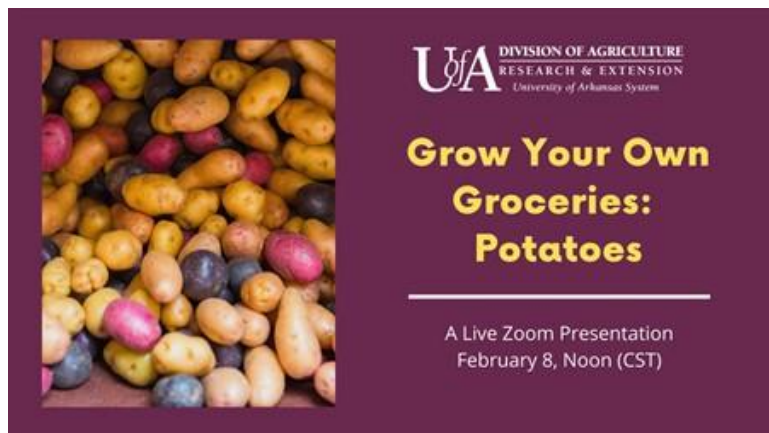
Also, consider yard art, a split rail fence to use as a trellis, or an old wagon wheel to ground and provide continuity to your plantings.

He reminded people of his affinity for glass and holding it up to the sky so its colors can sing.

Some may collect and display birdhouses, others may spray paint dead plants for an unique effect.

But it's about becoming our own brand and style of DIY -- Determined Independent Gardeners.





Join us via zoom on February 8th at noon to learn how to grow healthy, nutritious food in your own backyard and get some tips for new ways to cook and prepare your harvest. In this presentation, you will learn how to grow and cook potatoes.

Register below and a link to join the meeting will be emailed to you: <http://bit.ly/483860W>

Submit your photos for the 2025 MG Calendar!

Now is the perfect time to start collecting your winter photos. Start sending them today. Please email your photos to: mwilbanks3@gmail.com

Deadline to submit photos is Friday, June 21, 2024.

For more information contact the County Extension office or Mike Wilbanks at mwilbanks3@gmail.com.

Developing an Ozarks Green Thumb

You are invited to attend Developing an Ozarks Green Thumb event held March 2, 2024, from 8:00-3:00 at First Baptist Church Christian Life Center, 1205 Spring St., Mountain Home, AR. Cost is \$35 and includes lunch.

Register here:

http://uada.formstack.com/forms/ozarks_green_thumb

Event includes horticulture table, silent auction of garden-themed items, and MG project displays. Snacks and drinks provided.

Featured Speaker:
C. Colston Burrell
 Lecturer, Garden Designer, Award Winning Author and Photographer
"Nature as Gardener: Working with Natural Process for Beauty and Reduced Maintenance"

Janet Carson
 Former State Consumer Horticulture/MG Coordinator and Tour Guide and Blogger for Plan It Janet
"Preparing for the Season Ahead"

Brad Runick
 Baxter County Extension Agent and Staff Chair
"Cankers, Rots, Lesions, and Spots: Managing Plant Diseases in the South"

Randy Forst
 State Consumer Horticulture/MG Coordinator
"Some Like It Hot: Plants That Do Well in the Heat"




Limited seating! Registration has begun. Scan the QR code to register.



2024 is a big election year! Get the latest unbiased news and other important information from our Public Policy Center: Sign up for our newsletter at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/hKfldT7>