

2024 Officers

President: Rita Lamb
Vice-President: Ralph Robertson
Treasurer: Delita Lusk
Secretary: Sondra Bedwell



January 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: Passing the Torch to the New Officials at the December Meeting. See more photos on page 3.

Right: Photo by Clyde Davis of the first bloom of 2024. Wishing each of you a Happy New Year!



December Monthly Meeting

By Andrea Thomas

We had a wonderful Christmas party. The minute you walked in you were in awe of the beautiful decorations.

Everyone got a Head Elf, made by Delita. We had a great dinner. During the dinner, Betty & Karen drew names for door prizes. Next, everyone competed to see who could draw the best Christmas tree. One catch, you were drawing on top of your head.

Chead then passed the torch to the new officers & Jennifer swore them into office, making it official. We sang a couple of Christmas songs, then new president Rita Lamb ended the meeting. It was a great time. (See more photos on page 3)



MONTHLY MEETING

**Thurs., Jan. 11 –
6:00 PM – REA**

**We hope your Christmas
was wonderful and wish
you a Happy New Year!**

President's Corner

Well, it's 2024! New Year with a new MCRDMG President. I hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas and got lots of gardening gifts. I also hope each of you had a great New Year.

It is that time of year when we are looking at seed catalogs, getting our garden plans together, and making sure our garden tools are ready. And it is also that time of year that we will be getting our committees together and setup, along with our chairmen for those sanctioned committees. Remember, we must have a chairman for each sanctioned committee, or the committee goes away. So be thinking of chairmen for these committees.

I want to thank each of you for honoring me with being your 2024 President. If you think of something you need to discuss, do not hesitate to contact me.

Rita Lamb, President

Dues are Due

Please mail your dues to the Extension Office, 1007 Jefferson Ave., Texarkana AR 71854, or bring to the January 11th meeting and give to Delita Lusk.

Seedlings: – you are paid for the 2024 year.

Per By-Laws: "Membership dues are to be paid by the first month of the calendar year (January). If dues are not paid by January 31st, they will increase by an additional \$5 for Feb. (\$20), and an additional \$5 for March (\$25). If dues are not paid by March 31st, membership will cease."

Online Reporting System – In With the New

By Andrea Thomas

2023 has passed and 2024 is in, so it is time for "out with the old", which is Rita and I (Andrea) and "in with the new", which is David and Pamela. Rita and I are retiring as your online managers and David and Pamela have gracefully taken on the position of your new online managers. Of course, Rita and I will always try to help if we can, but David & Pamela are your new contacts.

Contact them: David Waldroup–txkrunner60@gmail.com. 903-334-9451 & Pamela Rayburn–pkrayburn@gmail.com – 903-490-1080.

Miller County 4-H Banquet Needs Volunteers

We are needing a few volunteers to help serve food at our Miller County 4-H Awards Banquet, February 15th at 6 p.m. We will also have a silent auction and would appreciate donations. All proceeds benefit the local 4-H activities. If you would like to volunteer, please RSVP by February 1st so we can make sure we have enough food.

Support the 2024 'Spirit Pole' Project

County 76 invites you to participate in the 2024 Spirit Pole project. This is your chance to represent your county in a fun, personal and collaborative way! These unique Spirit Poles will be displayed at the 2024 Master Gardener State Conference in Hot Springs for all to enjoy. Their purpose is to inspire gardening 'Spirit' through creativity, goodwill and involvement of your county. Any individual may also make a spirit pole to put in the auction.

A spirit pole is a handcrafted garden monument that reflects your personal style & message of community spirit. It should reflect your county and its unique beauty.

Inspiration can come from many sources like books or magazines, or by searching for peace poles or garden art totems. Let your creative juices flow. Instructions here : www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/county-76/fundraising.aspx. Each entry must complete a Participation Form by February 29, 2024, found here: https://uada.formstack.com/forms/spirit_pole



Twig Girdler

By Andrea Thomas

Have you ever seen twigs on the ground that look like someone had sawed them off the tree? Well your tree has probably been attached by twig girdlers. I have a mimosa that is hit every year. Whenever there is a high wind or storm in the fall I always find a lot of small limbs on the ground that look like they have been sawed off.



These beetles are $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, light to dark brown with a wide gray band across the wing covers (elytra) and a dense sprinkling of pink, orange or dark yellow spots **and** they have long antennae.

Adults appear from late August through October. After mating, females select a host plant, chewing a clean-cut "V"-shaped groove around a branch. Thereafter, they crawl above the girdled site and insert cream-colored oval eggs singly into notches chewed into the bark. Larvae hatch from eggs in about 7 days and begin tunneling underneath the bark. Larvae grow through several stages (instars) through the year before transforming into pupae the following summer. A few of the larvae do not complete development until May or June of the second year, which accounts for a small amount of girdling damage occurring in the spring.

Mouthparts are for chewing. Twig girdlers attack citrus, elm, hackberry, hickory, mimosa, pecan, persimmon, red oak, Texas ebony, walnut, and various fruit trees. Twigs selected by female beetles to girdle range in diameter from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Damage appears mainly in late summer and fall when adult beetles are active. Leaves on the girdled branches turn, die, and fall, and the branches often fall from the tree during high winds and storms. Beetles are not commonly encountered on trees. Larvae feed inside the dead injured tree part and are not a threat to tree health.

December Monthly Meeting Photos



Above: Line for Meal



Above: Singing Songs



Right & Above Right: Playing the Christmas Tree Art Game was Lots of Fun!



Right: Head Elf Ornaments to Take Home for Everyone



2024 Master Gardener State Conference



Get ready to visit Hot Springs where you can experience the historic bathhouse row and the beauty of Hot Springs National Park during our 2024 Master Gardener Conference. It will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The host hotel – The Hotel Hot Springs, 305 Malvern Avenue – is located 3 minutes from the convention center. For reservations call 1-877-623-6697 and clicking or typing in this link: <http://bit.ly/48MJqLO>. Be sure to use the code GARDEN24. The Hotel Hot Springs' rate is \$124 plus tax for two queen beds or one king. This includes a complimentary breakfast buffet. These rates are available for nights of May 29 – May 31, 2024. Last day to book for this rate is May 7, 2024, or until conference block is full.

PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR

Pre-conference is scheduled for Thursday, May 30th from 8:00 – 5:00. The first stop will be Garvan Woodland Gardens which is an amazing place to visit. Your tour will include a behind the scenes look at the greenhouse with the garden

staff and how it benefits the garden and Anthony Chapel. You will then visit the garden at your leisure. Box lunches will be provided by the Chipmunk Café.

Next, the tour will take you to a new business in Hot Springs: Origami Sake. The facility is equipped with a solar array for electricity, a deep water well, and Arkansas grown rice to produce their products. This is a true dedication to sustainability, which is so important to the environment. You will have a full tour of the facility from the Origami staff. This will be a fun stop.

The final stop of the day will be the Fordyce Bathhouse and Visitors Center. This part of the tour will be led by a National Park Ranger. They will talk about the “hot springs” and the long history of the bathhouse. It will take you back in time with the history of the work out area to the beautiful parlors that were offered in the day.

The pre-conference tour will cover all your senses. Spaces are limited for the pre-conference tour so be sure to register promptly once the registration is available on February 15, 2024.

Advanced MG Training Class: Seeds: Saving, Heirloom & Culture

Join Pulaski County Master Gardeners for their Advanced MG Training Class via Zoom on January 24th from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. This webinar is a blended training. This means that it is both open to Master Gardeners and all our fellow growers. This training will also serve as Advanced education from County 76. We will have a video presentation of Deeply Rooted John Coykendall's Journey to Save Our Seeds and Stories. Guest Speakers: Michael Washburn, Seed Savers Preservation Director and Dr. Virginia Nazaarea, Memory Banking: Linking Cultural and Agricultural Diversity.

Only MGs who have completed their first year of volunteer hours (first 40) may register under advanced training. Select YES for advanced training when registering if you want this to be considered advanced training. **To register click here:**

https://uada.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlpdO-tpjssH93kfRLP_FUTa_Mh-vE3IS-k#/registration. For any questions, contact Derek Reed at dreed@uada.edu or call 501-340-6650.

Changes to Master Gardener Advanced Training Requirements

First year Master Gardeners who have completed their 40 hours of volunteer work and their 20 hours of education are qualified to participate in all Advanced Training seminars. All MGs in good standing are qualified to participate in all Advanced Training seminars.