

## 2023 Officers

President: Chead Blue  
Vice-President: Rita Lamb  
Treasurer: Delita Lusk  
Secretary: Sandra Jackson



November 2023

# 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](mailto: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

**Top:** MGs stop for a photo opp.

**Right:** Trainees examine the Come Grow With Us Garden at Gateway Farmers Mkt. during field trip.

Photos by Clyde Davis



L to R: Marianne Mason, Chelsea Claybrook, Maxine Royston, Kristina Houston, Michael Johnson, Samuel Jefferson & Bethanie Bullock

Online trainees (not pictured) are Justin Bullock, Tina Cunningham, Cindy Ford, Larry Ford, Sheryl Grieve, Matthew Nix and Wendy Reed.

## MONTHLY MEETING

**Thurs., November 9  
6:00 PM – REA**

There will be no speaker for November's meeting.

**We will be electing officers for 2024.**

## New Officer Elections & Financial Updates

While there is not a program, there is a lot going on at the Nov. MG Monthly Meeting. Officer elections are on the agenda so be sure to come out and vote. Also, new financial guidelines have been released that will affect the way we conduct business. We don't have a lot of details because this is new to us as well, but we will be available to answer any questions we are able. We hope to have Randy come delve into more detail in the coming months.

## President's Corner

This year's Basic Training passed the halfway point October 25, 2023, and it has been well-received so far. The attendees seem to have been enjoying and taking real interest in this year's training.

We are also nearing the end of another year of the growing season and it's time to get our hours in for 2023. If you have earned hours & haven't entered them, now is the time to do so. If you have trouble entering your hours, contact Andrea Thomas for help. We don't want to lose anyone for lack of hours entered. There is still some time to earn hours. We will be making a new bed at the Extension Office.

This month will be election of officers and there will not be a program. Most of all the projects are in good shape going into the fall season. This month's meeting will be November 9<sup>th</sup> at the REA building. Hope to see you all there.

*Chead Blue, President*

## New MG Basic Training Manuals

As you may know, this year the Arkansas Master Gardener Program began using a new MG book for Basic Training. We realize many current Master Gardeners may wish to purchase this new book to replace their 3-ring binders.

Our plan is to order more books in December.

Once we have a list gathered, we will submit one big order. The State Office will not accept individual or county checks for payment; only one internal county payment. When the books are ready for pickup (most likely this will be in January 2024), we will pick them up and let you know they are ready either at the following MG Monthly Meeting or in our office.

The cost of these manuals is \$50. If you would like to order one, please let me know by December 1, 2023. Call 870-779-3609 or email [jsmallwood@uada.edu](mailto:jsmallwood@uada.edu) if you would like to order one. Payment is due at time of pickup. If you haven't already seen the books, they are quite nice.

## Trainees at *Come Grow With Us* Garden

*By Christy Worsham with Photo by Clyde Davis*

Mitchell Dudley, a designer with H&N Landscaping demonstrated to Miller Co. Master Gardener Trainees best practices on potting houseplants during a recent field trip. The demonstration was conducted at the newly constructed gazebo honoring the late and beloved Charlotte Fuller, a retired educator & Master Gardener.



## Pesticide Applicator Training

Applying pesticides requires education & training to assure safe and effective use. If you are interested in obtaining a license or if you need to renew an existing one, join us November 14, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Miller County Extension Office Classroom, 1007 Jefferson Avenue, Texarkana, AR. Cost is **\$20** for the training plus **\$45** for the license (license is good for 5 years). Pre-registration is not required. Call with questions.



## Volunteer Online Reporting

By Andrea Thomas

Currently 66 members have placed hours in: Sanctioned hours: 4037, Non sanctioned hours: 254.25 and Education hours: 1813.75. 50 of the 66 have enough hours to be recertified. 16 are still needing more hours for recertification. Then there are 30 with zero hours. The **DEADLINE** for reporting your hours is **December 15<sup>th</sup>**. Don't get caught needing hours at the last minute!

Our top 3 on volunteer hours (sanctioned & non-sanctioned combined) are Chead Blue with 507.25 hours, Doug McBride with 331 hours, and Ralph Robertson with 285.75 hours. **Great Job!**

Remember: **ALL** of your hours are important and needed to keep MG programs going. Your hours help get grants for MG programs. State does reports during the year that show how many hours you have worked, so do not wait; get your hours in.

If you have any questions or need help reporting your hours, please contact Rita or myself. You can call/text me at 972-322-9866, or email [at7550@yahoo.com](mailto:at7550@yahoo.com) or call/ text Rita at 903-748-5601, or email [eaglepts2@gmail.com](mailto:eaglepts2@gmail.com). We will do our best to help. Please contact Rita or me first for help and not State.

## What's Next for Trainees

By Christy Worsham

We have 16 trainees in our Basic Training this fall. The healthy number of trainees continues to reflect a strong interest in gardening.

The annual training for new members is 40 hours and encompasses best practices in: lawn care, ornamental trees, soil & plant nutrition, pest management, & growing fruits, vegetables, and houseplants.

Once trainees complete the course, they volunteer for 40 hours next year on Master Gardener approved projects that include:

- Miller County Courthouse Garden beds,
- the Pollinator and Come Grow With Us gardens on Gateway Farmers Market grounds,
- or preparation for and working at the Annual Plant Sale in early spring at the Four States Fairgrounds.

Volunteer hours are required of all certified Master Gardeners each year.

This year, nine are enrolled in the in-person courses spanning five days and seven are enrolled in the online delivery option.

## Grow Your Own Groceries Series

Join us November 14<sup>th</sup> for the latest Zoom presentation: *Grow Your Own Groceries: Pecans*. Learn how to grow pecans in your own backyard as well as tips for new ways to store, cook & prepare them. Click the link below to register. A link will then be emailed to you to join: <https://shorturl.at/mtRUZ>

Presentation begins at noon on November 14<sup>th</sup>.



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

### Grow Your Own Groceries: Pecans

A Live Zoom Presentation  
November 14, Noon

## Courthouse Bed Beautifying



Thanks to the efforts of many of our MGs, the Miller County Courthouse beds have never been more beautiful. Here are photos of a couple of workdays in September.



# Joe Lamp'l Guest Speaker at 35<sup>th</sup> Arkansas MG Birthday Celebration

By Christy Worsham

Biodiversity, ecological gardening & careful choices can make our ecosystem and outdoor experiences better, National television gardening host & author Joe Lamp'l told Arkansas MGs on Oct. 13.

Lamp'l was the guest speaker at the Arkansas MGs 35th Birthday Party held in Little Rock. It was his second time in The Natural State.



SW AR was well represented at the Arkansas MG 35th Birthday Party in Little Rock. Standing l to r: Rita Lamb, Sondra Bedwell & Rebecca McKamie. Seated l to r: Rita Nichols, Gayle Renfro & Sharon Lansford. All are Miller Co. MGs, except McKamie, who is a Hempstead Co. MG. Also in attendance, but not pictured, were MGRDMG Theresa Mitzler, Christy Worsham and Christy's husband, Preston.

He urged gardeners to be on the front lines of making positive changes to help our planet and survival. Dramatic & troubling changes occurring over the last few decades, he said, include:

--45 percent of orthopods have been lost in the last 35 years. We are dependent on their survival for our survival,

--3 billion birds have vanished in the last 35 years,

--two-thirds of wildlife have disappeared as a result of deforestation, urban expansion and poaching,

--and the Monarch Butterfly population has dropped by 90 percent in the last 25 years.

Widespread pesticide factors into these stark changes.

Lamp'l suggested an Integrated Pest Management approach with five basic steps:

- 1) Confirm the suspect insect is a pest as several insects are similar in color, shape, and appearance.
- 2) Positive identification is key.
- 3) Monitor pest activity. Most plants can sustain a 35 percent damage rate before being permanently damaged.
- 4) Explore management options starting with the least impactful. These tactics may include hand removing the pests or a barrier, such as netting.
- 5) Evaluate the results.

Also, he urged gardeners to practice ecological gardening by:

- A. Promoting healthy soil by investing in a quality product and amending with compost.
- B. Healthy soil promotes healthy plants and healthy plants aren't as attractive to pests.
- C. Increase use of living and natural mulches. If there is no mulch, the soil becomes hard like concrete. A two-inch layer of mulch helps create a moisture barrier that protects plants from excessive heat and cold.

*Continued on next page*



## MG Birthday Celebration Continued

- D. Maintain the garden and surrounding area with a light footprint. Birds feed on seed heads and the hollow perennial stems make a good place for bees to overwinter.

Also, leave the leaves on the ground instead of raking them. Leaves provide a place for wildlife to be safe and have shelter. However, some leaves can be shred for leaf mulch. Lamp'I said leaves are Mother Nature's gift to gardeners.

- E. Eliminate the use of chemicals as they can kill more than the pest. For instance, a bird that eats an insect with pesticides in it could be harmed or die.
- F. Conserve and use water wisely through drip irrigation, using timers for watering and making water available in birdbaths and ponds for frogs.
- G. Grow native plants, which offers year-round support for wildlife. Lamp'I said it would be ideal to have 70 percent of native plants in a gardenscape/landscape.
- H. Reduce the lawn area to ratio of 50 percent lawn and 50 percent native plants.
- I. Remove invasives from the landscape and make an intentional choice not to buy them.
- J. Promote biodiversity by having plants that attract pollinators. Ensure there is a variety of native plants so insects with different mouth parts can access the plants. Pollinators are known to have tube-like, chewing & lapping mouth parts.
- K. Think beyond the garden and keep things out of the landfill. For instance, use cardboard in the garden and lessen the amount of single-use plastic bottles.

Finally, Lamp'I suggested several apps/websites to help in the garden:

--Picture Insect app for identification

--iNaturalist--plant ID app for Apple and Android.

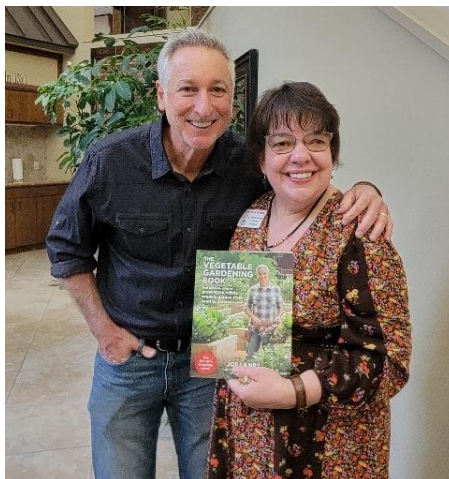
--Google Lens for plant and insect identification.

--[xerces.org](http://xerces.org)

--[butterfliesandmoths.org](http://butterfliesandmoths.org)

--[monarchwatch.org](http://monarchwatch.org)

**Right:** MCRDMG Christy Worsham got to meet & visit with Joe Lamp'I & Janet Carson at the Arkansas MG 35th Birthday Celebration.



## Aphids

by Andrea Thomas

If you planted fall greens, one of the insects to be on the lookout for is Aphids. They can get out of control very quickly because of how rapidly they can reproduce. Aphids are born pregnant and can change sex if they need to.

- Small, soft bodied.
- Also known as plant lice.
- Adults can be winged or wingless.
- Immatures are smaller without wings.
- Give birth to live young.
- Suck plant sap.
- Cause stunting and leaf curl.
- Leave honeydew deposits.





## More Basic Training Photos

Our “seasoned” Master Gardeners have really done an outstanding job making our trainees feel welcomed and to answer any questions they might have. Here are a few more photos from the first 3 weeks of training.



## It's Pansy Season

It's pansy season and who doesn't love the cheerful faces & delightful scent of pansies. A common and serious disease of many field crops & ornamentals such as pansies is Black Root Rot.

Cotton, soybean, peanut, begonia, fuchsia, cyclamen, geranium, gerbera, gloxinia, holly, pansy, petunia, phlox, poinsettia, sweet pea, verbena, & violets are some crops commonly infected. It is a soil-borne pathogen that can survive in the soil many years because the fungus forms thick-walled survival spores called chlamydospores.

Above-ground symptoms are stunting, wilting, yellowing, and plant death. When roots are examined, they have small black flecks containing the chlamydospores. When infection is severe, the entire root may look black.

Sanitation in the greenhouse is essential. Soil & pots should not be re-used. Monthly drenches of fungicides such as Insignia, Alude, & Compass are helpful in control if the disease is not too severe. The best control for homeowners is strict sanitation.



*Pansy Black Root Rot – *Berkeleyomyces basicola*, Photo by Sherrie Smith, UADA.*

**Right:** Note the black sections of roots. Photo by OSU Plant Clinic Collection

