

GARDEN VOICE



COUNTY 76 NEWSLETTER

3rd Quarter 2023 July 2023

Volume 27, Number 3

[LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT](#)

I am writing to you later than I normally do, taking time to attend a successful Plant, Nurture, Grow (PNG) Leadership Conference in Hot Springs. The PNG Conference is a strong reminder of all the opportunities for learning and growing together we have had this year.

2023 has been a busy and challenging year, but it has also been a year full of events for Arkansas Master Gardeners. Randy Forst and Julie Treat, our County Extension Agents and Master Gardener leaders across the state continue to work hard to bring us opportunities to learn, and many times we have chances to purchase plants and gardening items.

Our annual Master Gardener State Conference, this year in Russellville, was a wonderful educational experience, plus we raised money for our Janet B. Carson High School Senior and County Project Scholarships. Our silent and virtual auctions are always fun filled!

Our Plant, Nurture, Grow Leadership Conference was an excellent place to ask questions and get answers. Presenters were leaders with current updates for us. Our new Advanced Training System was shared for the first time (and well received:) Our Fundraising Project sponsored Opportunity Tables with great items which raised money to contribute to the expenses of County 76. If you were not able to attend, you missed a raffle for dinner at Randy Forst's family farm – ten lucky attendees will be participating:) Many people I spoke with were enjoying the sessions and taking notes.

I have had some wonderful personal experiences this year as I have been able to attend several of the county garden shows and plant sales. Can you really attend those and not get more plants? Those I purchased have done so well I plan to go back in 2024 for more plants. Plants I purchased elsewhere were not as successful. Going to the sales has afforded me the opportunity to meet and visit with Master Gardeners and encourage them to attend a County 76 meeting. Of course, you can also meet individuals (non-Master Gardeners) who are waiting to be invited or want to know how to become a Master Gardener. They were just waiting for someone to offer them an opportunity.

I encourage you to take the opportunity to go to some of the events sponsored by our counties if you can.

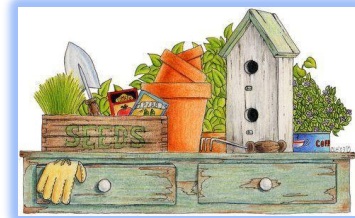
I must take the time to comment on the wonderful leaders who make our work so successful. We continue to see County 76 Project Chairs and Co-Chairs and many county officers who are the best leaders because they are organized and supportive, but it seems they are communicators first. They contact everyone who is an active member – and others who may not have been active recently. This makes everyone feel they are important and needed.

Our County 76 Second Vice President, Brenda Anderson, has resigned from her position. We wish her the best and hope she returns, until then we will miss her and her excellent input of County 76. Until we choose officers for 2024, our First Vice President, Becky Gibson, will cover the duties of the Second Vice President.

The next time we meet, I hope you have an interesting Master Gardener opportunity story to share.

May you have a Blessed Day and Happy Gardening,

Kay Roberts, President



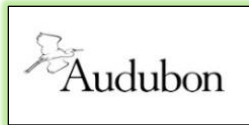
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

~Business~

- At the Arkansas State Extension Office, the July quarterly membership and project meeting of County 76 began when Kay Roberts, President, called the meeting to order.
- Minutes for the County 76 April 25, 2023, Membership Meeting were written and emailed to members for review by Darlene McGuire, Secretary. The minutes were approved for filing by the members.
- Gail McClure presented the County 76 Financial Report for the 2nd Quarter of 2023, April 1 through June 30, 2023. Gail gave the details of income and expenses in both our County 76 CES and private accounts. Our private account bank balance as of 6/30/23 was \$45,213.85. The CES account bank balance as of 6/30/23 was \$66,802.94. Total funds for both accounts as of 6/30/23 were \$112,016.79.
- Randy Forst, State Master Gardener Coordinator, shared information on current statewide activities.
 - Randy welcomed new members to County 76. He thanked Pope County for the State Conference.

- He commented on the great program that A-P put on and thanked the RRR project members. For the Annuals-Perennials program, 250 new members and mentors across the state attended. The special event was amazing, RRR did an excellent job.
- PNG is coming up the 4th and 5th of August. It is open to all Master Gardeners in Arkansas. There are already almost 100 registered, and registration is open until July 28. There is no limit per county who can attend. Thank you to chairman Rose Ann Houston. There will be a Hosta giveaway, with a wide variety of Hostas to be available.
- There will be an online training class for the fall, October 2 to December 8. The cost will be \$125.00 plus cost of dues, badge, tee shirt additional.
- There will be Zoom classroom training on Wednesdays 8:00 – 4:30 Oct. 11, 25, Nov. 1, 8, and 15. Cost will be \$75.00 plus dues, badge, and tee shirt.
- Julie will be sending the training application out to all agents.
- The training manual to be used is the Southeast Garden training manual from the North Carolina Extension Garden Handbook. It can be viewed online. You may preview the new Southeast Master Gardener Training Manual at <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook>. This manual is also used by five other states for Master Gardener Basic Training. NCSU is responsible for all updates and has licensed a Southeast Master Gardener Training Manual to the University of Arkansas. Randy hopes the new printed manuals with color images will be available by September for this fall's Basic Training options.
- The Southeast Master Gardener Basic Training Manual will be available to all Arkansas Master Gardeners for \$50.00
- *Save the Date* – October 13, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Arkansas Master Gardener Appreciation Day at the St. James United Methodist Church. The cost will be \$35.00. The speaker will be Joe Lamp'l. This will be for Master Gardeners and agents only. There will be two seatings for lunch. Janet Carson will be the MC for both seatings, and Joe Lamp'l will speak at both seatings.
- Our 2024 Master Gardener State Conference “Springtime in the Springs 2024” will be May 30 – June 1, 2024, in Hot Springs, Garland County.
- The 2024 Master Gardener calendars are being set up. The spiral bound desk size will be ordered again this year.
- There will be a raffle at PNG: The item will be for 10 people on September 30, 10:00 to 2:00. It will be Lunch and a Tour with Randy at Ratcliff (his home and his family's farm). The tickets will be \$20.00 each and you must be present to win.

~Education~



Those who attended the July 2023 County 76 Membership Meeting were able to hear a presentation by Dr. Dan Scheiman, PhD. Dr. Scheiman is the Plants for Birds Program Manager for Audubon Delta.

He and his coworkers advocate for birds, restore wildlife habitat, promote the use of native plants, and help people improve their local environments. Dr. Scheiman moved to Little Rock in 2005. He proudly shares that his home in the Hillcrest community has an all-Arkansas native plant yard.

Dr. Scheiman began by sharing that he promotes the use of plants in home gardens, public gardens, and others. He supports bird-friendly practices leading to actions which benefit existing bird populations. He would like to have everyone leave with positive actions for this. He said a big 'thank you' to the Master Gardeners who have been and continue to be active in the work of landscaping, maintaining public gardens, and work at the Audubon Center on the monthly workdays.

Interesting facts were shared on the impact of our practices on the declining diversity of our bird populations. Since 1970, three (3) billion birds have been lost. Birds depend on native plants to support their life cycles as native plants are vital to native insects. This has been known as the 'insect apocalypse'. When native insects are no longer available, birds lose the ability to survive.

It has been noted that some hope for this situation arises as a common understanding of the need for native plants increases. When people learn the shocking facts of Monarchs in decline (for instance), many are convinced that they should plant milkweed. This awareness increases to other plants and insects in decline. Many times, beneficial actions follow.

There are numerous reasons for the loss of birds, bees, and others. One of them is the loss of habitats due to urbanization, commercial building, and housing development. As gardeners who care, we can be aware of the use of lawns. Lawns, as we enjoy them, are not places of good habitats with water. They may have shade trees or ornamental plants, but many also create dangers from the use of pesticides and fertilizers, etc. We should not celebrate our lawns as status symbols, but rather as a place we share with other wildlife; a place for birds to stop, rest and refuel. This can be in the city or in the woods.

We can create bird-friendly places with native plants, shrubs, and flowers to provide cover and shelter with additional benefits. Carbon usage can be reduced while supporting climate change. We can reduce heat and see clean air and water. Our properties must be both beautiful and functional.

Dr. Scheiman said we can have the right plant in the right place to see the desired ecological benefits. It is known that native plants and native insects are evolutionarily tied to the survival of bird populations. We know that 96% of land birds feed their young

on insects. They don't feed on fruits or seeds but go for the insects to provide proper nutrition.

Seeking an increase in diverse plant and bird populations, we can find ourselves going in the wrong direction. We must properly use biological controls. This means reducing our pesticide use, researching organic alternatives. Without thoughtful pesticide application, humans and animals can be harmed. Learn and guard against highly invasive plants. Our yards should not be a reservoir for invasive plants. We must work to reduce them. Also, it is important to remember the benefits of leaves. Fallen leaves (in proper form) are free mulch. They are shelter for insects, as well as nutrients for our soil.

Dr. Scheiman shared resources for this work. He encouraged Master Gardeners to take advantage of the influence they possess as they work with others. He told of the work of his newly created Native Plant Coalition.

Members asked about Native Plant Sales in Arkansas. Dr. Scheiman shared that the Audubon Society has a fall and spring sale. This year's sale will be on September 25 with pick-up on October 5, 6, & 7. Also, locations and dates for Master Gardener Sales were shared. These sales are advertised online. Pine Ridge Gardens in London AR (close to Russellville) is a major native plant source for us.

Dr. Scheiman asked about Master Gardeners promoting best practices. He heard quite a bit about our Rain Gardens, Rain Barrels, and Pollinator Gardens 😊 Further discussion included Master Naturalists, increasing the availability of native plants, community ordinances, and others. For more: email dan.scheiman@audubon.org



Digital Bird Free Clipart

THE PROJECT PATCH

Advanced Training (AT) Project Meeting Report

Chair: John Hiegel (Craighead Co.) Co-chair: Joellen Beard (Pulaski Co.)

The following information was shared about the new Advanced Training System.

- Ten pages of changes to Advanced Training will be coming from Julie Treat.
- MGs need to keep their own Advanced Training hours and keep their records from year to year.

- After 40 hours of Basic Training and earning 40 hours of volunteer time, new MGs/Trainees may participate in Basic Training.
- Each previously earned Advanced Training Course = 8 hours of credit in the new Advanced Training system.
- 30 hours is required for each level of Advanced Training under the new system.
- Each Advanced Training Course under the new system must last at least one hour.
- The first Advanced Training Course offering will be a *Gardening School/Master Gardener Advanced Training (Course 1/Series 1)* at the Marion 1st Baptist Church. Training will be on Friday, September 22, 2023, from 8:30 to 3:45. Training continues Saturday, September 23, 2023, from 9:00 to 3:15. The training is a collaborative effort of the Crittenden County Master Gardeners, the Hughes Town & Country Garden Club, and the Arkansas Federation of Garden Clubs. Topics covered will be Basic Botany, Plant Propagation (hands-on workshop), Soils, Techniques for Growing Outdoor Flowers, and Herbs. Janet Carson and Randy Forst are among the presenters. For Arkansas Master Gardeners who are qualified to earn Advanced Training hours, this will be an opportunity to earn ten (10) hours credit in two (2) days.

Fundraising Project Meeting Report

Chair: Patsy Louk (Washington Co.) Co-chair: Susan Colles (Pope Co.)

- 2023 AR MG Conference virtual auction raised \$5,305. The silent auction raised \$4,966. Expenses were \$509.72, resulting in a profit of \$9,491.28.
- Our Fundraising Project will sponsor Opportunity Tables at the Plant, Nurture, Grow Leadership Conference on August 4 and 5, 2023.

Media Relations

Media Manager: Mike Wilbanks

- We have had 277 entries submitted for the 2024 Arkansas Master Gardener Calendar. This is a 56% increase from 2023 entries.
- The 2024 calendar will be available in spiral desktop and full-size flat versions (wall calendar).
- Arkansas Master Gardener photographers continue to set the pace for their unbelievable skillsets in photographing their plants.
- Three (3) new, qualified individuals have accepted the challenge as judges for the 2024 calendar.
- Mike Wilbanks shared, "I have been allowed to see many different Master Gardener photographic submissions from other states throughout the country. Our Arkansas Master Gardeners submit some of the most stunning works of art that there is!"

Plant, Nurture, Grow (PNG) Project Meeting Report

Chair: Rose Ann Houston (White Co.) Co-chair: Debora Carpenter (Prairie Co.)

- This year's PNG Leadership Conference will be on Friday and Saturday, August 4 and 5, 2023, in Hot Springs. There will be unique events. One event will be a T-shirt parade with a scuffle hoe for the winner. (Do you know what a scuffle hoe is?)
- Patsy Louk, Chair of our Fundraising Project, will have Opportunity Tables at the Conference. These will have raffle items.
 - Various items as prizes for raffle tickets which sell for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.
 - There will be a brunch raffle for ten (10) guests at Randy Forst's family farm in Ratcliff, AR, (Logan County). The brunch will be 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturday September 30, 2023. It will kick off with Mimosas in the Meadow at 10:00. Lunch includes homemade mushroom lasagna made by Randy's brother and dessert made by Randy.

Recruitment, Retention, Recognition [RRR] Project Meeting Report

Chair: Liz Hale (Washington Co.) Co-chair: Holly Bacon (Crittenden Co.)

- RRR members discussed policy and reimbursements for Arkansas Master Gardener Award Winners/Acceptors.
 - The Winner/Acceptor dinner cost will be borne by County 76 if the Winner/acceptor is not registered to attend the State Conference. Winners will have an opportunity to bring additional guests to the Awards Ceremony Dinner.
 - All winners/acceptors will be on stage at the beginning to cut down 'Stage walk time'.
 - Small and large program winners/acceptors will walk up together by Award Category (e.g., Rookie of the Year). Pictures will be taken with the trio: winner/acceptor, Dr. Scott, and Randy Forst.
 - A short PowerPoint presentation will be shown at the Awards Ceremony. Lengthier video will be posted to the Arkansas MG Awards online page.
 - Biographies of award winners will be printed as handouts for attendees of the Award Ceremony.
 - The Award Ceremony should start with a seated dinner at 6:00 pm. There will be a 30-minute presentation by a motivating dinner speaker.
- RRR members will serve as Annual County Contact Information Volunteers (Communicating with Master Gardener Program Presidents and Primary Master Gardener UAEX Agents).

- Leisa Stotts for the Ouachita District.
 - Angela Ryland for the Delta District.
 - Dot Hart for the Delta District.
 - Mimi Cox for the Delta District.
- RRR is seeking suggestions for the 2024 Annuals to Perennials (A to P) guest speaker via Zoom. Asking new Master Gardeners for suggestions was discussed. This topic will be revisited in earnest at the October RRR Project meeting.
 - RRR members discussed the following during our Open Forum. 1) The importance of promptly reporting Master Gardener volunteer hours online. UAEX Agents have monthly reports due on the 15th of the month – and the fiscal year ends October 15th each year – and MG hours are an important measurement component of the Agents’ evaluations. 2) Members shared what county groups are doing to honor those who achieved 20, 100, or 200 hours. This was shared by Lonoke County. They have seen more hours reported. 3) There have been some instances of having hours reported online not staying in the system. Currently, there is not an identified cause or fix. It is recommended to keep a personal record of hours should this happen. 3) Angela Ryland shared that Lonoke County hosted three “Ask a Master” booths at local farmers markets. They recruited 11 people who are interested in the upcoming Basic Training class.

Are you in the information loop?

For information or help

Email: Randy Forst rforst@uada.edu

Cc: Julie Treat jtreat@uada.edu

Read Randy’s Blog: The Arkansas Garden with Randy Forst

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/arkansas-garden-blog/>

Register for : Master Gardener Monday – a monthly Zoom with Randy and Julie

Register for : *MG Bee* – a Zoom with Randy and Julie for MG Officers

(This is new – *Master Gardener Business Extension Education.*)



MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE 2023
Russellville (Pope County)

DAYLILY HYBRIDIZATION WORKSHOP
State Extension Office



Above: Randy Forst at work
Left: Succulent Workshop



Presenter: April Birchfield,
Saline County
Others: Reviewing April’s
records for her crosses.



Welcoming Our New Members!

Garden Voice correction: Please forgive the incorrect postings in our April 2023 issue. We treasure the talents & skills of new members and are thrilled to have them become part of us!



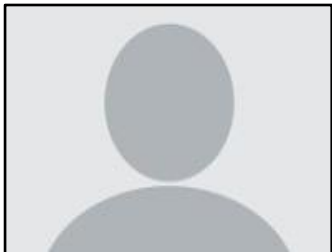
Alfi Anderson
Elkins
Washington County
*Project: Recruitment,
Retention, Recognition*



Dana Ellis
Stuttgart
Arkansas County
*Project: Plant, Nurture,
Grow*



Jackie Leech
Harrisburg
Craighead County
*Project: Plant, Nurture,
Grow*



Philip Wanzer
Russellville
Pope County
Project: To be decided



Sherree Dewitt
Maumelle
Pulaski County
Project: Advanced Training



Connie Toombs
Lamar
Johnson County
*Project: Recruitment,
Retention, Recognition*



Joan D. Wright
Pottsville
Pope County
Project: Advanced Training

MASTER GARDENER & HORTICULTURAL EVENTS

Monday, August 21, 2023 - *MGM* (Master Gardener Monday) **Canceled** for August. Randy will be out of town.

Monday, September 4, 2023 - Labor Day, *State Extension Office Closed*

Monday, September 18, 2023 - *MGM* (Master Gardener Monday) 12 to 1 p.m. For MGs and County Agents. Gardening Presentation by Randy Forst plus MG event updates.

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 - Deadline to register for *MG Appreciation Day/35th MG Birthday Event* (registration information coming soon)

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 - Deadline to send in Fall MG Basic *Training Class Notebook order forms* to state office.

Friday and Saturday, September 22 & 23, 2023 - Advanced MG Class (more information coming soon)

Monday, October 2, 2023 - *Fall Self-paced online MG Basic Training Class* begins Computer is mandatory for the class. The class begins October 2 and ends December 8. Registration is coming at the end of July and is through your local county extension office. Deadline to send registrations (numbers) to the state office is September 20.

Wednesday, October 11, 2023 - *Fall MG Basic Training Class* begins. Classroom setting held on *ZOOM*. October 11, 25, November 1, 8 and 15 (Five Wednesdays). Skipping the middle of October due to the State Fair. Registration is through your local county extension office. The registration form (for state office for numbers) is coming end of July to county extension offices. Cost of class to attendees varies by county. Registration deadline to send numbers to the state office is *September 20*.

Friday, October 13, 2023 - *Master Gardener Appreciation Day/35th Birthday Event*. Little Rock, AR. \$35.00 (includes lunch) St. James United Methodist Church, Little Rock, AR. Speaker Joe L'ampl. More information is coming soon.

Monday, October 16, 2023 - *MGM* (Master Gardener Monday) 12 to 1 p.m. For MGs and County Agents. Gardening Presentation by Randy Forst plus MG event updates.

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 - *County 76 Membership Meeting*. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Little Rock State Extension Office 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR.

Monday, November 13, 2023 - *MGM* (Master Gardener Monday) 12 to 1 p.m. For MGs and County Agents. Gardening Presentation by Randy Forst plus MG event updates.

Thursday, November 23, 2023 - Thanksgiving Day, *Little Rock State Extension Office Closed*.

Friday, November 24, 2023 - *Little Rock State Extension Office Closed* (if governor declares this holiday)

Friday, December 8, 2023 - Fall Online MG Basic Training Class ends.

Monday, December 11, 2023 - *MGM* (Master Gardener Monday) 12 to 1 p.m. For MGs and County Agents. Gardening Presentation by Randy Forst plus MG event updates.

Friday, December 15, 2023 - Deadline to report all *Master Gardener Volunteer Hours for 2023*. Be sure you print out your hours reported in the system so you will have a paper copy of your hours.

Monday, December 25, 2023, to Monday, January 1, 2024 - *State Extension Office Closed*



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"And into the garden I go,
To lose my mind - and find my soul."

- *John Muir*

**County 76 Membership/Project Meeting
State Extension Office
2301 S. University Ave, Little Rock, AR 72204
Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 10:00 am
We look forward to seeing you there!**

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. If you require reasonable accommodation to participate or need materials in another format, please contact our State Coordinator/Program Associate Office as soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay.