



COUNTY 76 NEWSLETTER

4th Quarter 2023 October 2023
Volume 27, Number 4

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Master Gardeners,

If you missed attending the October Co 76 meeting, you missed out on a great day. We were winners on that Tuesday when three scholarship winners shared with us what opportunities receiving a scholarship allowed them such as funds for a project or a college class. They gave us a look through the window of opportunity and the benefits. It is encouraging to see what these scholarships have helped counties and students accomplish, I encourage your counties and high school seniors to apply for scholarships offered by County76.

County 76 membership is made up of Master Gardeners from all around this great state. Members become a part of those helping to work toward making the Master Gardener programming better, such as leadership, and advance training. Watch Constant Contract emails for our January meeting information. Come and be a part of the future of Arkansas Master Gardeners.

I was going to ask about the nice fall weather. Thank goodness we all seem to have received a much-needed rain. Today was very breezy and chilly. At my place it feels like 'winter' is close.

Everyone has dealt with the drought this year. However, Master Gardeners and the County 76 projects have outdone themselves; by trying new ways to help the Master Gardeners throughout the state. I have been able to take advantage of traveling and have gotten to attend different events,

Master Gardeners have accomplished so much this year.

- 1) Many outstanding local plant sales with great buys and plants.
- 2) The State Conference in Pope County put us on notice that counties with smaller numbers of MG's can produce an outstanding State Conference.

- 3) We had a group trip to the Mid-America Science Museum for a tour with artist Linda Williams Palmer in Hot Springs. Linda is well known for drawing Arkansas Champion trees and interpreting each tree according to the season. It was wonderful.
- 4) Annuals to Perennials (A to P) has gone back to the online presentation format for New Master Gardeners and their Mentors. Having county watch parties is encouraged.
- 5) In September, County 76 Advanced Training and the Arkansas Group of National Gardening Clubs held the first-ever joint training class. It was a two-day training session, filled with Master Gardeners (including first year Master Gardeners and Master Gardeners from four other states). County 76 also provided outstanding presenters – Janet B. Carson and Randy Forst. Randy taught a session on Plant Propagation, and we had a workshop on rooting Little Lime Hydrangeas. All participants were given cuttings, and we left with them prepared to root in Ziplocs. This was the first class under our new Advanced Training Program.
- 6) Our Plant, Nurture, Grow Leadership Conference (PNG) in Hot Springs in August had great speakers and good attendance. It was good to see people visiting and sharing information.
- 7) Our Fundraising Project always brings unique and exciting ways to make money at events. At PNG, there were Opportunity tables, and a raffle. The raffle was for lunch with Randy Forst at his family farm in Ratcliff AR (Sebastian County). This was possible because Randy's brother, Gary, agreed to co-host with Randy at the lodge on the farm. There were ten (10) winners of the raffle. They are Debbie Atchison, Debora Carpenter, Donna Woodard, Elan Sutton, Judy Dare, Linda Varnadore, Rose Ann Houston, Susan Grobmeyer, and Me! Also present were Blanca Margarita Hernandez, Julie Treat, and Patsy Louk. That's right, I happened to be among one of the 10 winners who was invited to the Forst family farm. We had a beautiful day, got to meet Randy's brother and sister. Gary Forst's gardens are beautiful and so well cared for, drought did not appear to hurt him. Rose Ann Houston, Debora Carpenter, and I traveled together and stopped by a place in Pottsville, called Central Beekeepers Supply. They had a lot of interesting items, and of course, all three of us brought stuff.
- 8) Master Gardeners Appreciation Day was the Observance of the Arkansas Master Gardeners' Thirty Fifth (35) Birthday. The speaker was Joe Lamp'l. He gave each of us additional issues to think about as we work in the garden. We left with Master Gardener 2024 calendars, a tummy full of Whole Hog BBQ, and several "Fragrant Cheerfulness White daffodil bulbs". Randy gifted these because Master Gardeners are always cheerful - and we love free plants 😊 Calendars are also available to

purchase at your county office. You don't want to miss out, they are always in demand. Mike Wilbanks does such an outstanding job putting them together.

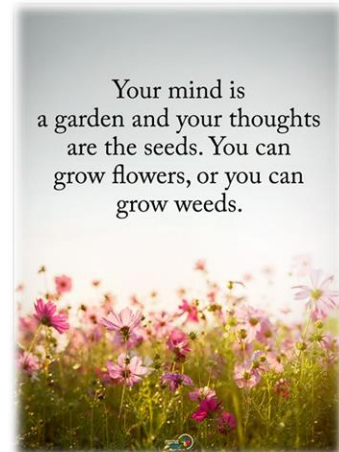
I have always loved the fall, it is usually the end of so much heat of the summer, and it means harvest in the garden. Hay was in the barns; harvest of the crops almost finished. October was always the time of my family's annual hayride and lots of food for family and friends. Of course, fall is the time to plant a late summer early fall/winter garden, bring in plants, help the soil prepare for the coming months. This year I am attempting to root additional cuttings; I still have the ones from the Advanced Training the session Randy taught. While the soil in our garden beds rests, we make plans of what we'll plant next.

It has been a very busy year for Randy and Julie. Randy has been in his job for almost a year, and he still likes Master Gardeners. This year the new Master Gardeners (trainees) have a colorful and up-to-date training manual, the old one was outdated. *Thank you, Randy, for getting these. They are nice.* The training manual to be used is the Southeast Garden training manual from the North Carolina Extension Garden Handbook.

I wish each of you a Blessed Thanksgiving and Holiday Season as each one celebrates in the manner you choose.

Thank you for making Arkansas Master Gardeners the best! I look forward to seeing you again.

Happy gardening,
Kay Roberts, President



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

~Business~

- On a warm, sunny October 24, 2023, Kay Roberts, President, called the County 76 General Membership and Project Meeting to order. She welcomed everyone and shared that we were meeting with a full agenda and lots of information would be shared.
- Darlene McGuire, Secretary, emailed minutes from our July 25 meeting to all members. Members were asked for any corrections. As there were none, the minutes were approved for filing by the members.
- Copies of our County 76 3rd Quarter Financial Report (July through September 2023) were available at the sign-in table for members to review. Gail McClure, Treasurer,

shared the current balances for our private and CES/C76 accounts following income and expense activities. The County 76 private account balance is \$44,992.61. The CES/C76 account balance is \$59,372.23. Gail offered to give project chairs a detailed copy of each project's activity if needed. She reminded members that she is available should they have any questions about our finances. Kay reminded project chairs to turn in a proposed 2024 budget in preparation for the Board Retreat in November.

- Susan Colles, Past President, has chaired this year's nominating committee for Executive Board members. Also on committee were Linda Varnadore, Clebourne County, and Ragina Gabel, Washington County. Susan explained that a position on the slate of nominations was not filled. A member who can work as our 2nd Vice President has not been found. Susan shared that any member who was willing to serve as 2nd Vice President was welcome to contact her for further information. As 2024 approaches, it is hoped that one of our members will find a personal schedule that will allow serving as a member of our Board. Until then, our 1st Vice President will assume the duties of the 2nd Vice President. The slate presented by the committee is as follows. These nominations were approved by members.

County 76 Executive Board – 2024

President: Kay Roberts, Lonoke County
1st Vice President: Becky Gibson, Pulaski County
2nd Vice President:
Secretary: Dana Downes, Pulaski County
Treasurer: Gail McClure, Garland County
Assistant Treasurer: Linda Soffer, Jefferson County
Past President: Susan Colles, Pope County

County 76 Appointed Positions – 2024

Media Relations: Mike Wilbanks, Craighead County
Garden Voice
Newsletter: Becky Gibson, Pulaski County
Angela Ryland, Lonoke County

- Randy Forst, State Master Gardener Coordinator, shared information on current statewide activities.
 - Randy & Julie helped with this year's Arkansas 4-H O-Rama. Each year contests are held at county, district, and state levels. 4-H O-Rama consists of approximately 40 competitive events. Randy & Julie worked the Ornamental Horticulture event. There were 2 youths per division. Garden flowers, foliage plants, landscape plants and trees were included for judging.
 - On August 2, Randy & Julie participated in the Horticultural judging at the Washington County Fair. Several counties have the County Fair as a project and they must know about the process of judging entries.
 - The PNG Conference in Hot Springs was wonderful. There were 116 Master Gardeners representing 32 counties in attendance. The speakers were great and fun was had! Money was raised by an Opportunity table and a raffle was held for dinner at my family farm in Ratcliff AR. It was really a good time. When

it was over, someone asked if Gary, Randy's brother who co-hosted, would be willing to do it again next year. And he said, "Yes". Come to the PNG conference in 2024, and maybe you can go to Ratliff, too:) Raffle proceeds are going to JBC Scholarships.

- September 22 & 23 we had Advanced Training in Marion. This was a training that happened because we worked with the Arkansas unit of the National Garden Clubs. We had Master Gardeners and Garden club members. We had four (4) new MG's who had qualified to go because they had completed their volunteer requirements. We had attendees from four (4) states. AT is working on training for next year.
- We are having online and Zoom Master Gardener training now. We have 102 more in training this year than we did last year. If you have a new MG in your county, please reach out and welcome him/her.
- Friday October 13 was the 35th Birthday of Arkansas Master Gardeners. We had a great celebration at St. James UMC in Little Rock. Joe Lamp'l was our speaker – and he was really entertaining. If you know him personally, you know he is knowledgeable and nice. We gave everyone Cheerfulness Daffodils because MG's are always cheerful. They smell like Gardenias. We raffled off a Master Gardener T-shirt quilt. Debora Carpenter won it. This year's birthday was a great time.
- I have had nine (9) programs throughout Arkansas. It is wonderful to visit a couple of counties I have not been to – but it's even better to get to know Master Gardeners all over the state.
- We have participated in promotional extension activities. This is always fun.
- We are looking forward to the 2024 State Master Gardener Conference in Hot Springs. You will like the sessions and the speakers. Garland County MG's have worked hard to set up tours and events you will love.
- We are proud to have another Master Gardener County group start in Newport in Jackson County. Our total number of groups is now sixty-three (63).



~Education~

The October 2023 County 76 Membership Meeting had a theme. It was 'Winners'. The Winners are Arkansas Master Gardeners, Master Gardener Projects, and Arkansas High School Seniors. Arkansas Master Gardeners are winners because they work in service to others and the environment. It is that work which creates the ability to give to MG Projects and High School Seniors that apply and receive Janet B. Carson Scholarships. Every year, Janet B. Carson County Scholarships are awarded. Applications are submitted and rated on Innovation, Goals/Purposes, Education, Use of Funds, Continuation of Project, Additional Funding, and a Completed Budget. We heard from two of these recipients.

Our first presenter was Gail Sails who became a Jefferson County Master Gardener in December 2017. Gail began by bringing thanks to County 76 and Arkansas Master Gardeners for awarding a 2022 *Janet B. Carson County Scholarship for the Jefferson County Herb Garden Expansion and*



Re-design which allowed the herb garden to be more visually appealing and enable further community education on herbs and their benefits. Learning includes the growing, caring for, and use of herbs.

In early 2018, Gail attended a seminar of The Herb Society of America – Arkansas Unit. She toured the demonstration herb garden at the Arkansas School for the Blind which is known as the ‘Garden of Inspiration’. This truly was an inspiration for Gail as she discovered an area beside the Jefferson County Extension Office which had raised beds. It was not being used and would be perfect for a demonstration herb garden.

Gail spent a lot of time learning about herb gardens. With the help of other Jefferson County Master Gardeners, the Jefferson County Herb Garden was designed and created. The plan was purposeful to include themed sections. Gail shared that there was a Bee Garden, a Fragrant Garden, a Culinary Garden, a Shakespeare Garden, a Silver & Gray Garden, and a Medicinal Garden. Inspired by a church garden tour, Gail wanted to add a Spiritual Garden, however funds were lacking. She learned about the JBC Scholarship from Linda Soffer and was so grateful to receive one.



We learned about all the work done to remove existing stones, put in red walking pavers, and prepared the beds. Gail shared many of her activities of growing in her skills to know about and care for herbs. The work in the Herb Garden furthered community education as tours for the Chamber of Commerce members, members of the Homemakers Extension group, student groups, and others.

Those in attendance asked questions about the plants in specific sections. Gail was glad to share pictures and tell us about the Rose of Sharon, Holy Basil, parsley, and mint - just to start. She was a most enjoyable presenter and concluded with an invitation to everyone to come by and tour the garden which is located at 501 S. Idaho Street, Pine Bluff AR 71601. To visit the garden, please go to the Extension Office (next door to the garden) and ask about a garden tour. Mr. Timothy Wallace, Arkansas Extension Agent, leads the Jefferson County Master Gardeners .



Our next presenters were Debbie Atchison and Terry Jo Gray, Garland County Master Gardeners. Debbie is also a member of County 76. Debbie and Terry Jo began with expressing appreciation for being chosen for a *2023 Janet B. Carson County Scholarship given to the Garland County Hot Springs Village (HSV) Xeriscape Garden at the Cortez Pavilion*. There are three co-chairs who work together to lead this project. Debbie and Terry Jo are two of them.

The HSV Xeriscape Garden is located on Lake Cortez. A lot of people access the lake daily, both residents of Hot Springs Village and the public. There are canoers and fishermen on the lake, and around the lake there will be those who exercise and walk pets. There are many social events at the Cortez Pavilion.

The garden on Lake Cortez started in the 1980's. It was created as a test garden. Jo Anderson, Horticulturist, moved to HSV. She was most interested in promoting the garden. She authored a book, Blossoms & Bushes, A handbook for Gardeners of the Upper South. As interest in the garden grew, a handout was created for visitors and guided tours were available. The garden became a collection of plants that were able to survive and thrive. A lot of plants that people didn't want in their yards or had extras of found their way to the garden. Debbie and Terry Jo told us there were huge plants, poison ivy, and 'yuccas, yuccas, and more yuccas!

Debbie said three years ago when interest in improving the garden developed, folks became a little upset when Master Gardeners started saying that pruning and care was needed. Cutting the growing plants was hard to understand:) It was easier to get rid of the extra leaves and let the plants grow.

We were shown an aerial photo of the garden. Elements were the main garden which borders the road and several raised beds located near the pavilion. The plan for improving the Xeriscape Garden was well organized. We heard excellent details of all aspects of consideration involved. The MG's spent much time pulling Bermuda grass, removing unwanted plants, and caring for desired plants.



Initially, pathways were needed to enhance the garden design. Debbie and Terry Jo said they had to educate themselves first, then their committee and Master Gardeners on the work. Debbie and Terry Jo said they were able to gather a few rocks for the pathways, but they truly had no idea how much was involved in making proper pathways. The gardeners have a wonderful partnership with the Hot Springs Village Property Owners Association (POA). When help is needed, the POA brings tools and equipment to get the work done. Workers came, materials were donated, and lined pathways were built in less than a day. Next, signs and posts are needed. They are still working on these, and they know the garden will be so different than it is now by next spring.

This project was targeted to become a Monarch Way Station. Changes were made to make the garden more appealing to people and pollinators. As the Way Station was created, interest developed in the environment and education. This meant research at the library was needed. As members of the project learned, they were able to share with others and even answer questions that came to them.

Planning for the HSV Xeriscape Pollinator Habitat had three clear goals: 1) To enhance the garden for those who use it, 2) benefit pollinators, and 3) Provide educational resources for Master Gardeners and the community.

As the need to create an ideal pollinator habitat grew, more research led to the study of proper structures and their design. The talk of the project became everything about a pollinator hotel. Terry Jo explained that in their online research they found a plan for building a structure that they liked. Then the questions follow. Who does this belong to? Could we use it as ours? Terry Jo continued following the trail. The plans belonged to a young man in Illinois who had designed this pollinator hotel as part of a project to earn his Eagle Scout

Badge. Terry Jo began making contacts and found Steven Brizzi, a Master Gardener from Washington County. Steven traveled to Garland County and drew plans for the pollinator hotel. He also held a session to train others on pollinator habitats. Debbie said this was 'well attended' by many people, including MG's, young people and HSV residents.

Debbie and Terry Jo often visited with Mr. Lee Norman of the HSV – POA. He has always been willing to help with the project. He has agreed to build the pollinator hotel. We learned interesting details from this presentation, such as the fact that structures for specific pollinators must face a certain direction to be used. When folks heard that the MG's were going to work for the benefit of pollinators, they worried. Everyone knows bees are pollinators and that bees also sting. In addressing this concern, Steve Brizzi helped them to understand that bees who came to this area would most likely be solitary and not aggressive unless provoked.

As enthusiasm has grown, student groups have become involved. Students and the FFA group from Fountain Lake Schools have begun learning there. Debbie Trip (a former teacher) has begun working with church youth groups in the garden. Also, she is working to make boxes & kits that can be used when teaching in the garden. An article about the Xeriscape Pollinator Project created more interest in the work. Master Gardeners have made leaf sand-casted pollinator puddles for the garden. Another project for learning about winter seed sowing using milk jugs now exists.

The future is bright for this project. Debbie and Terry Jo told us about the concepts of the extension of their work: sustainability of pollinator habitats; education for selves and others on the importance of pollinator to humans (pollinators are so important for our food), understanding about the life stages and needs of pollinators identified for a specific area, water sources and native vegetation, nesting needs, and conservation practices.

Questions asked generated interest in the use of QR Codes for signs. What are they? Where do you get them? Someone said this would be a great training session.

As you can see, the Master Gardeners of the HSV Xeriscape Garden are terrific resources for others interested in replicating this work locally. We also learned that this project will be on tour at the 2024 Master Gardener State Conference. The conference is in Hot Springs from May 30 to June 1, 2024.



There was another time of sharing good things that County 76 and Arkansas Master Gardeners are doing. We learned about the *Janet B. Carson High School Senior Scholarships* that are awarded to deserving students every year. One of the scholarships awarded this year was to Colin Galloway from Pulaski County. Actually, we awarded four High School Senior Scholarships this year, and you may read about those seniors at <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/awards.aspx>



These young people are not given scholarships without reason. Each applicant is unique and brimming with skills and talents leading to a bright future. As with County Scholarships, all applications are judged based on several things. The judging rubric elements follow.

- 1) Major: College major must be in a plant science related field.
- 2) GPA: Reported high school Grade Point Average demonstrates dedication to learning.
- 3) ACT Score: Reported completion of the American College Test exam demonstrates serious intention to attend college.
- 4) Courses: Applicants submit plant science related education opportunities taken.
- 5) College acceptance: The scholarship is sent directly to the Arkansas college or university. We communicate with them to arrange the sending of funds. This avoids confusion or extra work for students.
- 6) Activities: Applicants tell us about service and work in plant related activities.
- 7) Essay: We learn about the applicants background and learn from his/her perspective how this scholarship will help achieve goals.
- 8) Recommendations: Applicants send two (2) letters of recommendation concerning character and work ethic among other information.

Colin Galloway was kind enough to travel from the Jonesboro campus of Arkansas State University to spend time with County 76. He shared appreciation for receiving the JBC Scholarship. Colin told us that it was nice to not have to worry about how that part of his tuition would be paid.

Colin has a background in working with plants. At his young age, he is a Pulaski County Master Gardener and volunteers along side his grandfather, Mr. Charles Anderson. Colin also has experience in everything plants from working with his parents. This background gave Colin real advantages when it comes to his ASU coursework. He has a desire to study water usage in agriculture. He has ideas about the benefits of that work, and would like to seek a master's degree. Colin loves the way Master Gardeners care about the world, the environment.

His parents are Robert & Nikki Galloway. They own a garden center in Little Rock - The Nurserie, 7901 Stagecoach Road, Little Rock 72204.



<https://www.thenurserie.com> They specialize in hydroponics, bulk landscaping/gardening supplies, and farm products from local producers. They have donated to our Master Gardener Auctions and MG's receive a discount there.

Colin is one of four Arkansas high school seniors who received the JBC Scholarship. Please learn more about MG Scholarship

winner at <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/awards.aspx> Awarded scholarships are truly a point of pride from the generous hearts of all Arkansas Master Gardeners!

THE PROJECT PATCH

Advanced Training (AT) Project Meeting Report

Chair: Joellen Beard (Pulaski Co.)

- *Project note: 2023 Chair of Advanced Training John Hiegel, Craighead County, was asked by his church to assume leadership of a new church. John agreed, but taking this position would not allow him time to work with us. He has resigned as chair. We appreciate John's willingness to work and lead with us. We wish him well in his new work. We are fortunate the Joellen Beard agreed to assume Chair for the remainder of 2023.*
- Joellen announced that she will continue as Chair in 2024, and she will be joined by Dana Downes, Pulaski County, as Co-chair.
- Joellen welcomed new folks who had attended the AT Project meeting. She said, "We need you. We have great ideas for the future!"
- The Master Gardener AT/National Garden Club training held in Marion on September 22 & 23 was very successful. Qualified Master Gardeners who attended will receive ten (10) hours of AT training. Five (5) hours each day, and certificates of completion will be sent for each day. We had attendees from other states and four new Master Gardeners who had completed MG Training and their first-year volunteer requirements to begin credits in AT. It has been decided that County 76 will send certificates to attendees from other states. Joellen told us that Randy was the best speaker there:)
- Earned Advanced Training hours may now be recorded online in the same location that local project hours are reported. Once logged in to the system the 'PROJECT' field will have *STATE ADVANCED TRAINING HOURS in the drop-down menu. Choose that, and you are in business! If you have attended AT classes before the new system, you will receive eight (8) hours credit for each class. More details will be published soon on this.
- Joellen shared information on possible trainings next year. A Pulaski County training will be on Cultural connections between plants, food, flowers, and people. An example of this concept is that Joellen's relatives have history from long ago telling that 'Black-eyed peas and pecans saved the lives of confederate soldiers'. This training will involve experts in the seed-saving field. Other ideas for trainings include Irises, pollinator hotels, scholarship winners sharing their project experiences (getting & using the scholarship), training at the Hope extension office on ornamental flowers and Arkansas Diamonds, Joellen has talked to folks in other states about reciprocal AT.
- We learned that the 2024 State Conference will have four (4) sessions of AT on trees.
- Kay shared that the new AT system requires a payment of \$25 to work on and complete each of the five (5) AT levels. These payments will be made to the state through an online system. These payments should not be sent directly to the State Office but will be made after the system is posted online.



Congratulations!

Andrew Kessel, Pulaski
Diann Arington, Garland
Karen Diamond, Benton
Ralph Edge, Baxter

~New MG's at 1st AT~

*Pics - Angela Ryland



Fundraising Project Meeting Report

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

- We are happy to announce that our Fundraising Leadership will remain as Patsy and Susan have agreed to continue their positions in 2024. This means good things for County 76 Fundraising.
- Patsy shared information about the event held at this year's Plant, Nurture, Grow Leadership Conference on August 4 & 5 in Hot Springs. There were sixteen (16) items on the Opportunity Tables. One of the items was a raffle for Lunch with Randy Forst at his family farm in Ratcliff AR. There were ten (10) winners. All 10 winners were there on September 30. Randy's brother, Gary, co-hosted with him. There was a tour of the garden and house. Everyone had a good time.



Gary Forst
Randy Forst
Blanca Hernandez
Debbie Atchison
Debora Carpenter
Donna Woodard
Elan Sutton
Judy Dare
Julie Treat
Kay Roberts
Linda Varnadore
Rose Ann Houston
Patsy Louk
Susan Grobmeyer

*Pics – Patsy Louk

- Patsy shared information about fundraising at the 2024 Master Gardener State Conference. (May 31 – June 1, 2024, in Hot Springs). There will be an on-site silent auction as is our tradition. However, we will not have a Virtual Auction this year. We will have something new this year. It is Spirit Poles. This is an idea that came from the International Master Gardeners Conference which was held in Overland Park in June. Patsy attended. This was an activity there- and a great success! A 'Spirit Pole' is a handcrafted garden monument that reflects your personal style and message of community spirit. Spirit poles are pieces of unique garden art that can be displayed in the yard, garden, home or in your community. Everything you

ever wanted to know about how to take part in this fun opportunity to raise money at our 2024 conference is found online:

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/county-76/fundraising.aspx> The path is going to the Master Gardener landing page on UADA and choosing 'County 76' from the left menu followed by clicking on 'Fundraising' in that left menu. Spirit poles are 4 feet tall. They are made from a 4 x 4 treated wood post. You sand, protect & paint a design of your choice representing your county or individual ideas about gardening and/or the environment. (Counties can choose something they are famous for:) They will be made, set up at conference and auctioned off in the silent auction. An important step in participating is to find detailed instructions on the website above and complete the posted **Participation Form by February 29, 2024**, and submit it online. This is important because County 76 will be furnishing the floor stands for the posts. It will be possible to purchase a stand for the pole you win in the auction.

Patsy is asking that Spirit Poles be brought to conference before the conference begins. She and Susan Colles will be glad to make arrangements to get your poles to conference if you are not able to have them there before conference. Please contact Patsy Louk or Susan Colles if you need help with this.

- Susan made a Spirit Pole so members of County 76 could see one. They will be only 4 or 5 feet tall for easy transport. Susan told us that she bought the materials for the pole in the decking department of a Lowe's Home Store. She painted it with Kilz primer, painted it with latex paint. She used decals and letters on it. Poles entered may be done with decals or painted designs. Susan used decals because this was a 'quick' demo. The toppers for Spirit Poles are up to you – you may use a bird house, solar light, a plant, or a pail,

or anything original. Susan said her cost was just under \$50.



Spirit Poles at Conference & Susan's Demo

Media Relations

Media Manager: Mike Wilbanks

- Mike was unable to be with us. Kay Roberts shared his report with the group. Calendar -spiral and wall - completed and a purchase link has been sent out in Constant Contact.
- We are so glad that Mike has agreed to work in Media again in 2024.
- This means there is only one word for Mike:



Plant, Nurture, Grow (PNG) Project Meeting Report

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

- Rose Ann began by thanking all of the members of the PNG project for all of the work done this year. Working together made the project successful. She also thanked Debora Carpenter for her contributions as co-chair. Debora was willing to do whatever was needed and was an active leader of the PNG Leadership Conference this year.
- There were eleven (11) project members in attendance today, and we had a visitor there. We welcome others to join us.
- The 2024 PNG Conference will be held on Tuesday & Wednesday, August 20 & 21, 2024, at the Vines 4-H Center in Ferndale. The Conference will begin at 1:00 on Tuesday and end at 11:30 on Wednesday. Lodging will be available at the Center as in the past. The conference committee has held regular meetings for planning. There are exciting activities being planned. We will have informative sessions and maybe some round-table topics. We know that Dr. Deaque Fields will be our opening speaker, as he was his year. We will have another Q & A time with Dr. Fields because it was so good this year.
- It is exciting to announce that our 2024 Chair will be Linda Soffer and our co-chair will be announced. If you have any questions or ideas about our conference this year, please feel free to contact Linda or a PNG member.

Recruitment, Retention, Recognition [RRR] Project Meeting Report

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

- We are proud to announce that Liz Hale has agreed to chair RRR again for 2024. She will have two (2) Co-chairs. Holly Bacon has agreed to be a co-chair again, and Leisa Stotts will serve as co-chair. Leisa is from Okolona in Clark County.
- Liz encouraged everyone to return to their county groups and promote applying for county awards so that winners chosen may apply for MG State Awards by January 15, 2024. State award criteria and applications are available on <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/awards.aspx> (Master Gardener landing page to Awards in the left menu). We would love to have state award applications from every county this year.
- Judges for the 2023 State Awards are lined up. These are people from other states. They are Randy's counterparts. They are experts and good judges. They even like to share ideas from our work with MG's in their states.
- The 2023 State Awards will be given at the Opening night dinner of the 2024 State Master Gardener Conference. This will be Thursday night, May 30, 2024, in Hot Springs. Each award winner will be allowed to bring a guest to the ceremony. We

have nine (9) separate awards with two categories for each award. There is a winner from counties that have 50 or fewer members, and a winner from counties with more than 50 members.

- The 2024 Annuals to Perennials (A to P) will be held again this year by Zoom. This is a special event for new Master Gardeners and his/her mentor. This is most likely to be held in July. We have given the name to Randy for the speaker we would like to have and some back-ups. We will be giving details on A to P before long.
- Hilde Simmons is leading the work to update contact information for all County Master Gardener Presidents. This information is beneficial if there are Master Gardener programs that need information about what other Master Gardeners are doing, they may contact Julie for it. This should be completed by mid-January.
- Please remember that information for the Length of Service awards will need to be sent to Julie Treat in February. This will be lists for those who have completed 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and now, 35 years of service in Master Gardeners.
- Liz reminded everyone to be sure to enter volunteer hours in the online system before the deadline of Friday, December 15, 2023. County Online Managers need to print reports as they may not be accessible in the new year.

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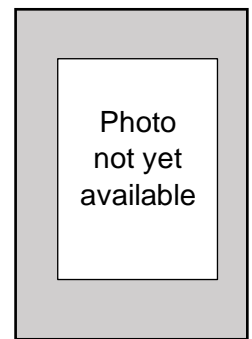
Michele Wineteer
Montgomery Co.
PNG Project



Tyronne G. Davis, Sr.
Jefferson Co.
AT Project



Christine Gentry
Lonoke Co.
RRR Project



Gail Pianalto
Washington Co.
RRR Project

Are you in the information loop?

For information or help

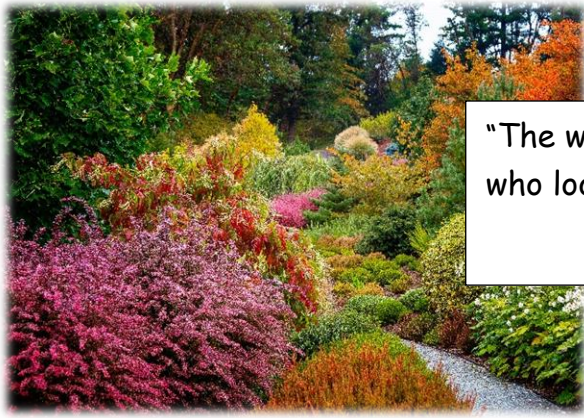
Email: Randy Forst rforst@uada.edu

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/>





"The world will always be beautiful to those who look for beauty."

- Margaret Renkl
From The Comfort of Crows

www.sunset.com

MASTER GARDENER & HORTICULTURAL EVENTS

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. [Registration Link](#)

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 – Grow Your Own Groceries: Pecans, 12 p.m. on Zoom. Learn how to grow pecan trees in your own backyard. [Registration Link](#)

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*

Friday, January 15, 2024 – MG Award Nominations deadline. Take a look at the nomination forms at the link. We know there are great people and projects in all counties across the state so send in those nominations 😊. [Award Nomination Forms](#)

County 76 Membership/Project Meeting
State Extension Office
2301 S. University Ave, Little Rock, AR 72204
Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 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.