

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

February 2019



Camellias

The Camellias are lovely in bloom this year. It is always a treat to walk through the grounds now that it is cool and see how many different types and colors Mepkin has. We finished cleaning up the remnants of the Creche Festival and got back to winter cleanup on days in which we could work. It has been very cold and rainy with wind at times.

This month we will prune and feed the roses, spray for Chickweed and Florida Bethany, and remove vines from shrubs. There are also the jobs of evaluating the pruning of the Oleander and Nandina, plus, feeding the bulbs as they appear.

Despite the weather, several of our winter blooming plants are at their best, and even in Winter, Mepkin shines with the sculpture of tree branches and shrubs.

GARDEN UPDATES:

Store/St. Clare:

Angel has been to market and we are anxious to see the new products. The Store has many Trappist products, which are always first class. You really must stop in and see.



Store



Blooming Fatsia in front of Store

St. Clare:

Kathy has kept St. Clare in 5 Star condition for the enjoyment of all our Visitors. She has had help from Jill and others raking out debris and leaves. It is a full time job and we thank all of them for keeping this "introduction" to Mepkin in such perfect order.



Entrance to St. Clare

Notice all the berries on the Nandina. The berry production has been huge this year, meaning "cold" harsh winter by folk lore. We leave the berries even on the Beautyberry for our friend, Brother Bird.



The Tractor Seat (or Leopard Plant) bloomed profusely throughout the Creche Festival.

Walking through the property this past month has been a walk of peace and serenity. Often we do not take the time to see how glorious the fields are in Winter. Come out---take a stroll and see what God has in store for you.



Firemen's Memorial



Looking across the field to Luce in early morning with the frost.



Coming from St. Benedict toward the Monastery in early morning



The field across the road from St. Benedict

Orchard:

Time flies!

Norm and I were pleasantly surprised to see the citrus looks good despite the enclosures having taken a beating from the wind. One of our heat lamps was broken but how is a mystery. We have patched things up. Thankfully, Craig is keeping an eye on things.

We have a new project to beautify the orchard. We are converting from the 7

foot net wall to an electrified wire fence. The old fence was getting shabby and probably ineffective too. I bought components at Tractor Supply. Jimmy Livingston is our consultant.

Jimmy is a farmer on the side and uses electric fences to protect his crops from deer. We plan to get the fence complete before there is anything to interest the deer.

Let's hope the weather warms up a tad.

Howard

Dottie's comments:

We have spoken earlier about replacing the tall deer fence that could no longer be "band-aided" together. The photo below shows the new fence as a work in progress. The metal upright stays holding the mesh are shorter, and there will be an electrical charge to discourage the deer.



Odds and Ends:

Congratulations to former Abbot Stan on the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross for distinguished service to the Church!



This papal honor was presented to Father Stan on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Several members of the community attended the ceremony and the reception after.

Further news in the community is that Father Richard McGuire, former chaplain to the sisters in Esmeraldas, has returned after serving there for twenty five years. Welcome home! Father Richard!

Although it has been wet and cold, Steve and I have been very busy in the Greenhouse. As you can see, Steve is preparing for the Greenhouse Show we hope to have again this April. Here are a few of the things he is growing:







The team will be taking these individual plants and arranging them in attractive pots, bowls, dishes, so you can just take one home to put right on your table or porch!

Now is the time I eat crow. Last month I suggested you visit the Mepkin Website. In my rush, I gave you the email to Mepkin NOT the website. Within 10 minutes of sending it out, I had many emails informing me of my mistake. Working with the elderly (me) is not always easy. The Website is www.mepkinabbey.org. Please accept my apology!

On to more pleasant things. I want to dedicate this issue of the Newsletter to my friend and co-partner in getting the new Volunteer Program going years ago,

Ursula Wells. When Father Guerric asked me to head this up, I agreed only if Ursula would be my Volunteer Director. The hours and hours she has spent making the success of this program happen cannot be counted. Ursula has decided it is time to hang up her gloves. Thank you, Ursula, for all the laughs, encouragement and hand holding you did with me. Without you, this program would not be the success it is.



Ursula and me when we first started.....



Ursula and Nick at one of her famous Volunteer parties



Ursula and Elaine (picking up after Miss Dottie)

Ursula promises to come help with the roses from time to time---and hopefully to come to the Volunteer events. Sylvia has been working into Ursula's various tasks, as Craig has into mine.

My thanks also to Howard, for the Orchard Report and to Langhorne for editing.

"The expanse of the sky, the songs of the streams, the scent of a blossom testify to God's creative mind and living power. You are heir to a world full of magnificent reminders of who God is and what He can do. He encourages you to admire His creation, treasure it, and contemplate His continuing love for you."

Come join us! It will add a dimension to your life you did not realize you were missing. Contact Sylvia (Craig's assistant and Volunteer Director) at 814-720-4174 or bellamaw1@gmail.com. Craig (Director of Grounds and Gardens) can be reached at 843-709-8362 or Mepkin.volunteer@gmail.com.

Happy Valentines Day! dottie