

## Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

March 2019



### Kalanchoes

As the Camellias had just started to bloom last month, I reported how lovely they were this year. This issue I will report on several of the varieties. Also, in February we pruned the Crepe Myrtles and Oleanders and as well, pruned and fed the Roses. Mary hit the vines in the various shrubs as she always does and Sylvia fed the bulbs as they popped out of the ground. No only were the Camellias a sight, but the Lenten Roses have spread and are blooming! We had a few days that spraying was effective and we will keep on that to keep ahead of the weeds.

This month we are taking the “wintering over” pots out of the Greenhouse and placing them on the grounds, and are fluffing up the winter pots as they had lost their shine. I will apply alum sulfate to keep the Hydrangeas a deep blue in some places and we will continue to feed the roses and shrubs as they start to show new growth. The Daylillies will be fed and those we missed in the Cloister have been moved to the wonderful Daylily bed that Sylvia developed last fall.

### **GARDEN UPDATES:**

Store/St. Clare:

This month I want to feature the wonderful new items we have in the Store. I mentioned before that Angel, the manager, had gone on a buying trip. Look at all the new selections:

Bracelets:





Other selections::



Banks



Art



Soapstone hearts from Kenya



Soapstone angels from Kenya



Tin angels from India

Of course, there is also the usual fabulous Trappist products and even dried and fresh mushrooms.

St. Clare:

The Camellias in St. Clare are breathtaking. Kathy continues to rake up the spent blooms and groom the other plants that have had their season.



Blood Red Camellia



Multicolor Camellia

Let me take a pause here and show you what happens to some Camellias as they age. In various parts of the Monastery we have these:



As you can see, some of the blooms are white, and some are pink



Some blooms are deep pink and some very light pink

Both examples are in the Luce Garden area where we have some of the oldest examples.



Camellia from Luce Garden

Kathy has also taken on the Parking Court, whose new berms keep filling with dead vines from the clearing and also with the constant march of the Wisteria. She is really a wonder.

### **Orchard:**

Some excitement since our last report. We decided to install an electric fence to

save money and improve the appearance. It took us several weeks to get the fence installed. We had to cut off the fence posts and remove the old 7' deer fence. I bought the components at Tractor Supply. Jimmy Livingston was our consultant.

The fence control emits a clicking sound and a faint pulse of light when it's working properly. Craig was checking the unit for proper operation. He was looking for the light pulse and cupped his hands to block the sun's reflection but he got too close and the current jumped to his hand. Quite a jolt and he thought it sounded like a small caliber shell being fired although he says it might have been his imagination.

We have two caution signs on the top wire. If you happen to be in the vicinity give it a wide berth. Howard

### **Annual Prescribed Burn:**

In February Howard and Norm headed our annual prescribed burn. It is done to keep the variety of plants under control. If not done, one or two species will take over all the other. Our thanks to Howard and Norm and any who helped them make this happen.





**Labyrinth after burn**

### **African American Cemetery (Clermont Cemetery)**



### **A word from Craig:**

Can you believe the transformation?

A big thanks to Joey Bradshaw and the Catholic Youth Group for the initial clearing, Chuck Dolesy for his ongoing efforts to remove vines and roots, and Peter Wallace for the gift of azaleas from his personal stock.

### **Odds and Ends:**

Due to the kindness and enthusiasm of Greg and Jill Ewell (faithful Garden Volunteers and Docents), we are covering a new area now, participating in various Volunteer opportunities in the communities. Jill and Greg manned our booth at the recent Senior Center Volunteer Fair.



### **Jill at Senior Center Volunteer Fair**

We have a power point presentation now and are available to present programs for any of you who are in garden clubs, civic clubs or environmental groups. Please call the Mepkin Store (Angel) 843-761-8605 to arrange a date.

Again, we have been blessed with three new Volunteers! Sylvia, the new Volunteer Director is doing a bang- up job! They are all fabulous!



### **Sylvia, Volunteer Director**



## **Ann Dawson**

I worked with Ann on a very rainy day in the Greenhouse and she is some worker! She even shared some of her succulents with us for the Greenhouse Show in April. More about that down below.

Dottie's note: Photos of Sheri and Sandra will be featured in the April Newsletter.

Welcome to each and everyone of our new members! We are so grateful for the time you spend here.

These Volunteers were badly needed and we could use more. The regional meeting for Abbots and Abbesses happened at Mepkin in February and in trying to get everything done, we almost needed a traffic cop to direct the Gators! If you would like to add serenity and fellowship to your life, join us any Monday-Thursday 8:30-11:30. Call Sylvia at 814-720-4174 or email her at [bellamaw1@gmail.com](mailto:bellamaw1@gmail.com).

## **UPDATE ON THE GREENHOUSE SHOW (April)**

I thought you might enjoy seeing more about the Kalanchoe that I showed at the beginning of this Newsletter. Succulents are wonderful to follow in their increasing and in their blooms. God has made such a wonderful world for us to enjoy.

The Kalanchoe produces more through forming "babies" on the edge of their

leaves:



Close up:





**Bloom of the Kalanchoe (you saw the entire plant in bloom last Newsletter)**

The babies drop everywhere and we put them in soil and voila! A new plant is born.

Next month I will announce the dates when the various show items will be in the Arbor. Keep us in mind for your screen porch or patio. "Take a piece of Mepkin home with you!"

Here are various things in bloom at this time:



**Cherry trees at the road to the Retreat Center, in memory of Father Jonas' father and brother**



**First Lenten Roses blooming in St. Clare**



Can anyone tell us what this plant is? In summer it sits on the pillars at St. Benedict (and only blooms when we bring it in the Greenhouse).

One more reminder: the wonderful book in the Store, Brother John, by August Turak. I close with the last sentence in the book.

“Brother John loves God so much he doesn’t know what to do with himself, so he stands outside on a cold Christmas night with an umbrella, waiting. Waiting to offer us some protection and human comfort on our long journey home.”

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

Thank you for the complimentary emails. I share those about the Volunteers with them and they love hearing what the gardens and grounds add to your retreat and your life.

Until next month, blessings, dottie