

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter

May 2015



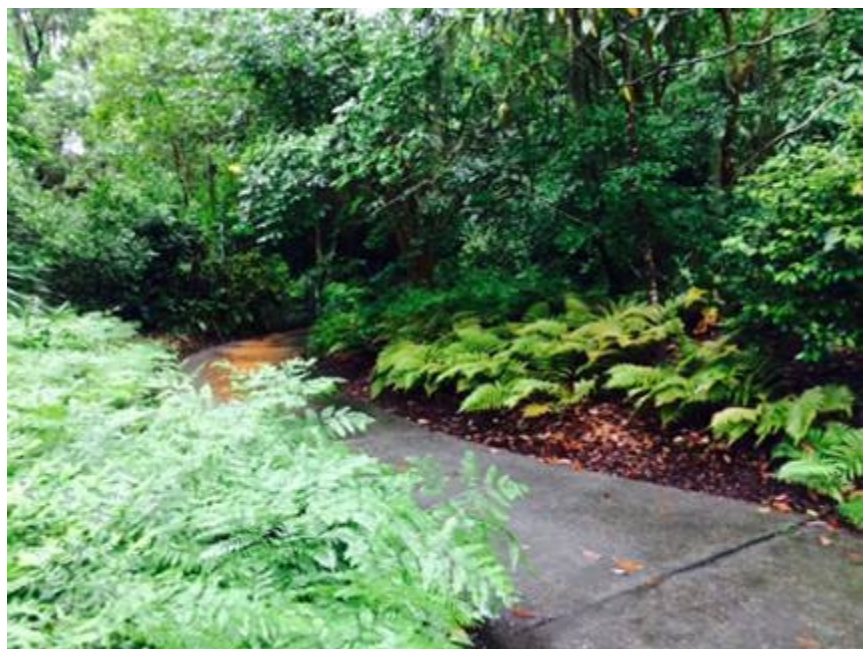
Ponds at Luce Garden (Craig Clark)

April continued with it's spectacular beauty of azaleas and other flowering shrubs at Mepkin Abbey. Everywhere one looked one saw a picture wanting to be captured. The hard work of the past few years controlling weeds, feeding, and pruning on a regular basis has really paid off. Our Volunteers continue to be dedicated and loyal, stretching each week to be sure the grounds are saying "welcome" to our many visitors.

Garden Updates

Store/St. Clare/Walk to the Church:

Starting at the Store, St. Clare is a vision of a sanctuary with the Ferns and Fringe Trees abloom, along with the Siberian Iris and Azaleas blooming as well. The Crown of Thorn pots also bring a sense of peace and serenity as our Visitor begins his tour and walk to the Church.





Cloister:

As we approach the Cloister, we enjoy the bright red Father Francis Kline azaleas that are in full bloom.



We will enjoy these azaleas again across from the Columbarium, as you will see.

Our newest feature in the Cloister is a new birdbath. Two years ago the ice storm broke our old birdbath. Here is the new one.



The birds are most appreciative!

Entry to the Church:

Several months ago our newsletter featured two of our Saturday Volunteers planting a bed of Hawthorns on the right Monk's Entry to the Church. As you can see, these plants have outdone themselves and are in full bloom now.



Labyrinth:

After the burn last month, the Labyrinth quickly recovered and all kinds of native plants started popping up. John Martin had agreed to help us plan recovery of the Labyrinth, as I am not knowledgeable about the various plants in there. Phase One started with Guerric, John and I meeting and flagging several species that have taken over other more desirable natives. Phase Two will be, after we edge the grass paths and remove the invasives, evaluating again and continuing to do so until we achieve the desired mix of plants. Understand that a native plant installation such as this will be always changing, but we hope to keep it somewhat more tidy in the future. Each month I will try to feature a few of the plants that are blooming. We hope there are native plant lovers out there who would help us with this project. We thank John for his time and help in this project.



Fr Guerric and John

St. Benedict:

You have heard me brag about Miss Doris' work at St. Benedict before. Last month it was the narcissus, and this month it is the incredible rose garden at the Farm Gate. From two years ago, with transplanted roses from here and there, she has developed an awesome sight at the gate to the Farm.



Roses at Farm Gate

The Orchard:

The Orchard is coming along very well. The blueberries are laden with fruit (for their size) and the blackberries have been trained to the wires and have a lot of flowers as well although the number and size of the plants are significantly less than last year. The raspberries look promising but they are a questionable fruit for our area. We need the benefit of holy soil!

The figs are off to a slow start in the orchard. I feel jinxed when I look at Brother Joseph's tree next to the shelter there are some almost full sized fruit on that. My figs at home are slow getting going to so I feel positive at the moment. I think gardeners are always optimistic.

There's still a bit of cardboard and mulch to spread then it will be time to get after the weeds that have broken through. A never ending battle but I think we have slowed them down. Howard

Luce Garden:

Luce Garden continues to be our biggest day-visitor draw. It is not unusual if the weather is good, to have 35-50 people wandering around—young and old. What a pleasure this garden gives our community! Thank you, Luce Crew, for your extraordinary work in this area.



Luce (Craig Clark)

Columbarium:

The Fr Francis Kline Azaleas were just stunning this year. Peter had worked all year to water them and to keep the deer away. They only get more beautiful each year.



Fr Francis Kline Azaleas

An added treat is the Buckeye that is blooming between the Azaleas and the Laurens Cemetery.



Buckeye

Mystery Photos:

This month features native plants that are blooming in the Labyrinth. See if you know any of these.



Coreopsis



Baptista



Verbena

Odds and Ends:

This past fall Craig collected white Native Hibiscus seeds from Luce Garden for me, and Peter collected pink Native Hibiscus seeds from the Ravine and Upper Pond at Luce. The seeds wintered-over in envelopes on my desk and when I returned in February I decided to see if they would grow. With Ursula's help, we planted and low and behold! Lots came up! We have about 100 starts and are still transplanting to bigger pots in hopes they will survive in the wild! Here is the current stage.



Native Hibiscus in the Greenhouse

Speaking of recycling or reusing:

I was stunned one Sunday at Mass to see Father Gueric's arrangement. The roses are from Doris' Farm Gate Rose bed and the beautiful white ceramic vase is a gift from Kathleen.



Brother Stephen's annual garden that Brother Joe puts in for him, is something I must report on. It is the star of the colorful gardens, and Stephen faithfully keeps it in top condition. He also helps us water new plantings in the Cloister. Look at these photos.





Spring Gathering:

Once again, Ursula put on a wonderful Sunday lunch for our Volunteers (a gift of thanks from the Brothers). With the Brothers joining us for dessert, you can see, a good time was had by all.



Nick, John and Barbara, Fr Isaac



Marcella and Faraja



Br Joseph and Page



George N, Doris, Jo and Brother Dave



Shane, Helen and Liz



Miss Abbey, Debbie and George C



Br Paul, Ursula, Fr Jonas, Wayne



GH Bob, Fr Guerric, Br Martin, Br Robert

Many thanks to Howard for The Orchard Garden Report, to Craig for the Luce Garden photos and Fr. Jonas for the photographs at the Spring Gathering. Many thanks to Langhorne for editing. I have run on way too long this month, but it is hard not to show the beauty that is Mepkin. Blessings, dottie

