

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter

July 2015



Daylilies

June, we survived, but only because our Volunteers are so dedicated. Three weeks without rain! The hours of watering, grooming, mowing, just to keep things manageable. It was like treading water, but the Volunteers remained cheerful and always were willing to do more. They obeyed Nurse David's instructions on hydrating, etc. and no one fell out in the heat. This week we have started to have rain at least several afternoons, so now everything is perking right up.

We have started the enormous task of feeding all the azaleas and camellias and pruning them. In addition, we will be cutting back perennials and feeding them, grooming daylilies, feeding hydrangeas and roses. It just goes on and on.

Garden Updates

St. Clare:

Many of our perennials and ferns we have added have come back and are doing well. Our stand of ferns are the best in the area, so says our landscape people. We hope the coolness of the Walk continues to set the theme of serenity and quiet for the visitor.



Bog Garden Area



Elephant Ear Island

Cloister:

We have redone the 10 man bed once again. The Blanket Flowers did not do well, nor did the Kalanchoe. We have removed them, added to the Plumbago and put in white Vinca. I think you will agree it is an improvement. Brother Stephen continues to help us out with watering and we so appreciate him. The daylilies are in riot at present and the raised herb and vegetable beds are growing before our eyes.



10 Man Cottage Bed

Entry to the Church:

Father Isaac, a visiting Benedict at Mepkin on Sabbatical, surprised us by clearing the large Azalea beds to the right of the Church. You will not believe the improvement. Thank you, Father Isaac, for being such a help to us!



Father Isaac



Backside of Azaleas cleaned up



One of 5 large loads Bob and I cleaned up from Father Isaac's clearing

St. Benedict:

St. Benedict just gets better and better. The perennials are out with a vengeance and there is always something of interest going on.

The Orchard:

Had a great surprise, the raspberry crop was well above expectations and the fruit was enjoyed by the brothers. The fruit only lasted for a 2 week period but came on strong. I plan to move the one remaining muscadine and plant more raspberries.

The blueberries look promising but will need to grow. I hope Jimmy Livingston will give me a tutorial on pruning the plants for best results.

The green fig, I call lemon fig, appears to be the most productive at this point. The fruit are progressing nicely and are about the same size as the fruit I have at home.

The other plants seem to have an abundance of fruit but quite small. Time will tell!

We have been mulching the remote persimmon trees after layering the base with cardboard. There has been damage from mowing and we hope the ring of mulch will allow the bush hog to stay farther away.

I hope Mepkin got some of the rain we have gotten in Summerville.

Howard

Dottie's Notes: Look at what these men have accomplished in one year! The fruits were plentiful and the blueberries are still ripening as are the figs.





Luce Garden:

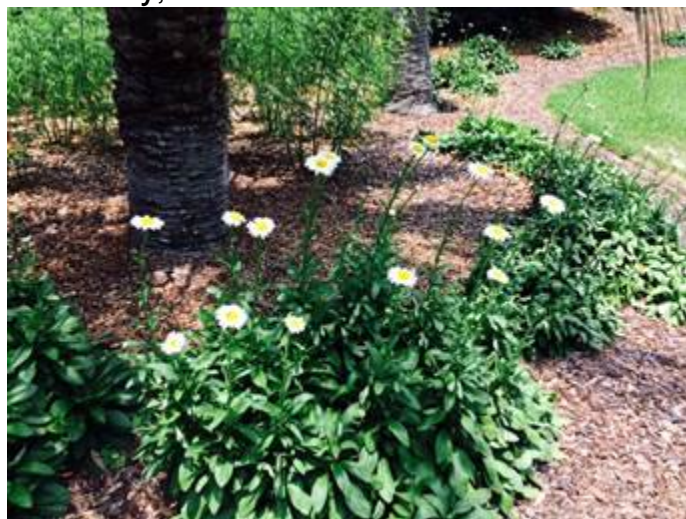
The Luce crew continues to terrify me by sending photos like the one below.



This "friend" must really keep them on their toes.

They have their hands full with feeding Azaleas and Camellias and pruning as

needed. The hydrangea in Luce were ridiculously loaded with blooms this year. (These are the ones I was going to take out because they never bloomed!) Currently, the daisies are in bloom and all looks wonderful as usual.



Daisies

Columbarium:

Due to the extreme heat, we have decided to postpone replanting the Columbarium until it is cooler in the Fall. We have changed the pots and remulched, so all is well.

Retreat Center:

The Retreat Center is going to begin writing a report for us each month to keep everyone abreast of what is coming up there. Here is the piece for this month:

The Saint Francis Retreat Center at Mepkin Abbey opened in August of 2013. The simple and clean architectural design offers individual guest rooms, meals, a common area for gatherings, and the Francis Kline Memorial Chapel. The Center provides a tranquil space to all who join us for spiritual renewal. To book a retreat go to our website www.mepkinabbey.org and click on BOOK A RETREAT

We are looking toward 2016. Some of the lectures you may wish to attend are:

Thursday, January 14, 2016, 2:00 - 4:00 PM, Mepkin Abbey Library, \$10 registration fee

What Animals Can Bring to the Second Half of Life

by Dr. Linda Bender, DVM and author of **Animal Wisdom: Learning from the Spiritual Lives of Animals**

Thursday, February 11, 2016, 2:00 - 4:00 PM Mepkin Library, \$10 Registration Fee

Conscious Eldering

by Ron Pevny author of **Conscious Living: Conscious Aging**

Labyrinth:

The project to improve the Labyrinth has started! Green Carolina has started removing the large Grass that was overwhelming the more desirable perennials. This week they are edging the paths, which will give a neater appearance and help Mike with his mowing. Below we have photos of some of what is blooming now. I would love to have help with this project. As you can see, I am really out of my element on identifying what is what. Please email me at roddyd@ghmail.com.



Rattlesnake???



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Mystery Photo:



We received information about this caterpillar and I share:

Yes, I'm familiar with this one. It's called the Abbott's Sphinx moth larva (how appropriate to find it at Mepkin Abbey :o)

The scientific name is: *Sphecodina abbotti*. Adult moths fly at night and take nectar. Larvae feed on members of the grape family... *Vitis* or *Ampelopsis*.

Odds and Ends:



Bob and Page

Bob and Page have sold their house, received their custom Airstream and have taken off for an adventure throughout the United States. We hope they will keep us posted. We cannot thank them enough for their invaluable help throughout the years with the Greenhouses. We wish them safe travels!

Last month I once more mentioned Alan, one of our unique Volunteers, who keeps adding to the list of things he helps with. He continues to clean the Library weekly, has cleaned the corridor and porch at the Old Dorm we have improved, and now he has brought us a truckload of plants that we will use to add color to our gardens. Here he is in the Greenhouse with the slew of Caladiums he brought, along with

Agave for the renovated Agave bed we are developing in St. Clare and some heat tolerant plants to help tide us over as the heat continues.



Alan with the Caladiums

I am happy to report that we have another new Morman “Sister” working with Sister Ruth now. Here is “Sister Rachel” with Ruth. They have been invaluable to us this past year.



Sisters Ruth and Rachel

The Native Hibiscus project continues to be a real success. Peter has already planted some at the Upper Pond and plans more for the Ravine. We have placed some along the Walk to the Church and between the Store and Gallery. Thanks to Karen for the wonderful job pictured below.



Native Hibiscus along the Walk to the Church

We still have plenty of good stock and Peter is going to share them with a group he knows. Our cup did really “runeth over”.
 Last, but not least, is the new directional sign posted where Sawmill Road comes into Dr. Evans Road. What a change!



Directional sign

Many thanks to Howard for The Orchard Garden Report, to Carole/Father Guerric for the Retreat Center Report and to Craig for the alligator photo (you can be sure I did not take it!). We miss having Langhorne’s editing this issue. I was unable to contact her. Be safe this summer in the heat and plan now to come to the Creche Festival in the Fall.

Need a quiet day? Please come and walk the grounds and gardens. This is a very special place God has given us. Best, dottie