

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter

October 2015



The Labyrinth in bloom

The big news this month are the floods in South Carolina. You are receiving this newsletter later than usual as I was unable to return as planned due to the closed highways. The good news is that the Abbey was spared major damage in most areas. As usual, as soon as our Volunteers could get here (Dr. Evans was closed as was several sections of 402), they started on the debris and had everything looking amazingly well by the time I arrived. There is just no stopping the loyalty to Mepkin and the standard of care they perform. Here are some of the damages that we have.



Walk around the Lower Pond at Luce



Path damage at The Columbarium



Steps at the Columbarium



Silt fence damage at Columbarium

Garden Updates

The Store:

Despite the storm, the welcome mat is still out at the Visitor's Reception/Store.



Here you see the Everblooming Azalea outdoing themselves!

St. Clare:

Throughout, the gardens continue to bloom. A walk through St. Clare has several beautiful views:



Cloister:

The Breezeway is enjoying the bloom and aroma of the Tea Olive “hedge” to the right.



Tea Olive blooms

The Cloister main feature, as promised, is the Russian Sage, in full bloom and full of yellow butterflies.



Russian Sage with butterflies

The Walk to the Church:

In addition to the blooming Tea Olives, our perennial Mums are bringing sunshine to the Walk.



Mums along Walk

Howard's Orchard Report:

The "Orchard/Garden" crew presses on despite reduced numbers. Norm is off visiting family for a few weeks. George is planting lettuce behind the Senior Wing. All the rain doesn't appear to have hurt our various endeavors. I have been pulling weeds in the orchard. The rain has softened up the ground but on the other hand the extra rain may promote additional weed growth.

George brought some oriental persimmons from home to share with the brothers and fellow laborers in the field (us). They are great! We have a BIG CROP of persimmons in the field behind the concrete roofed barn/gator garage. I picked a few Tuesday and will likely pick a great deal more next week. There was only evidence of one fruit that had been munched on by deer but we expect more if we wait too long. We will sacrifice a bit of sweetness by harvesting early but the fruit will ripen nicely indoors.

In late November Jimmy Livingston will help us with pruning and transplanting some of our fruits and brambles. We hope to make the most of the arbors for raspberries and blackberries. I planted a new fig I brought from home that should add to the harvest. Father Joe told me about a couple of his fig recipes that should appear in his soon to be released cook book.

These sound scrumptious!

CHEERS

Luce Garden:

The Luce crew continued their good work. When I left last week, they had already restored the walk around the Lower Pond and were working on restoring the drainage

system. I was relieved to see that the Cooper River had not overflowed its banks into Our Lady's Room with all the debris it would bring. We have been very cautious about critters that the flood did bring---think snakes and alligators!



Clearing by the Steps across the Lower Pond

Labyrinth:

The Labyrinth is a sea of yellow this month. It is an awesome sight. Our Volunteers have been trying to keep the natives that fall over on the path cut back. We really need help in this area of the gardens. We hope to finish the edging of the paths after the Creche Festival. There was sink hole damage earlier and that area needs to be redesigned and replanted. Can anyone help with this? Please contact Father Gueric at guerricheckel@gmail.com.



Labyrinth in gold

Retreat Center:

Recently the Saint Francis Retreat Center hosted the first retreat for Consecrated religious of the Diocese of Charleston. Priests and religious were hosted to a day of lecture and a rededication to their vows. Religious women and men from South Carolina had an opportunity to connect with one another in support and camaraderie. This is one of the new events taking place at the Retreat Center.

Carole

Mystery plant:

I have featured this fruit before. Its place in St. Clare was full of fruit this year.



Odds and Ends:

We have another new Volunteer, John Apiel. He has been a wonderful addition to the Tuesday team and jumped right in to help. Thank you, John. Welcome to the group!



John

Many thanks to Carole for the Retreat Center report, to Howard for the Orchard Report, and to Langhorne for editing this issue. We still do not have two of our Volunteers back healthy. Please pray that our current Volunteers stay healthy! Please spread the word that we always need new Volunteers. We have opened so many new areas and need to get things “dressed up” for the Creche Festival. Give yourself a gift and come to the Creche Festival-book a place at www.mepkinabbey.org. As Advent approaches, it is one of the best ways to anticipate the coming of the Christchild. Peace, dottie