

Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteer Newsletter
August 2016



Luce Pond

July has been a month of unbelievable heat. I chose the above photo to let you know there are still places of cool and calm here at Mepkin.

Our Volunteers have been working in 90 degree weather for weeks, with the humidity pushing the heat index over 100 degrees. They are amazing people as you will see by the work they do day in, day out.

Our biggest challenge has been keeping up with the watering. In Berkeley County, as you know, it may rain one place and a half-mile away, no rain at all. On top of watering, our tasks include fertilizing hydrangeas, roses, and perennials as well as pulling the ever present vines and grooming the spent blooms.

Garden Updates

St. Clare:

To the Day Visitor, the first impression of St. Clare is one of an oasis of peace. Please see the wonderful photos here taken by a Retreatant before Mass last week.



St. Clare (Abbey, accompanying the Retreatant)

St. Clare has a bloom I have never seen before this month. I think it is a kind of New

Zealand Flax. The base leaves looked like it was a Century Plant, but then this huge bloom stem came up and it was not like any Century Plant bloom with which I was familiar.



Bloom Stalk

Can anyone identify this?

The Cloister:

The Crepe Myrtles have been the outstanding feature in the Cloister (and all over the Monastery grounds). They are as pretty as I have ever seen them. Here is one of the pair that are at the Monk's Entry into the Church:



Crepe Myrtle in Cloister

Also, the raised beds continue their bounty, and I did get the pesto made for the Brothers . The pots are holding up to the heat and the 10 Man bed is almost worth a photo.

The Orchard:

The heat has been borderline unbearable but we have been thankful for a bumper crop of figs. Several of our younger plants haven't borne fruit yet so we have great expectations for the future. The brothers really enjoy the figs. Father Kevin told me that he especially enjoyed the sweet potato and fig recipe the Father Joe made last year and was looking forward to a repeat. I checked Father Joe's cookbook and the recipe is there. If you can find some figs give it a try!

Howard

Luce Garden:

Our guest photographer Retreatant Kathleen also took this wonderful overview of Luce from the hill above where the Reatreat Center is. Here is her comment to me: "Photos cannot show how walking Mepkin's grounds delights the Spirit and eyes as a total experience. Thank you, Ursula and the dedicated volunteers for all the hard work".



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Native Hibiscus and Daisies in bloom in Luce

These are the men who make up the crew who keep Luce Garden the jewel in the crown it is. The ladies, Pam and Marcia, were absent for this photo.



Russ, Craig, Nelson, Joe

Retreat Center:

This month:

August

- 1 Mon 4 days Private Retreat
- 5 Fri 3 days Private Retreat w/ Optional Conferences
- 8 Mon 4 days Private Retreat w/ Optional Conferences
- 12 Fri 3 days Centering Prayer Retreat (Only)
- 15 Mon 4 days Private Retreat w/ Optional Conferences
- 22 Mon 4 days Private Retreat w/ Optional Conferences
- 26 Fri 3 days Private Retreat
- 29 Mon 4 days Private Retreat

Featured Retreats

Private Retreat

A private retreat offers one the opportunity to set one's own retreat format while emphasizing silence, personal prayer and reflection. Retreatants are also invited to join the monks in their public prayer as often as desired. Spiritual Mentoring and the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation are available.

Private Retreat With Optional Conferences

In addition to what a private retreat offers one has the option of attending conferences on various aspects of contemplative life and practice.

Centering Prayer Retreat

This retreat is offered for those who already have a regular contemplative discipline or who practice Centering Prayer. It offers the opportunity to sit with others in silence three or four times a day with a conference followed by discussion.

Odds and Ends:

Clean up at The Abbey:

I have mentioned the Costellos before. They are Senior Mormon Missionaries who mission at the base here and come to Mepkin on Mondays. They have taken on clearing the Live Oak on the Farm of the Yupon. It is backbreaking labor and one of love. Here are the before and after photos:



Tree line along Farm Road before



Tree line on Farm Road after

The highlight of July for all Volunteers was the annual Volunteer Picnic, in which the Abbot and the Brothers honor each of us for our work at Mepkin.

The Abbot opened the event with a prayer, then a Scripture Reading (as is the custom), and then, on to the delicious buffet!



Abbot and Margaret Weaver



Jackson, Ursula, Sister Eve and Sister Sarah







After lunch, came the Awards.

Achieving GOLD this year were:

Craig Clark, Mary Mestrez, Norm Moraux, Russ Shorter, Lynn Steedley



Lynn



Russ



Craig

Other new levels:

BLUE: Tom McClusky, Don Pfefferkorn, Nelson Weaver

PURPLE: Kathleen Cassels, Warren Humphrey, James Nettles, Mary Wrixon

RED: Erwin Atzinger, George Clark, Alan Cox, Elaine Dennis, Faraja Greene, Caroline Stoll

GREEN: John Apici, Al Bellacicco, Elaine Bellacicco, Ben Bentley, Rosemary Clark, Fred Franks, Brenda Gailey, Dick Gotheridge, Shane Graham, Marscha Litschewski, Willie McElveen, JoAnn Morast, Bill Phillips, Bob Rose, Carolyn Rose, Joe Sims

BLACK: Phyllis Atzinger, Sylvia Bras, Susan Dallas, Ann Flanagan, Anne Marie Foeller, Steve Fraile, Dallas Gailey, Helen Graham, Steve hoeckele, Gwen Lewis, Debbie Masterson, Linda McKnight, Kathy Mitchell, Mary Moore, George Svagerko, Robert Tew, Pat Whetzel, Andrea Whiteman, Dan Whiteman

The total Volunteer Hours for July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016 was 15,621. WOW!

Next month we will have new feature: Volunteer Spotlight. One Volunteer will be featured each month, interviewed and will give a short bio of their life. We thought you might like to learn more about each other and our “readers” would like to see the kind of people who give so unselfishly to Mepkin. Thanks to Craig for suggesting this and taking this on!

Many thanks to Howard for the Orchard Report, to Kathleen, Craig, Kay and Father Jonas for the photos and to Langhorne for editing this issue.



Crepe Myrtle at Garage on Farm Road



Breakroom Rose (Kay Sappol)



Breakroom Rose (Kay Sappol)



Breakroom Lily (Kay Sappol)

Mepkin is a beautiful place to work! Keep the faith, dottie